

JAN - MAR 2015

THE ACROPOLITAN

A Magazine on Philosophy, Culture & Volunteering

FEATURE

SHAKESPEARE: HEAVEN AND HELL WITHIN US

PROPOSALS FOR A BETTER WORLD

DESIGN OF THOUGHT AND MOVEMENT
INTERVIEW WITH MITI DESAI

THE EASY AND THE DIFFICULT

RUMI: THE MYSTIC

SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC EVENTS

NEW ACROPOLIS

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.**



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,

Today the faculty of philosophy is thought to be academic, intellectual, and theoretical, and is often considered boring and irrelevant to daily life. However, a deeper understanding of the word 'philosophy' dispels this notion; it loosely translates to a *love for wisdom*. How can love be theoretical or intellectual? How can wisdom be irrelevant to our lives?

The force of love is a force of attraction, a natural yearning, that binds the lover to an object. It is the same force that drives the dancer to express aesthetic form in her every posture. It is the same force that impels great author-poets like Shakespeare to explore human nature through the wizardry of words. And maybe, it is the same force that caused ancient sculptors to express divine archetypes through their craft.

Perhaps this love for wisdom is the highest form of love that human beings are capable of. Perhaps it is the only true path to wisdom; the only true way to improve our world. This issue traces through a variety of experiments – investigations into the true nature of Philosophy – to discover, awaken, and transform our lives.

The Editorial Team

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Editorial Department
Editor-in-Chief: Yaron Barzilay
Editor: Kurush Dordi
Editorial Team:
Manjula Nanavati
Bhavna Tripathi Roy
Natasha Mehta

Public Relations & Production
Harianto H Mehta

Art Department
Graphic Designers:
Janki Shah
Neha Mehta
Printed by Vinay Arts



**New Acropolis
Cultural Organization** (India)
Yaron Barzilay
National Director
A-0 Connaught Mansions
Opp. Colaba Post Office
Colaba, Mumbai 400005
Tel: +91 22 3192 0515
Email: info@acropolis.org.in
Web: www.acropolis.org.in

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PROPOSALS FOR A BETTER WORLD

BY GEORGIOS ALVARADO PLANAS



No one can ignore the fact that we are living in a world in crisis, a world of great changes on the ecological, social, economic and even cosmic levels.

On the **ecological level**, this can be seen in the excessive, irrational and selfish exploitation of the natural resources of our planet Earth.



Flooding in Cedar Rapids, IA

by U.S. Geological Survey | Flickr | CC BY 2.0

Some of the factors of this ecological crisis are of great importance for our immediate future. For example, the global warming of the planet, due to an uncontrolled industrialization, with its consequences of the melting of the polar icecaps and the progressive and now unstoppable rise in sea levels; pollution by chemical and radioactive waste of land, water and the atmosphere; and

genetic transmutations in many plant and animal species, to cope with the need to feed our overpopulated planet.

The effects of all this can already be seen in the climate change that is gradually – or abruptly – occurring in different parts of the world, in earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and natural disasters, which seem to be increasing every year and dominating the international news from time to time. All these are signs that changes in the Earth are imminent and that we should be on red alert.

On the **social level**, we are seeing a constant increase in the waves of migration of the poorest people going in search of new hopes for a better quality of life in the richer countries.



Aftermath of Earthquake in Haiti

by Zohrah | Flickr | CC BY-NC 2.0

This is inevitably leading to a sense of social alienation, the effects of which are reflected in an increase in crime, as a way of surviving in hostile conditions, the increase in drug addiction, by which people are seeking to find the paradises of hope that they do not find in their day-to-day reality, and in many other dark ways that unflinching lead to dehumanization, especially among young people.

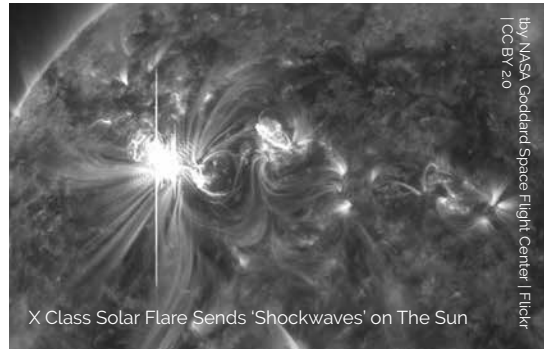
On the **economic level**, the great world crisis that is being faced by the majority of countries is already fully in evidence. Even China, which is regarded as a great economic power, no longer has sufficient manpower to continue with its immense production line for world exports, as it had been doing in recent years. This process, in the short or medium term, will inevitably have repercussions on the whole world economy, with effects that we cannot yet imagine.



On the **cosmic level**, the more technologically advanced countries have already warned of the imminence, this year, of one of the most explosive electromagnetic solar radiation storms of recent centuries on scientific record.

It is almost as if the Sun, as well as the Earth, were "angry" with the conduct of human beings..and with certain scientific experiments that are kept "top secret"...in spite of the fact that some of them are to some extent common knowledge, even if they are claimed to be "unfounded rumours".

As philosophers, we should also take into account the opinions of internationally renowned astrologers,



who tell us that we have already entered the age of Aquarius and its first phase of "Ice", or solidification of the waters (which symbolize vitality and psychic life, amongst other things), with their consequences of break-up and fragmentation (ice breaks, water does not), at every level, from family, community, society and state to the international level. In this way, fiefdoms are being created, states within States and mafias of all kinds.

All these factors are consistent with the opinion of many modern historians that we are entering into a new Middle Ages, although this time, due to the phenomenon of globalisation, it would be worldwide rather than simply local, as was the case before on several occasions in history, at certain focal points of the different civilisations.

More than 50 years ago, the founder and first International President of the IONA, Jorge A. Livraga, had already expressed opinions on this which today are being proved to be entirely consistent with the facts to which we are referring.

It is urgent, then, to offer proposals for alternative solutions, which can be compared and contrasted with those recommended by the different International Organisations. The IONA has its own proposals, which we sincerely consider to be very valid and practicable.

Specifically, to promote on an international level the 3 constitutional Principles that inspire the IONA, namely:

Fraternity and Tolerance

To promote an ideal of universal fraternity, based on respect for human dignity, beyond all racial, sexual, cultural, religious, social and other differences.

Universal Knowledge

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

Holistic Development

To develop the best of our human potential, by promoting our full realization as individuals and our integration into nature and society, not as mere spectators, but as active participants in a world that needs to be improved. Our work results in better individuals who bring sustainability to social development.

These principles are closely related to the three Areas of Action that, both on an individual and a social level, are proposed by the IONA: Philosophy, Culture and Volunteering.

Philosophy to learn to be better – each one of us, so that all together we can make a new and better world.

Culture, not as mere information, but as a means of developing a character that will be capable of discerning and understanding. This will help to eradicate ignorance, which, as is well known, is the mother of all the evils of humanity.

Volunteering, in order to learn to be socially responsible and to take up – freely, disinterestedly and personally – the challenges that modern States can no longer cope with, because they lack social support and consensus, as shown by the many strikes and revolutions that are continually taking place around the world. ★★★

Georgios Alvarado Planas is the Deputy International President of International Organization New Acropolis.

NEW ACROPOLIS IS GROWING! We are in the process of setting up a branch between Bandra (W) - Vile Parle (W).

For more details and a schedule of events:
Please contact: Ubai Husein (Branch Manager)

email: ubai.husein@acropolis.org
mobile: +91 99200 18204

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SHAKESPEARE: HEAVEN AND HELL WITHIN US

BY ZAHI GLICK

Winedale Shakespeare Festival



When we speak about Shakespeare we can refer to him as the Philosopher-Artist. An artist who succeeds, in his work, in investigating the depth of the human existence and his relationship with the gods and the universe. Shakespeare, a wizard of words, is a symbol of an artist whose work lives forever because it touches the heart of the human experience and asks questions that are and will always be relevant to human beings.

Why Shakespeare? What makes him so special? Why have many of the playwrights of his time disappeared or were forgotten while he remains relevant? There is no rational explanation. During the course of history we see artists who have opened a channel to inspiration, who unveiled the mystery of existence. It is a great gift and a great responsibility.

To understand Shakespeare's greatness we must understand the Elizabethan Theater in which Shakespeare was the brightest star.

