

APR - JUN 2015

THE ACROPOLITAN

A Magazine on Philosophy, Culture & Volunteering

FEATURE

BIOMIMICRY: Human Creation Inspired by Nature

THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR

CAN THE END
REALLY JUSTIFY THE MEANS

CUSTODIANS OF CULTURE
Q&A WITH PADMASHRI SHEKHAR SEN

SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC EVENTS


THE 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.**



FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

Dear Reader,

The past hundred years have seen a rapid rise in the pace at which technology has changed and affected our lives. We have discovered countless solutions to reduce suffering, increase efficiency, and cheat old age. However, has this progress led to increased happiness, or made our lives any more meaningful?

Perhaps somewhere along the way, we have confused our means with our goals. Perhaps somewhere along the way, we have surrendered our most glorious attribute, our inner freedom to express our true selves through the practice of Virtues. Virtues are the essence of our character, the natural qualities of the divine that exist within every human being. Yet they remain astonishingly unexplored. We have ingeniously learnt to imitate nature, but remain blind to the values that governs her every facet. We investigate history and archeology, but dismiss ancient civilizations as primitive, unable even to conceive, let alone express, these virtues.

With this issue of The Acropolitan we explore the values and virtues that have remained unchanged through human history. Whether we look to nature for inspiration, or to Scientists and Artists who devote their lives to unravel the secrets of life, it is clear that the solutions transcend geographical, ethnic, and cultural boundaries..

The Editorial Team



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



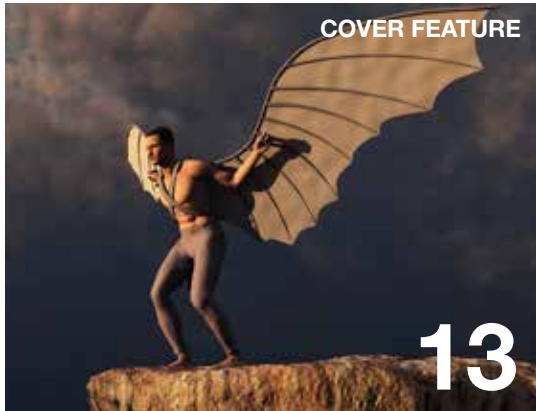
CULTURE broadens our understanding of life, and fosters a spirit of mutual respect and solidarity, strengthening human dignity and facilitating harmonious coexistence.



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

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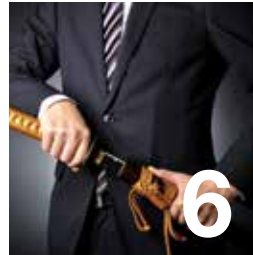
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THE ACROPOLITAN
April - June 2015
Volume 2 - Issue 2

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LEADING A FULFILLING LIFE

BY DELIA STEINBERG GUZMAN



We sometimes ask ourselves: what is life? What does it mean, for a philosopher, to live?

The special mode of existence that has been afflicting the human being over the last few centuries has made us forget certain simple but important values, while their place has been taken by meaningless elements. This is why it is so difficult to define what life is.

It goes without saying that life is much more than having a body and trying to satisfy all its fleeting desires, controlling it very little and ineffectively, and most of the time ending up as its slave.

Nor is it about just attaining a prominent position in society, because prestige and praise are illusory shadows handed out like prizes by people who are themselves immersed in the illusion; what exists today will disappear tomorrow for no apparent reason; those who today sing the praises of certain types of behavior will deplore it tomorrow with the same passion...

Life cannot be just about power and wealth, because these suffer the same fate as praise and condemnation: they alternate like a light show, in which it is almost impossible to recognize anything valid and stable.

The same can be said of the person who pins his hopes on human affections, especially if he or she doesn't know how to maintain and develop them with time. To raise a family, to perpetuate a name or a tradition, all this is valuable, but...does it fulfill one's life completely? Do we not sometimes feel a deep and hidden longing that asks for "something more", so that all those other things can take on a new, more valid and justified meaning?

To live is an act of responsibility, to oneself and to others.

To live is an act of generosity towards oneself and towards others.

There are some who shut themselves away in their studies, searching there for the meaning of existence; to know is a way of standing out like any other. Then there are others who find it difficult to fill the long hours of boredom and look for distractions that are forms of escape; anything goes, as long as it helps us escape from the emptiness of the inner self, which stands silent before us.

For a philosopher, to live must be much more than any of the above. To live is a school, the most complete and difficult of all schools. Body, feelings and thoughts are the tools that help us overcome the tests of this special and critical stage of learning. Time is the great teacher and the inner self is the pupil who gathers experiences throughout his or her existence.