This theater was born during the renaissance era in England under Queen Elizabeth's reign. It was a very special theater because of its unique combination of the renewal of classical studies and medieval theatrical traditions.

Shakespeare's plays are the best example of this theater and are the highest peak of its legacy. We will explore a few elements of Shakespeare's plays and through them reveal his greatness.

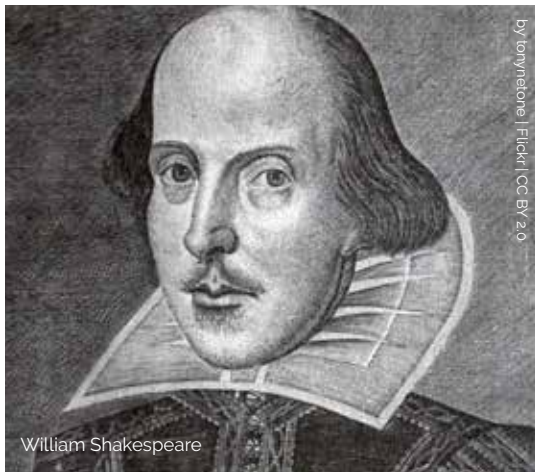
Shakespeare, a wizard of words, is a symbol of an artist whose work lives forever because it touches the heart of the human experience and asks questions that are and will always be relevant to human beings.

"CHORUS:

O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention,
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!"
(Henry V, Act 1, Scene 1.)

The Elizabethan Theater is a unique theater. A theater that combines the classical studies of the Renaissance era, that explored man,

society and their connection to the universe, and the medieval theater that was performed in the town square, outside in daylight. A poor theater without much decoration, but with a lot of creativity and imagination. Shakespeare's theater, as most of its kind in London, contained both worlds. The 'Globe' was an open theater, in the shape of a circle, the roof was open so the performances were in daylight, and the stage was bare. It was a world created by imagination and the power of the spoken word. We can see a good example of the magic of this theater in the beginning of 'Henry V', one of Shakespeare's greatest historical plays, in which the chorus asks the audience:



"Suppose within the girdle of these walls
 Are now confined two mighty monarchies,
 Whose high upreared and abutting fronts
 The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder:
 Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;
 Into a thousand parts divide on man,
 And make imaginary puissance;
 Think when we talk of horses, that you see them
 Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;
 For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
 Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times,
 Turning the accomplishment of many years
 Into an hour-glass: for the which supply,
 Admit me Chorus to this history..."
 (Henry V, Act 1, Scene 1)

It's a wonderful thing to create a world through words and imagination. A chair on the stage becomes a palace, a painted tree on a cloth, a forest, and three armed men, a mighty army. This was Shakespeare's theater and the tools to create this imaginary world were the words he wrote that stimulate our imagination until this very day. This is the real magic of theater: not rich scenery and special effects, but the ability of an actor and the spectator to create a world together. In this theater there were no boundaries between the actors and the audience (no fourth wall). On the contrary, the audience was invited into the world of the play, to be an active part in it. A wonderful example is King Henry's speech to his army, convincing them to charge the enemy.

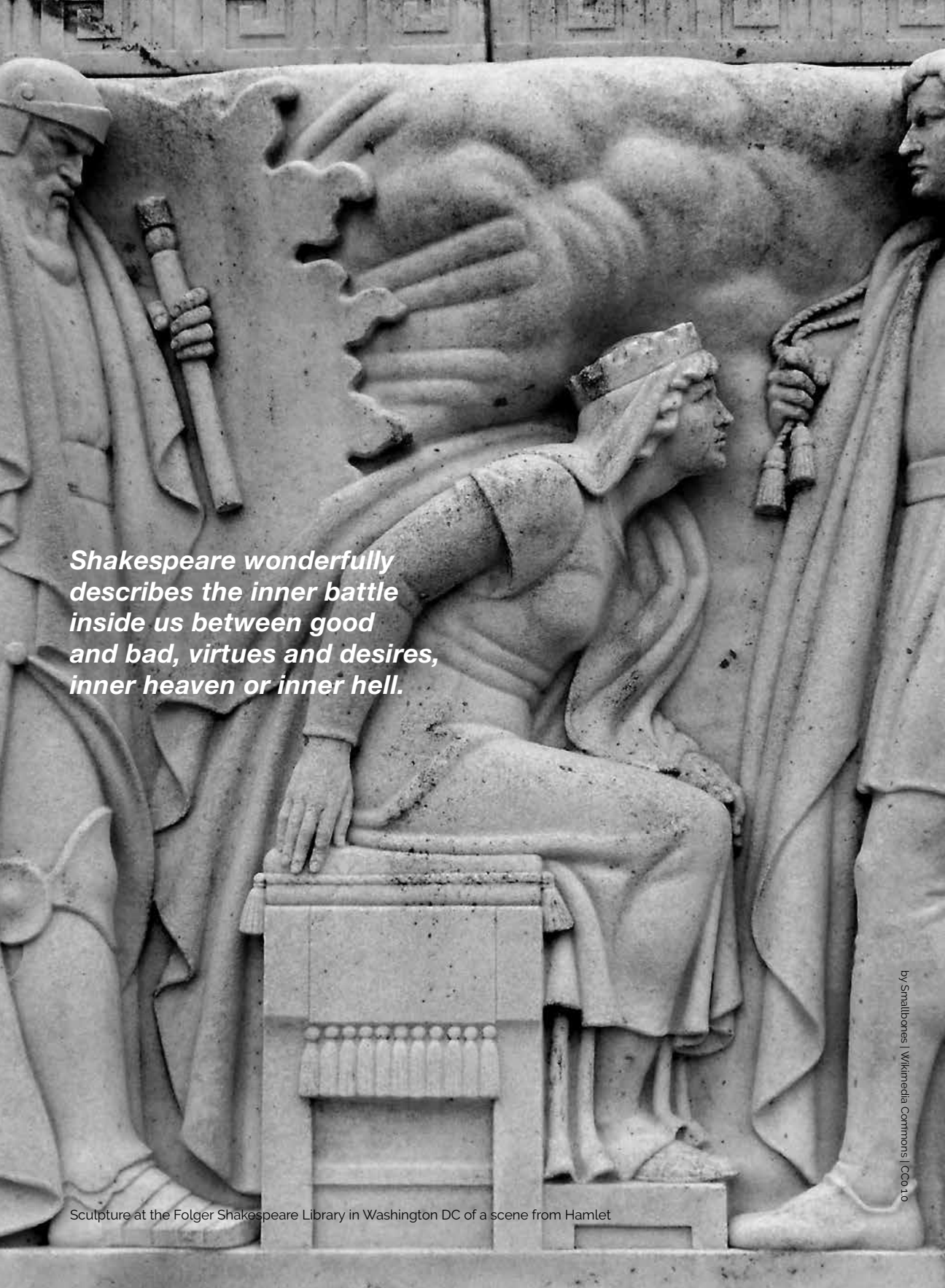
"KING HENRY V:

"Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;
 Or close the wall up with our English dead.
 In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
 As modest stillness and humility;
 But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
 Then imitate the action of the tiger..."
 (Henry V, Act 3, Scene 1)

King Henry's men are not the only actors on stage, but all the spectators who become part of the theatrical world.

The audiences in Shakespeare's theater were not passive spectators, but an active part of the story. This was the magic that brought together the noblemen with the peasants, the rich with the poor. Shakespeare not only gave them a show to look upon, but also a world to live in, even if it was only for a few hours. The audience was a part of Lear's great storm, of Macbeth's hideous crime, and Caesar's cruel murder.

But Shakespeare's words not only created a world outside of man, but also gave an expression to the inner world of the characters. In the renaissance era, the classical studies (philosophy, art, science,



Shakespeare wonderfully describes the inner battle inside us between good and bad, virtues and desires, inner heaven or inner hell.

Sculpture at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC of a scene from Hamlet

medicine, astronomy and many more) returned to the center of life. Human beings were no longer small subjects in the rulings of a furious God that taught them right from wrong. They had to listen to their own conscience and choose their destinies for themselves.

We have a choice in what kind of person we shall be and that heaven and hell are not foreign concepts in our existence, but they are the consequences of our actions and how we live our lives.