From this point of view, external circumstances have only a relative value, the value needed to provide us with situations appropriate to our development, but circumstances are not essential or definitive, and it is not they that make us what we are. When we start seeing circumstances in this way, they cease to become obsessions and can be managed and changed with much more skill. Only then does the human being begin to become the master of his own destiny.

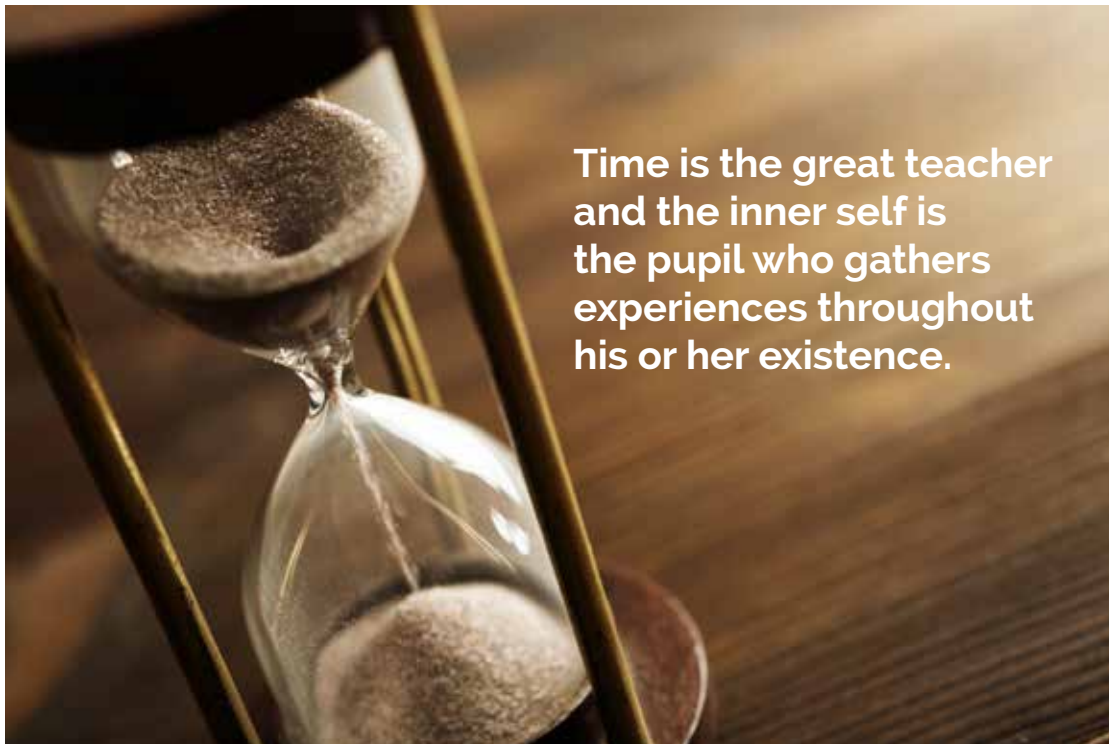
To live is an act of responsibility, to oneself and to others. A philosopher cannot live in an unthinking way;

his or her actions must have a purpose and a logic that can transcend the simple survival of the body. In the school of life everything has a reason why and therefore a how and a "wherefore".

To live is an act of generosity towards oneself and towards others. It is about helping ourselves by learning; it is about sharing every achievement, everything we learn, giving value to existence as a constant gift to the world in which we find ourselves and above all towards the humanity of which we form part.

To live is...to be alive. This is not a secret, it is not a play on words. To be alive is to feel oneself a part of the living universe, of its energies, to use them and to resonate with them. In this way, the philosopher can make life an eternal act, towards a goal of perfection, which is also eternity. ★★★

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



THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR

BY KURUSH DORDI



"Chivalry is itself the poetry of life."

- Schlegel, Philosophy of History.

Amidst the vibrant mythological tradition of Japan emerges an interesting story of creation that speaks of deities Izanami and Isanagi, who were instructed by the primordial gods to dip a spear into the celestial ocean. As they withdrew the spear, the drops that trickled off its blade, are said to have created the islands of Japan. Was this perhaps the beginning of what would later influence the famed warrior spirit of the Samurai in Japan?

It is necessary to first dispel the notion that the Samurai were simply brutal mercenaries, expert killing machines, patronized by power hungry feudal clans. Although such examples are abundantly documented through history, perhaps these were the declining remnants of a much deeper, spiritual way of life.

The existence of such a warrior class is not unique to Japan, and can be compared to Knights of ancient Europe or the Kshatriyas, the warriors of ancient India. While today we tend to look at warriors as mere fighting men, many ancient cultures considered the

warrior spirit as inspiration for a spiritual state of consciousness. And so we find reference to glorious warriors throughout the ancient world; warriors who did their utmost to shield themselves from invasion of the disrupting forces of the ego, engaged in a constant inner battle. In Japan, a formal code of conduct emerged, and prescribed the principles to which each samurai must adhere, giving way to what we know of today as the *Bu-shi-do*, or the 'Way of the Warrior'.

The *Bu-shi-do* code served as a book of instructions guiding the behavior in practice on and off the battlefield. Because it was a practical manual it offered the opportunity, to act coherently throughout one's life, aligning actions to universal ideals, or virtues, thus ensuring that every action was decisive and meaningful. Zen elements like introspection of one's own nature, also find resonance. Hence it meant living life on a foundation of principles and morality.

It is said that the essence of the Samurai way lay in the development of excellence in two aspects: *Bun* and *Bu*, or Culture and Martial, respectively. A Samurai was expected to develop a balance between both these ideals, resulting in efficient and disciplined warriors, who were also skilled in the arts.

calligraphy, and poetry. The most accomplished Samurai are known to have been able to compose exquisite verse, whilst engaged in the very act of killing on a battlefield, demonstrating their inner non-violent composure and courtesy. An unknown eighteenth century scholar compared *Bun* and *Bu* to the wings of a bird:

"Culture and arms are like the two wings of a bird. Just as it is impossible to fly with one wing missing, if you have culture but no arms, people will slight you without fear, while if you have arms but no culture, people will be alienated by fear. Therefore, when you learn to practice both culture and arms, you demonstrate both intimidation and generosity, so people are friendly but also intimidated, and they will be obedient." (Arts of the Samurai, 2009.)

The most accomplished Samurai are known to have been able to compose exquisite verse, whilst engaged in the very act of killing on a battlefield, demonstrating their inner non-violent composure and courtesy.

Another anonymous source states, "Fighting isn't all there is to the Art of War. The men who think that way, and are satisfied to have food to eat and a place to sleep, are mere vagabonds. A serious student is much more concerned with training his mind and disciplining his spirit than with developing martial skills."

The *Bu-shi-do* tradition speaks of seven, or sometimes eight, virtues namely Justice, Courage, Generosity, Truthfulness, Courtesy, Mercy, Loyalty. These virtues are said to be the inherent, but usually latent, qualities of a human being, of the spirit, and therefore when these qualities are manifested, it is said that it gives expression to the natural aspect of who we truly are – a spiritual being, enveloped by



a tangible body, an energetic body, an emotional body, as well as a mental body.

However like all tools, these virtues are meant to be used and therefore the primary responsibility of the samurai was to practice, defend and uphold these values at all times. Each virtue was intertwined with another, like links of a chain that complete the circle of the *Bu-shi-do* code. For instance the Samurai found it worthless to act with courage, if not in the pursuit of justice. Likewise, it was impossible to express generosity in the absence of mercy. For the Samurai, every act had to be an honourable act, and every battle was therefore, an honorable battle – both externally, and internally.

But what is this battle? Who is fighting whom? In resonance with the external battles between the medieval warlords, perhaps the battle that concerns us, is the battle we are fighting in our day-to-day life. Every day we are faced with choices that cause an inner conflict between our lower ego and our higher virtues. This opposition is beautifully expressed in mythologies worldwide: the battle fought by Arjun overcoming the Kauravas in the battle of the Kurukshetra, the slaying of the dragon by St. George, or Theseus killing the Minotaur. Each of these mythologies signifies the glorious hero overcoming the dangerous hidden monsters of the personality in the deep dark abyss of the self. It is in that dark place that vices such as anger, greed, jealousy, fear, weakness, insecurity, like the infinite Kauravas, lie in hiding. And the task of the hero is not just to fight, but to slay each dragon, lest from the dead it should arise again. The Hero, however, needs the right weapons to fight these monsters, which are the virtues which enable him to emerge victorious. When we emulate this victory in our own life, we tame our personality, and express our true identity.

The Samurai can best be described as "Philosophers in Action" for whom life was a process through which to discover the true Self, awaken that Self, and transform into that Self. Eternal and perfect, this Self temporarily takes on material form, in order to engage in this battle, to eventually emerge victorious, and free of the lower calls of the transient personality. Actions in the material realm then, are manifestations of an inner state of being, and therefore every action must be treated ceremoniously, requiring attention, discipline, and alignment; for the Samurai, even in the face of death.