The psychological research had developed and Shakespeare is a wonderful example of the ability of an artist to shed light on the human psychological world. In his soliloquy (monologues in which the audience gets a glimpse of the character's inner world, where they reveal their most intimate thoughts, doubts and desires and turn the audience into their confidante.) Shakespeare wonderfully describes the inner battle inside us between good and bad, virtues and desires, inner heaven or inner hell. Shakespeare creates a mirror of the heart and hands it to us through his wonderful plays. What better example to give than Shakespeare's most famous soliloquy from 'Hamlet', where an indecisive prince turns to us for help. What is the right thing to do, he asks. To avenge my father, or die trying? Or to end my life right now?

"HAMLET:

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks

That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.--Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd."
(Hamlet, Act 3, Scene 1.)

All through the play, Hamlet takes us, through his soliloquies, to an inner journey in his soul. This is a journey we take with all of Shakespeare's great characters. We are a part of King Lear's agonizing madness, of Iago's envy of Othello and his plan to destroy him, of Richard the 3rd's viciousness and Richard the 2nd's helplessness and many more...

What is most wonderful in Shakespeare's characters is that we don't see them as bad, good, weak or mad, but as human beings, capable of the most wonderful and the most horrible things, like all of us. The immense spectrum of emotions that we see in Shakespeare's characters, are the same

emotions that we recognize in ourselves. That is what makes Shakespeare great. That is what makes him immortal. In his greatest works, he strikes a chord with the essence of the human existence. Shakespeare causes us to turn our eyes in to our hearts and see there the greatness of man, and the horror that man can inflict upon the world and upon himself. He makes us realize that, like his characters, we have a choice in what kind of person we shall be and that heaven and hell are not foreign concepts in our existence, but they are the consequences of our actions and how we live our lives. Heaven and hell are inside us, and are manifested in us as conscience and virtues, as opposed to lust and lower desires. In Hamlet's 'speech to the players', he gives the actors of a traveling theater that come to Elsinore several 'professional advices'. But the key observation in his speech is not only true for the actors, but for art itself.

"HAMLET:

...the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure."

(Hamlet, Act 3, Scene 2)

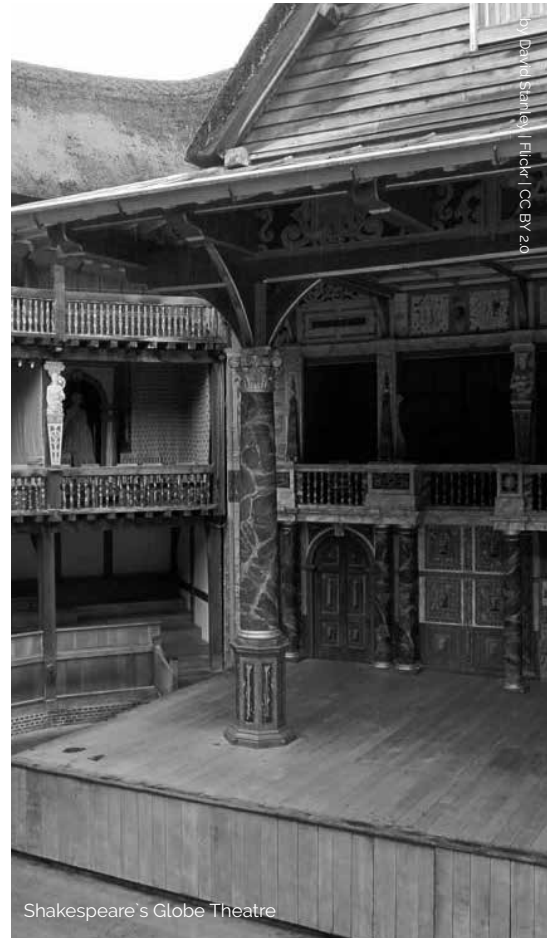
The only question is - which character will we choose to portray in the play that is our life.

In conclusion, this article did not contain all of the magnitude and depth of Shakespeare's work, and did not intend to do so. It is impossible to capture the artistic wealth of Shakespeare's work in such few words. The purpose of this article is to enlighten us as philosophers to the importance and the benefit we can extract from his work. We learn that art is a bridge between the eternal and the temporary,

and every great artist reveals in his work a piece of eternity. Through Shakespeare's words, characters and deep understanding of human nature, we can touch the essence of the battle that is raging inside each one of us. Because every one of us is a hero and a coward, a noble hearted man and a villain, a wise man and a mad man. The only question is - which character will we choose to portray in the play that is our life. Shakespeare's words can give us inspiration to march on in this inner quest and constantly ask ourselves that question. ★★★

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DESIGN OF THOUGHT AND MOVEMENT

INTERVIEW WITH MITI DESAI
BY MANJULA NANAVATI



Performance at Melbourne Recital Centre

Miti Desai is the founder and creative head of Miti Design Lab. A designer and classical dancer, Miti teaches as a visiting faculty at the Srishti School of Art, Design & Technology (Bengaluru) and at Sophia Polytechnic (Mumbai), and has personally created and executed courses initiating children into Holistic Design, Aesthetics and Culture through the performing arts.

She has performed extensively at dance festivals as an exponent of *Mohiniattam* (a classical Indian dance form) and her performances are uniquely marked by an absence of the need to overstate or overwhelm. As in her design work, what comes through is a serenity and a surrender to the medium in its purest and most subtle form.

THE ACROPOLITAN: Miti can you tell us about how you came to dance.

MITI: My journey in dance began from my journey in Design. I had studied Applied Art in Mumbai and went to USA to study Design. There I began to think about the role of design and what it means, about engaging with and experiencing design internally and holistically. I began to grow more and more uncomfortable at the idea of a life that revolved around commercial and financial transactions alone.

I had taken *Bharatnatyam* classes as a young girl and I found myself drawn to dance as I felt I could internalize the principles of design and actually experience design within my own body through the medium of dance.

The search for a teacher and an internal, spiritual and design approach to dance brought me in touch with my teacher, danseuse Mandakini Trivedi. Her dance school, Nateshvari Dance Gurukul situated in Mumbai & Lonavala, is committed to reviving the yogic tradition in Indian dance through the perfection of technique and the perfection of self. Mandakiniji believes in creating dancers who assimilate the principles of art into life. It was truly a blessing of nature that brought me in touch with the teacher and an approach to the art, which has given me a holistic perspective in the practice of the art and in my life.

TA: Tell us a little more about *Mohiniattam* as a classical dance form.

MITI: There are seven different classical dance styles that the Indian tradition offers. Each one comes from a different state in India, with a different geometry of movement, costume, jewelry and even music; yet the principles and values are the same in

all. *Mohiniattam* is one such form. It is a gentle and lyrical classical dance style from Kerala. Its swinging and swaying movements are reminiscent of the swaying palm trees and the undulating backwaters of Kerala. Its rich mimetic technique beautifully offsets its simple pure dance movements. Together they create a dance that enchants.

Classical Indian dance is a solo dance form...it was all about the individual spiritual journey. And a spiritual journey must be walked alone.

Classical Indian dance has two aspects. One is pure dance, the exuberance of movement, where the dancer (and through her the viewer) experiences bliss and joy. The other aspect is the mythological or storytelling aspect. This borrows from literature and poetry, and is usually about gods and goddesses within the Hindu tradition, but really it is about universal truths. Most Indian art forms are multi-layered, but dance most of all, because it combines Poetry, Music, Theatre and Movement, each a specific art form with its own form, structure and complexities. When all these arts are combined and layered one upon the other you can imagine the sheer multiplicity and intricacy of thoughts, values and ideas that are presented.

In addition, classical Indian dance is a solo dance form. Although today you have ensemble casts also, it originally developed as a solitary discipline, as it was all about the individual spiritual journey. And a spiritual journey must be walked alone.

TA: Are there aspects of dance that have spilled over into other parts of your life?

MITI: Dance changed everything in my life. It changed me personally, privately as well as

professionally & publicly. My exposure to the Indian arts changed my sense of aesthetic completely. I credit classical dance with bringing me back to my cultural roots and to traditional aesthetics, which is the hallmark of my design sensibility.

TA: And are there philosophical values that you have lived through your dance and applied to your life?

MITI: Classical Indian dance by itself is devised and designed in a way that it facilitates an inward journey. But of course it is up to the practitioner's intention, integrity and intensity (all at once) that would result in the art penetrating into one's day-to-day life, beyond just a profession or activity that one engages with. Though the form by itself is designed such that the mere practice of it also gives immense energy.

The dance school that I trained in, and more importantly the teacher that I trained under, focus on the ability of dance and art to penetrate into one's life. In any master-disciple, or *guru-shishya*, relationship what you are taught is expected to be applied to your life.

Mandakiniji focuses on what she refers to as 'The Yoga of Dance'. The meaning of *yoga* is to become one with, to unite. Through the aesthetic form, the themes and the experience, classical Indian dance facilitates this process at the physical, intellectual and psychological level. And that is how I have been initiated into the world of classical Indian dance. The dancer must integrate with the dance; the essence of the dance must be held within and exist in everything that one does.

When a sculptor sculpts a statue of Ganpathi he says, "That is Ganpathi," but when a dancer dances the role she says, "I am Ganpathi." I must understand the very essence of Ganpathi as deeply as my consciousness allows. For example, Ganpathi rides a mouse, which is a metaphor for a swiftly darting restless mind. Ganpathi is therefore the master

Goodenough Fashion (London)



All Images Courtesy: Miti Desai

Melbourne Recital Centre



Royal college of Art (London)

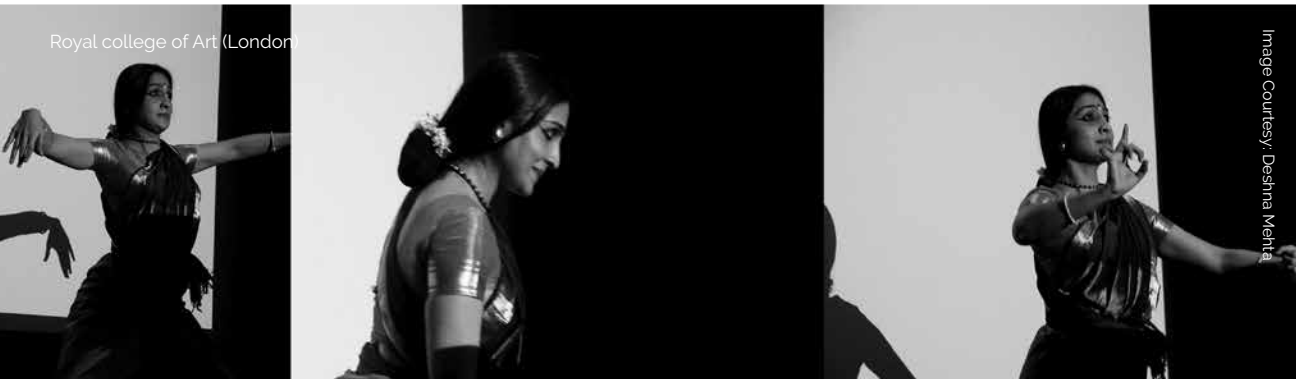


Image Courtesy: Deshna Mehta

of the mind. When I dance, *that* is what I need to convey. And when I succeed in allowing that value to exist within me, through all my actions that is art entering my life.

Inner growth is a value of prime importance to me. Every action I try to view through that peephole. So professional decisions are weighed against core values. The practice of classical dance leads to an inner journey, an introspection; and I try to support that value in everything I do.

TA: For a personality who is so understated both privately and professionally, how do you feel about performing on stage?

MITI: Performing is about shedding one's own personality and becoming the character; the principles and the value of the dance and what is being depicted. And in the process it is about forgetting the individual self and moving towards a possibility of transcending into a higher realm. So the mere individual personality is actually of no consequence in performing.

Also, performing is like tight rope walking. The completion of the walk successfully can be overwhelming and the possibility of not being able to achieve the target could have dips at many levels. Sometimes, even fatal. Performing is like that. It can result in the most ecstatic inner experience that one can have, leading to a burst of vital energy, but it also has the immense potential to turn poisonous. Glamour, visibility, fame and applause go hand in hand with performing; and these are vital ingredients that can disrupt an inner equilibrium. It is very easy to be affected and controlled by all the outward sparkles that performing results in. The challenge is to perform with the highest intensity and hold the inner experience, without letting the outward experience control the inner space.

Performing is an unavoidable challenge, because dance is in itself a performing art. And if the

dancer believes that that the principles of art must penetrate and assimilate into one's own life, then the responsibility is immense. Then the challenge is to dance in front of an audience of 500, or 5, with the same purity as if you were dancing alone (independent of the outward) and yet, at the same time it is not about ignoring the audience, but rather drawing them in, because dance also focuses on the value that - you and I are one; just as the dance and I are one. And I (the dancer) want you (the audience) to be able to experience what I am experiencing at the fullest. There is an inner feeling of wanting to share and give in abundance that the performer operates from; and if that feeling comes from an honest and pure space then real communication emerges.

TA: What is the most important thing that dance has taught you?

MITI: Discipline. In order to lead an integrated life you need discipline. It centers you. Dance was my first taste of intense discipline. The practice of the art encompasses physical, mental & emotional discipline all at once.

TA: What does dance mean to you. Is it a career, a passion, an outlet for creativity?

MITI: To me my dancing is a form of self-expression that emerges from an innate passion; from a yearning to engage with something more than the mundane; towards a possibility of transcendence.

The *shastras* tell us that "From the formless comes the form, and the form takes you back to the formless." In Indian thought the purpose of life is to elevate, engage, introspect, and integrate. This thought is given a form through the actual form of the dance. But the real purpose of dance is for the dancer to understand and express through the magnificent form, the experience of the formless. In other words rigorous training has the potential for a dancer to master the form and move inwards to experience the formless. This to me is a challenge and a journey that I engage with.

TA: What do you see as the future of classical Indian dance?

MITI: The history of classical Indian dance began with *Devdasis* in temples and moved over time into a respectable small industry. While there is an abundance of practitioners, professionals, children and youngsters who are practicing, teaching & learning dance, classical dance as a professional future seems dim. There is a lack of financial stability for a young individual who would like to take this up as a full time profession. There is not much money in dancing professionally, the experience can be unpleasant and the commercial and professional aspect sometimes is a complete contradiction to the philosophical aspect of dance. While anything commercial takes away from its intrinsic value, without financial stability the art form will die; so there is a need to engage with the commercial aspect also.

One reason for this is that the audience is dwindling. The complexity of the dance form requires the understanding of many other art forms, and there is a language that must be deconstructed and understood. Art education is not active enough and especially in Mumbai the influence of Bollywood inculcates the exact opposite values to those required for art appreciation. The arts are mediums to elevate you and nudge you to look more deeply into yourself, and Bollywood is a medium to entertain you and to escape from yourself. To appreciate any art form you need to be attentive, you need to think, then you will come out of the experience elevated and energized. You can't watch a classical dance recital with popcorn and a cola; but sadly that's the nature of the society we live in.

TA: The way of the dancer and the way of the philosopher have a similar core. Do you relate to that? According to you, what is the philosophy of dance?

MITI: Yes indeed! The philosophy of classical Indian dance is the philosophy of the civilization and the culture through which it emanated. What is the purpose of life? It is to grow; it is to raise the level

of consciousness, yours and everyone else that you touch. How does the layman grapple with this?

In India, spirituality is so pervasive that even at the grassroot level everyone is familiar with words like *moksh* and *dhyan* and concepts of meditation and detachment. In ancient times, to help people on this path, ladders were created, in the form of all the arts, and classical Indian dance was one such ladder created to allow a glimpse into the possibility of a higher self.

The challenge is to perform with the highest intensity and hold the inner experience, without letting the outward experience control the inner space.

In the *shastras* the Sanskrit expression used to describe the experience of classical arts, its essence or *rasa*, is known as *brahmananda sahodara*, which literally means 'born from the same womb'. This expression recognizes the similarity between the experience of art and the bliss of *Brahman*. The artistic experience is therefore put at the same level as the supreme bliss of *Brahman*. Thus the practice of classical Indian dance intrinsically takes you deeper to understand the philosophy that rests beneath its magnificent form.

TA: Design and dance are so integral to your life. What would you rather be known as - Miti, the Designer? Or Miti, the Dancer?