When Plato exclaimed, "Man you are God, but you've forgotten," perhaps he insists that the very purpose of human life is to remember – to recognize these inner qualities, and express them here, and now. Krishna teaches in the Bhagawad Gita, "the real Kurukshetra is here in our own lifetime". Yes, the way of the warrior is difficult. It needs patience, perseverance, and courage. But it is only by beginning the journey that one arrives at the destination.

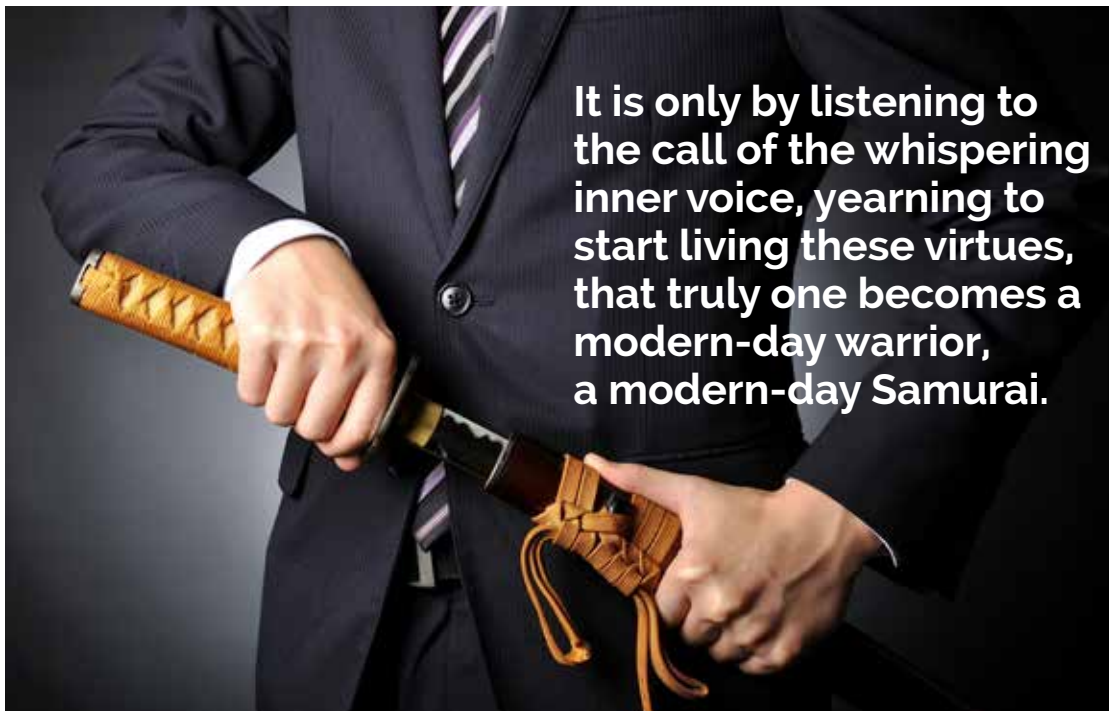
Usually, we choose the easy over the difficult, the comfortable over the adventurous; we choose survival over truly living. But in order to live we need these values to help us realise our true self and move out of the darkness of ignorance, into the light, into a happier, more fulfilled, life. These values are in a sense the divine GPS system which allow us to attain our highest goal. It is only by listening to the call of the whispering inner voice, yearning to start living these virtues, that truly one becomes a modern-day warrior, a modern-day Samurai. ★★★

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It is only by listening to the call of the whispering inner voice, yearning to start living these virtues, that truly one becomes a modern-day warrior, a modern-day Samurai.

CAN THE END REALLY JUSTIFY THE MEANS?

BY YARON BARZILAY



Often when we come across this phrase, it is meant to emphasise the importance of bottom line results, disregarding the means used to achieve them, as if the path of our actions isn't important at all; only the outcome is. Sometimes it is used in order to justify an unethical act with regards to a right cause, or even a noble ideal.

Practically, one may say that a small evil is acceptable, in order to prevent a greater one, or to bring some good. But what starts with good intention may easily grow into an undesirable reality; planting the seed of a certain tree can't result in a different type of tree, no matter how much we wish for it.

This might not seem right to those who are driven by selfish goals, consider materialistic results alone, and are attached to the most superficial realm of life. But it definitely should be a concern for those truly aspiring for the Just, Beneficial and Good of others. Can the end ever justify the means? Can any good come from bad deeds? Can the banner of a good cause ever be raised by unethical behaviour?