MITI: Actually I feel that they are two sides of a coin, inseparable from each other. To me they are different dimensions of the same aspect and they coexist together and facilitate each other. When I am designing I am exploring the dance of design. And when I am dancing I am exploring the design of dance. ★★★

THE EASY AND THE DIFFICULT

BY DELIA STEINBERG GUZMAN



We speak of difficult jobs, difficult subjects, difficult psychological situations, difficult actions or circumstances, difficult people, difficult times... The list would be endless and we won't even attempt in such a limited space to complete it or offer a solution for each of these cases. Instead, we would like to focus on the inner attitude of a person who has to face difficulty.

Almost everyone acknowledges that there are things which are easy to do: generally, they are the things that others do and a few that others do well. I don't know why most people think that "the others" – the "non-cranes" of the Platonic myth – have easy things to do, and that life piles the difficult things on themselves and not on the others. Perhaps the reason for this could be that most people don't truly know how to put themselves in someone else's shoes.

On the other hand, each one of us knows that, when faced with certain situations, we can deal with them fairly well; each one of us knows that we are capable of completing some tasks well or very well. But alongside these, there are many other situations which appear to be unsolvable, like unattainable goals.

Let's think it over a little. The easy *per se* does not exist. If we were to ask people, one by one, what they consider as easy, they would all respond differently. There are things that we know and can do, and there are things that we don't know and can't do. What is easy is what we have already learned to do, what we have mastered and can do effortlessly. When, where and how did we learn...? The fact is that what has been learned and assimilated is reflected in the ease with which we do things in life.

What is not known and is new to us wears the mask of difficulty.

In the same way, the difficult in and of itself does not exist. It depends on the person and his or her accumulated knowledge. What is not known and is new to us wears the mask of difficulty. It is likely that, because we don't know how to resolve a situation, we continue to label it as "difficult" for many years, even though it is not so much unknown or new as repetitive and feared... The experience of fearing and dreading new things is not going to lead us to

If everything was always easy it would be a warning sign: either we have stagnated in what we already know, or we have become so unconscious that we don't even recognize the new steps to climb....

master what is difficult. On the contrary, to avoid difficulties, we must avoid all signs of fear.

It is natural that life is filled with difficulties. We have all come into this world to learn, to acquire new knowledge... If everything was always easy it would be a warning sign: either we have stagnated in what we already know, or we have become so unconscious that we don't even recognize the new steps to climb....

What is difficult is what makes us face what we need to acquire at this moment. What may seem to us like a hard trial is actually an indispensable exercise to let experiences make their way into our consciousness... ★★★

Delia Steinberg Guzman is the International President of International Organization New Acropolis.



RUMI: THE MYSTIC

BY BHAVNA ROY



Ottoman Empire Sufi Dervishes

Eight centuries ago a culture of mystical Islam suffused the lands extending from modern day Turkey (Anatolia) to modern day Afghanistan and Iran (Khorasan); it was called Sufi Islam. Etymologically, the word 'Sufi' is derived from the Arabic word *safā*, meaning purity. Mystics of the order created a path towards attaining self-knowledge and god-realisation in their desire to reunite themselves with God. This phenomenon was cradled and nourished by great intellectual, artistic and philosophical icons of the time; foremost among them was Jalaluddin Mohammed Rumi.

Rumi was born in the year 1207 in the Persian city of Vakhsh, located in the region of modern day Afghanistan-Tajikistan. The son of a jurist, scholar and Sufi mystic, he hailed from a lineage of the Hanafi stream of Sufi priests and his home was the haunt of poets and mystics. When the Mongols invaded Central Asia the family travelled westwards through Baghdad and Damascus, and settled in Karaman, Anatolia. In 1228 Rumi once again relocated to Konya, where upon his death in 1273, his remains were enshrined in the Mevlana Mausoleum, which today has become the epicenter of Sufi mysticism.

Rumi's life took a dramatic turn in 1244 when he met the dervish, Shams of Tabriz. Soon Rumi was to transform into a love-infused poet-sage. According to legend, four years later, on a night immersed in debate and spiritual bonhomie, Shams was called out to the back entrance by a mysterious voice. He walked out, never to be seen again. One muses, maybe the illumination that emanates from realization led him towards the 'whole', the 'one'; for he had left behind with Rumi the revelation of the true meaning of the Islamic concept of *Tawhid*.

Tawhid translates as 'making or asserting oneness'. To a Sufi, god is, in essence, a unity that finds expression in the plural descriptions, or attributes, of itself. It is the 'oneness' that suggests that there is no absolute existence outside of divinity. This mystical realization is said to be beyond expression. It can only be experienced through intuition and in beauty. In the *Diwan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*, Rumi expresses this essence as only a poet can:

**Why should I seek? I am the same as
He. His essence speaks through me.
I have been looking for myself!**

It is said that through love he discovered his true identity and was born again into the kingdom of a higher consciousness – a *human* that came into *being*. Rumi expresses evocatively:

**It is love that birthed me, not my mother;
A hundred blessings to that mother.**



Rumi subtly recognizes the transformative power of transcendental love as a catalyst that raises a practitioner of religion beyond the bounds of the religious framework into the realm of the religion's true essence, its philosophy, indeed its mystery. To him, the body is but the lamp that holds the light of the being. Love is the agent that transforms consciousness from identification with the vessel that is our desires, emotions and thoughts, to our true self, the *mevla*. He writes in his masterpiece *Mathnawi-e-Rumi*.

**Someone asked, "What is love?" I answered,
"You will know when you become 'we.'"**

Mevla is an Arabic word that means patron, master or loved one. Shams was *mevla* to Rumi, who in turn became *mevla* to his own disciples. Rumi's poems do not prescribe a solitary path of self-fuelled emotion, bereft of active engagement with

the world of action. In Shams he had experienced the guiding hand of a guru; the disciple had birthed the path:

**Without a guide you become confused
Even on a road you've travelled many times.
Don't travel alone on a Way you've never seen;
Don't turn your head away from the Guide.**

After his death, his son Sultan Walad established the Mevlevi Order to perpetuate his father's unique form of *zhikr*. *Zhikr* is an Arabic word denoting remembrance, or invocation, of the divine as a devotional act. *Zhikr* is ordinarily performed with rosary beads. Rumi, however, performed it in the form of the *Sema* dance.

**The light of zhikr creates the full moon.
And brings those who are lost to the path of Reality.**

Rumi gave birth to the *Sema* dance in a burst of spontaneous inspiration when one day, as he walked the streets of Konya, he heard the rhythmic lilt of the *zhikr* - *la elaha ella'llah*...there is no god but god. Suffused with ecstatic joy, Rumi stretched out his arms, one palm turned upwards towards the sky, as if receiving, the other extended downwards towards the ground, as if transmitting. Poised thus, he began to spin in unison with eternity.

As the dervish whirls, he leaves behind the emotions and intellect that emerge from the gateways of the senses and deep-seated instinctive 'memory'. His consciousness rises, to become harmonious with the beauty and intelligence of the soul. Lost in ecstatic eternity, the disciple becomes the yogi, one who 'knows union'.

Today when dervishes dance together ceremonially, they rotate on their own axis, while also revolving around an invisible centre; evoking the wonder of the rotating planets that revolve around the Sun. When they dance together, the dervishes exemplify *tawhid*, for the world of the soul-realized is the world

of a collective awareness, where many-become-one; they whirl in synchronic communion as one.

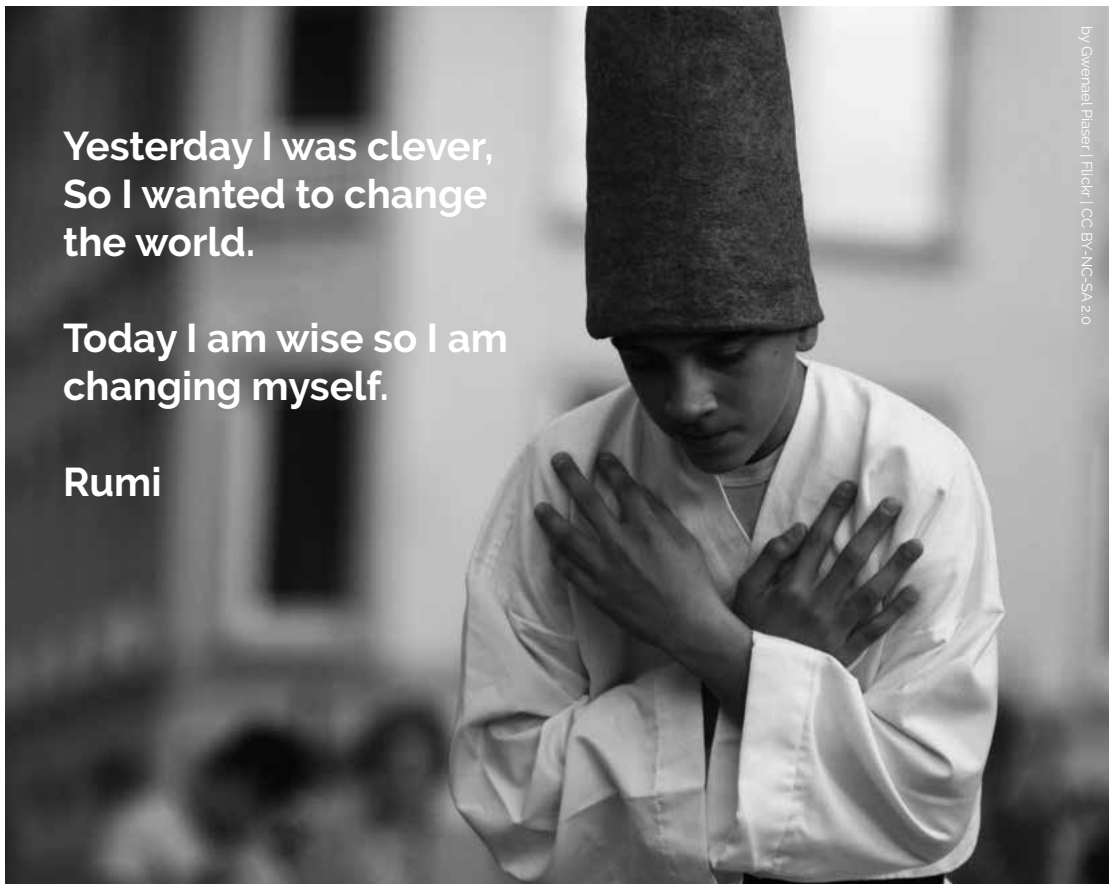
**Unless the seeker is absolutely erased,
In truth, he will not come into union.
Until a servant becomes erased completely,
Tawhid is not realized as real.**

As for those who accuse him of immersing himself in intoxicated other-worldliness while eulogizing disengagement from the mundane world of responsibilities and obligations, he has the last word:

**All that you have read should help close every book.
Any page you have ever turned should have aided in
Dusting off—rending—the veil over your glorious eye.
All talk and words are foreplay. I have other things
in mind for us now. Now close the book! ★★★**



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**Yesterday I was clever,
So I wanted to change
the world.**

**Today I am wise so I am
changing myself.**

Rumi

CITY OF PURIFICATION

BY HARIANTO H MEHTA

Ardhanarishvara

Just a few kilometers off the Mumbai Harbor, nestled on an island, amidst basalt rock mounds, lay a mysterious complex of exquisite cave temples that whisper a silent homage to the region's spiritual past. It's tune inaudible to the nearby metropolis teeming with ambitious commerce, and ceaseless traffic, here the temple walls echo a stark but graceful embrace, and invite the yearning explorer to re-discover a mystical tradition so vibrant in the distant past.

Called *Gharapuri*, or the 'City of Purification' by its pilgrims, Portuguese seamen christened the island 'Elephanta', a tribute to the colossal stone sculpture of an elephant that is known to have once stood magnificently welcoming visitors to its shores. I ask myself, "Could this have been another *Hastinapur*, City of Elephants, symbolic of a Centre of Wisdom?" Perhaps in this truth lies the intrigue of this island.

**"Ancient Hindus seldom built their temples otherwise than in the bosom of the earth, as though they were ashamed of their efforts, or did not dare to rival the sculpture of nature."
- Blavatsky**

Absent this sculpture today, as I disembark the motorized ferry, I am greeted by a warm humid morning breeze, and a band of monkeys, naughtily observing the passers-by. I decide to hurriedly begin my ascent past the souvenir stalls lined along both sides of the paved walkway, and contemplate the irony of destiny: a centre of purification, of inspiration, perhaps of redemption, left to the behest of 'divine' brokers engaged in the 'business' of religion.

Soon I arrive; an understated stone entrance, marked by two pillars, guarding the secrets shrouded in darkness that lay beyond, inviting me to discover. I enter, and as my eyes adjust to the dim interior, I am filled with wonder, and ponder why a people, so expert in architectural and artistic skill would invest such effort in constructing such a feat. H.P. Blavatsky suggests that "ancient Hindus seldom built their temples otherwise than in the bosom of the earth, as

**Amidst the delicate
play of light and
shadow, here
dances the glorious
Natraja, swaying to
the cosmic rhythm
of the Tandava,
full of vitality
and movement.**

though they were ashamed of their efforts, or did not dare to rival the sculpture of nature." Who were these ancient master craftsmen; so ambitious, yet so humble? During which blessed time did they meditate amongst these walls?

Tradition credits the start of the building of this architectural marvel to the sons of King Pandu; the five sons who emerged victorious from The Great War of the *Mahabharata*. Over the next three centuries, it is believed that many Kings, Princes, and believers, contributed – chisel in hand, and devotion in heart. However, in the absence of inscriptions to ascertain dates, historians and archaeologists continue to disagree as to the true antiquity of these cave-temples. Blavatsky laments, "How many generations of Hindus...have knelt in the dust before the *Trimurti*, your threefold deity, O Elephanta? How many centuries were spent by weak man in digging out in your stone bosom this town of temples and carving your gigantic idols? Who can say?"

As if recognizing the transience of the material world, I notice that the ornate relief sculptures adorning the walls are severely damaged; yet they draw me in. A mythical world of the gods, comes to life; the playground of *Shiva*, as some call it. Amidst the delicate play of light and shadow, here dances the glorious *Natraja*, swaying to the cosmic rhythm of the *Tandava*, full of vitality and movement. There, in graceful meditation, atop a full bloomed lotus, is *Yogisvara* in reflective penance. The gurgling divine waters of the Ganges are forever frozen in reverence, the earth cradled under the celestial compassion of *Gangadhara*. And yet fiercely he attains victory over the demon *Andhaka*. As if helping the seeker to synthesize these many aspects, serene and motionless in the centre-most chamber, is found the celebrated *Trimurti*.

Surrounded by the many facets of *Shiva*, I feel naturally lured by the singular enigmatic form of this three-faced deity. Its enormous size, coupled with the attention to detail of ornamentation and iconography, accents the sublime sentiments evoked by each of the three faces. I am reminded of the essential unity of life that lay beyond the plurality of form. Within me is *Vamadeva* (facing West), the nurturing creator of joy and beauty, a promise of the vitality of life. Within me calls *Bhairava* (facing East), whose anger can burn all life. And also within me, serenely *sattvic* resides the central *Tatpurush* (facing North), defender of harmony. These three aspects of myself, of life, of the divine, resonate and awaken contemplation, as though an oil lamp were brought to a mirror. So often I allow myself to go astray in *tamas*, heated in passion or crippled in lethargy. Often I find myself drowned in *rajas*, undisciplined and inefficient action, lacking of purpose or direction. But how rarely I'm able to act with *sat*, in harmony, allowing expression of my own true inner identity, master of my personality.

Neither good nor bad, these three *gunas*, like the *Trimurti* are natural aspects of life, each playing an essential role in the evolution of all life. But with me lies



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A lion stands guard

the exercise of will, the freedom to choose which *guna* to express, determining the right time and the right measure! Perhaps here lies the glory of Man; this freedom to choose - with intention and meaning. Perhaps here lies the human path of transformation and purpose.

Getting There

Elephanta is an hour long ferry ride across the Mumbai Harbour, starting at the Gateway of India. Several ferries leave every hour, and purchasing tickets in advance is rarely necessary. Tickets can be bought at the MTDC office located just outside the Gateway compound. The toy train (Rs10) on Elephanta is not recommended. Instead use the short walk to stretch your legs, before your ascend up towards the caves.

Accommodation

Elephanta is day-long excursion. No overnight accommodation is available on the island. But there are several small canteens and shops that serve food and beverages.

Money

No ATMs available. There is also an entry fee to the caves (Indian Nationals: Rs10, Foreigners: Rs250).

Sight Seeing

Try to depart from Mumbai early morning, to avoid the afternoon sun. Official audio guides, called AudioCompass, from the Ministry of Tourism are available to download on smartphones, and will allow you to explore at your own pace. Do this while still in Mumbai.

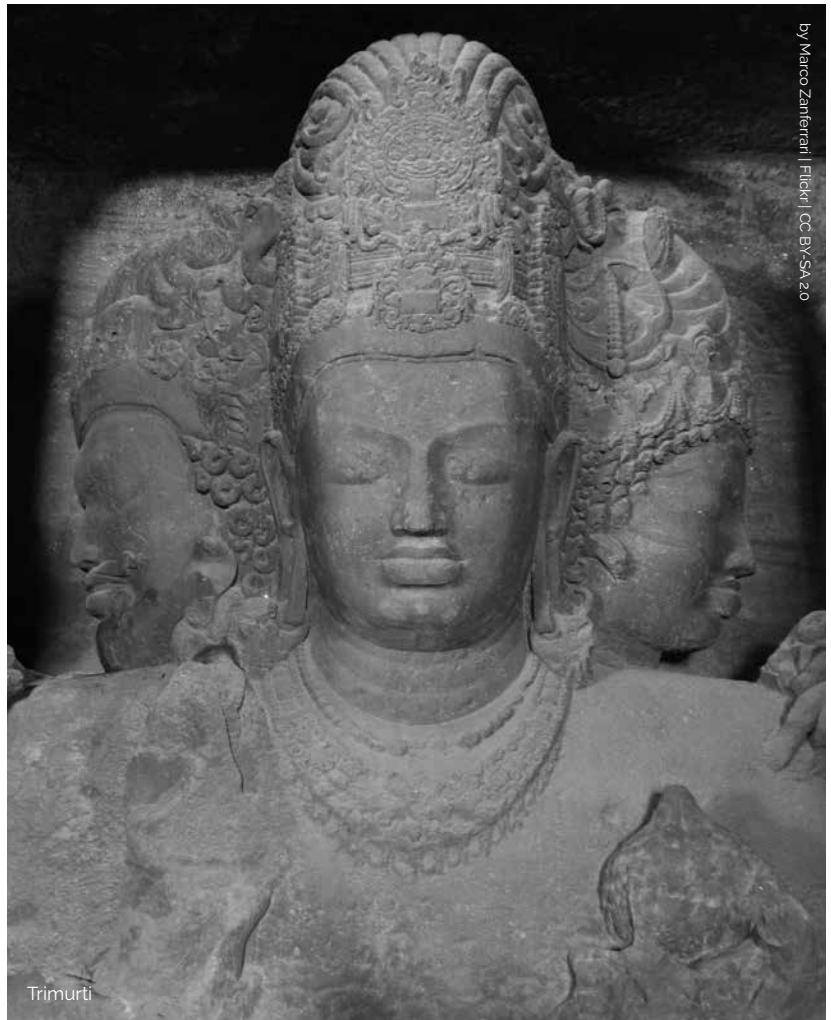
Essentials

Sunscreen, hats, water bottles, walking shoes. Beware the monkeys!

In a magical voyage, over land and sea, transcending the boundaries of time and language, these ancient sculptors were both artists and philosophers. But they were also teachers, so compassionate that their legacy continues to inspire, teach, and reflect fundamental truths about life, relevant even today. But it requires us, not just to look, but to see, because as taught in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "Only when the disciple is ready, does the Master appear." ★★★

Bibliography

Blavatsky, H.P. From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan. London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1892.



By Marco Zanferri | Flickr | CC BY-SA 2.0

Trimurti

Trimurti flanked by Gangadhara



by Ryan Pikkell | Flickr | CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Nataraja



by Waczeslaw Arggenberg | Flickr | CC BY 2.0

Dvarpal, Guardian of the Sanctum



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Andhakasura mardana, Slaying of Demon Andhaka



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BOOK REVIEW

BY MANJULA NANAVATI

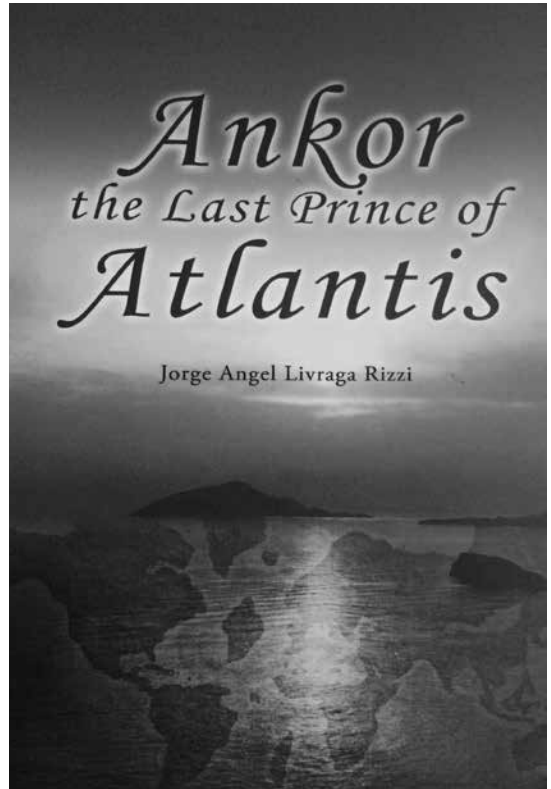
ANKOR, THE LAST PRINCE OF ATLANTIS

BY PROF. JORGE ANGEL
LIVRAGA RIZZI

Many ancient traditions tell a story of an immense flood that destroyed a civilization that existed thousands of years ago; one that was perhaps far more technologically and spiritually advanced than we are today. Amongst them, Plato speaks of a vast continent called Atlantis that sank into the ocean. Although modern historians have found meager evidence to corroborate this, too many traditions around the world explicitly, or obliquely, refer to this cataclysm to ignore it completely.

Prof. Jorge Angel Livraga sets his novel on the doomed island of Poseidonis, the legendary last remnant of the Atlantic Civilization. Eighteen-year-old Prince Ankor is assigned a mission; to journey to the sacred Temple of Kuum, and as a disciple of the High Priest learn, absorb and experience the mystical insights of the great Atlantean civilization. On doing so, he is to be entrusted with carrying this cargo of scholarship aboard a ship loaded with more than half a million books and objects of worship to the land of Kem, on the banks of the river Nile. There, equipped with profound wisdom, a magnificent culture would blossom, to astonish and enlighten the world.

The young pupil begins his voyage with the universal questions that are pertinent to us all. Who am I?



What are my obligations as a member of the human race? What is man's role in the universe? What is Destiny, Freedom, Truth, Justice? As the High Priest initiates the fledgling prince into the mysteries of life, the reader finds himself drawn deeper into a vortex of questions and answers that continually unpeel to reveal yet deeper questions. Ankor begins an inward journey to strengthen himself physically and mentally, before he embarks on his search for the 'Mystic Pearl' which, it is said, holds the secret to finding the path towards higher consciousness. His search is grueling, exhausting and formidable, and Livraga demonstrates that although a master can show you the path, in order to truly grasp the essence of the teachings, you have to walk the path yourself. It is only through experience that



knowledge can be transformed from the realm of mere intellectual belief into conviction. Guided by the wisdom of his master, Ankor (and the reader) slowly reach the realization that "I am the Pearl".

It is only through experience that knowledge can be transformed from the realm of mere intellectual belief into conviction.

The Last Prince of Atlantis is a fascinating and instructive meditation on the mysteries of the universe and the miraculous potential of human beings. Livraga's insight helps the reader understand the critical challenges and limitations that lay on the path of evolution, and the extraordinary laws that govern all of nature, which we must learn to work with in order to proceed on our own journey towards Truth.

As complex as these concepts are, Livraga presents his codex simply, a little at a time in easily digestible nuggets, woven through the story of a young prince's search for his higher self, and his zeal to protect, and transmit wisdom, so vital to humanity against the back drop of a civilization in its last stages of annihilation.

The book works well enough as a story - part adventure, part mythology. But to truly appreciate its philosophical weight, the reader must first absorb... then ponder...and finally introspect. That input of time and effort will reap a rich and priceless harvest, for the book will, over time, continue to give to you, as much as you are prepared to give to it. ★★★

Founder of International Organization New Acropolis, Prof. Jorge Angel Livraga Rizzi (1930-1991) was born in Argentina and studied philosophy and history of art at the University of Buenos Aires. His many interests included archaeology and history, and his literary talent was evident from an early age when he won the national poetry prize in Argentina in 1951.

Ankor, the Last Prince of Atlantis was his first novel, written in his early twenties. His other works include the *The Alchemist*, *Thebes*, *The Elemental Spirits of Nature*, and many more. Livraga leaves behind a legacy of a youthful and philosophical spirit.

SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC EVENTS



T'AI CHI - FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

Workshop

Saturday 17th & Sunday 18th January 2015

9:00am (2hrs), Pre-registration Required

@ New Acropolis Mumbai

Based on the Chinese philosophy of Ying and Yang, T'ai Chi is a meditative martial art and a holistic system of health. It has been an indispensable part of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and is recognized as the 'fountain of youth'. Its principles of balance and concentration are essential to the urban lifestyle. This workshop will focus on the therapeutic value of T'ai Chi, known to benefit patients of Type II Diabetes, Osteoporosis, Arthritis, High Blood Pressure, and Bone Density issues, among many others. Under the guidance of Sensei Sandeep Desai, students will learn to weave T'ai Chi into their daily routines. Fees Apply: Rs2500/-



SPIRIT OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Lecture

Saturday, 17th January 2015

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

@ New Acropolis Mumbai

Reads the motto of the Olympic Games, "Citius, Altius, Fortius" – "Faster, Higher, Stronger." Perhaps these values spoke of a state of consciousness, beyond just an expert aptitude for sports. Originally conceived of atop Mt. Olympus, the abode of the gods of Ancient Greece, this gaming event served a noble purpose of fostering fraternity amongst the warring city states. The event inspired expression of the best of human potential, and participation is thought to have taken precedent over victory. Imagine such a spirit at the Wimbledon, or the Soccer World Cup!



HOW TO CHOOSE

Lecture

Saturday, 31st January 2015

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

@ New Acropolis Mumbai

How do we make truly meaningful choices in life? Whether we are choosing a partner, an occupation, or a place to live - our choices may determine how happy or satisfied we are in our life. But by what criteria do we make our choices? Which of these criteria should we rely on? Which should we be wary of? And how will we know if we've made the right decision?



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PHILOSOPHY OF ECOLOGY

Seminar

Saturday, 7th February 2015

10:00am (5hrs), PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED

@ New Acropolis Mumbai

Faced with an ecological crisis, an exploration through the history of humanity may shed light on how ancient civilizations maximized human potential, maintaining harmony with the environment. This seminar will present practical tips to live ecologically aware, and will include a hands-on composting session. Inquiries/Registration: +919920018204 or ubai.husein@acropolis.org

This course establishes the foundation for every aspiring Philosopher. The curriculum comprises of traditional knowledge, presented as a comparative study of Classical Philosophies, and helps each student to develop a sensitive ability to internalize the fundamental Laws that govern Nature, and Humanity. The course material serves as an introduction to ancient cultures and investigates the origins of humanity – a time when the invisible world was respected, drawing a sense of wonder and esoteric mysticism. New Acropolis strives to preserve this universal heritage, by offering it as an integral part of its scholastic development. **Course Duration - 16 Sessions. Tuesdays, 7:30pm - 9:30pm. FEES APPLY.**



LIVING PHILOSOPHY: DISCOVER, AWAKEN, TRANSFORM

Introductory Course

FREE Introductory Session

Tuesday, 17th February 2015

7:30pm (2hrs), @ New Acropolis Mumbai

Course Starts

Tuesday, 24th February 2015

7:30pm (2hrs), @ New Acropolis Mumbai

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED



TEOTIHUACAN – WHERE MEN BECOME GODS

Lecture

Saturday, 21st February 2015

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

@ New Acropolis Mumbai

The legendary people associated to the temple city of Teotihuacan, believed themselves to be the custodians of an ancient wisdom. They are known to have worked with a sophisticated system of symbols, achieved admirable feats of Architecture, and developed an accurate calendar to measure cycles of time. Amongst many others, these accomplishments were but a means of expression that originated in a deep understanding of life, and were meant to serve goals that transcended the material world.

SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC EVENTS



RE-EXAMINING THE TECHNOLOGICAL AGE

Lecture

Saturday, 28th February 2015

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

@ New Acropolis Mumbai

Google. Cloning. Nuclear Power. Space Exploration. Plastic Surgery. Fracking. The exceptional technological growth and advances in medicine are a testament to the potential of modern man. Our global civilization has invested unprecedented time, effort, and finance to benefit and assist humanity to make life more 'efficient' and 'comfortable'. But as a human race, are we happier today than ancient civilizations? Somewhere, somehow, have we lost the way?

The fascinating world of dreams has long intrigued human beings. Myths and legends suggest that dreams might be a gateway to another world. What are dreams really? What do they indicate? What is the relationship between a dream and reality?



URBAN MONK

Lecture

Saturday, 28th March 2015

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

@ New Acropolis Mumbai

Siddhartha Gautama Buddha leaves us a simple, but profound, legacy of the 4 Noble Truths, and prescribes a practical solution to human problems that are astonishingly relevant in our own modern-urban context. His teachings about the importance of The Middle Path can help us lead better, happier, and more fulfilled lives, while also answering the need of our times to engage with, and affect, society.



REALITY OF DREAMS

Lecture

Saturday, 14th March 2015

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

@ New Acropolis Mumbai



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in the Classical Manner

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7 Fold Constitution of Man
The Ethical Life of a Disciple
Themes from Ancient Indian Tradition

THE GREAT UNIVERSAL WAR

Animal Self vs. Human Self
The Internal Battle of Kurukshetra
Svadharna and Karma Yoga
Themes from The Bhagawad Gita

BUDDHA AND THE PATH TO LIBERATION

Lessons from the Life of The Buddha
Process of Self-Transformation
The Middle Path, 4 Noble Truths
Themes from The Dhammapada

HEARING THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE

Symbolism of Tibetan Vajrayana Tradition
H.P. Blavatsky and the origins of a mystical manual
for disciples
Recognizing the Mayavic nature of the World
Themes from The Voice of the Silence

PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES FROM THE ANCIENT WORLD

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Harmony, Confucius
Path of Happiness, Aristotle

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True Freedom, Stoic Principles
3 Paths to expressing Unity, Plotinus
Neo-Platonism

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The Maieutic Approach, Socrates
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The Metaphysical Disaster

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Allegory of the Cave, Plato
The Political & Philosophical Ideal
Founding Principles of New Acropolis

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Models of Governance, Plato
The Triumphs and Challenges of Democracy
Organizational structure of Traditional Society

PATH TO MYSTERY

Roles in Ancient Society:
Children, Adolescence, Elders
Traditional Education and Tribal Initiation
Mystical and Magical Initiation

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Reliability of History
Myths: Truths hidden in Mythology
Chronological Time, Sacred Time, Mythical Time
How Myth drives History

CYCLES WITHIN HISTORY

Natural Law of Cycles
Cycles of Time: Hindu Yugas, Great Year of Plato
Challenges and Opportunities of our times

ESOTERIC HISTORY OF MAN

7 Kingdoms of Life
Manas & the Evolution of Human Consciousness
The Discipular Path: Devotion, Investigation, Service

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A 32-hour Introductory Philosophy Course (16 Sessions)

See page 31 for detailed Course Syllabus

FREE INTRO : Tuesday, 17th Feb 7:30pm

COURSE STARTS : Tuesday, 24th Feb 7:30pm

Living an Ethical Life, Practicing Wisdom
Ancient Indian understanding of Man
Discovering Human Purpose
Hearing the Voice of the Silence (Tibet)
Harmony (Confucius), Justice (Egypt)
Nurturing the Soul through Right Education
Evolution of Consciousness
The Way of Happiness (Aristotle)
Types of Governance
Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato
Extracting Truth: Myth vs History
Opportunities of our Times