To act ethically doesn't imply that one must be naive and impractical, or that one expects perfect actions that may only exist in the realm of the ideal, rather

than in the material world. On the contrary, to bring a dream to life is a necessity for the true idealist, and to be impractical will be unbearable for him. Without this, his dream is nothing but wishful thinking, mere fantasy, with no real intention of fulfilment.

To act ethically doesn't imply that one must be naive and impractical, (...) to bring a dream to life is a necessity for the true idealist, and to be impractical will be unbearable for him. Without this, his dream is nothing but wishful thinking, mere fantasy, with no real intention of fulfilment.

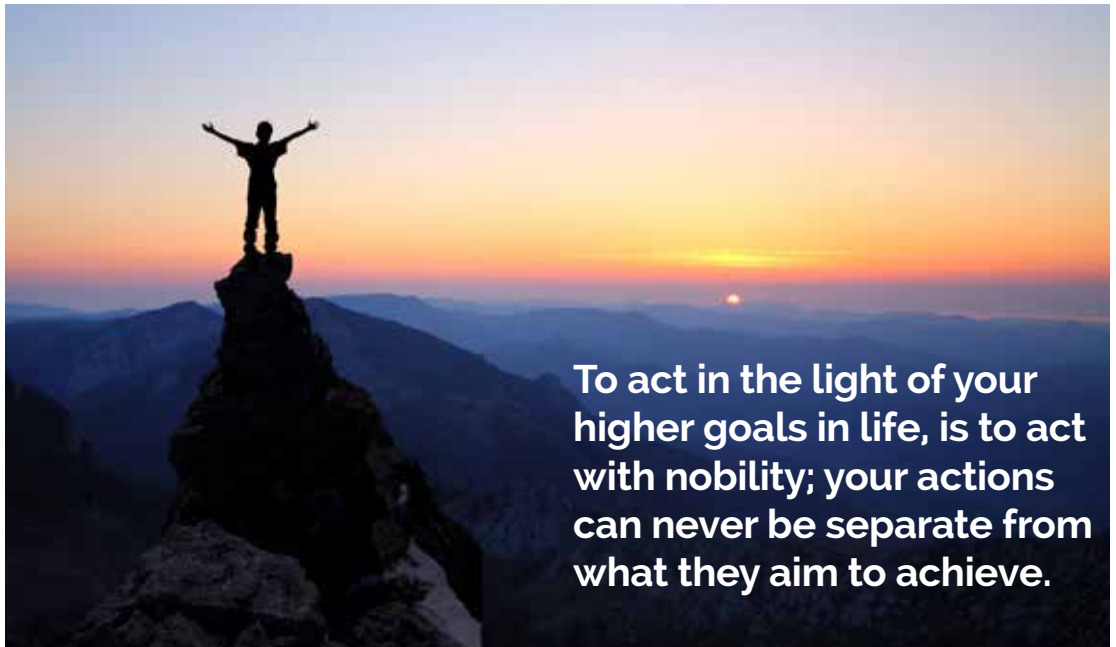
It may be this very need to "live the dream" that may reveal the mistake and the lie in justifying the means in the name of a noble goal. Doing so is exactly what will "kill the dream". No, the end never justifies the means, but rather it illuminates the means with its own light. To act in the light of your higher goals in life, is to act with nobility; your actions can never be separate from what they aim to achieve. This is a marvellous thing because it allows for uniting the present and the future, and one illuminates the other. We cannot see the future just as an accumulated result of many moments of time; instead it is an outcome of the path we choose to take at any given moment. Not to separate from the future means that that which we wish to see in our future, illuminates our present and demands from us that we live right now the future that lies beyond the horizon; we must imagine and follow the truth, and the noble, as the only sustainable way, regardless of how long it may take.

Not to disconnect from the future also requires that we not separate from the past, because we project to the future what we've learned from the past, our best experiences help us shape our dreams and

imagination. When the past is not separated from the present, events that have happened may be re-understood, and can unveil to us new perspectives on the path of our life.

To live and act in the light of our noble goals in life is to remember who we truly are, resisting the deceiving voices that constantly attempt to cause us to believe that we are something else. Never define yourself by the shadows of your imperfections. Instead live in the light of what lies in your future, in the innermost chambers of your heart. Take a look at the stars that are high above you. Perhaps they are also present in your past and in your future; imagine they are enormous hearts, shining from within, just as your own heart may one day. You might not be there yet, but you can act and live today as the noble creator of your bright future. ★★★

Yaron Barzilay is the National Director of New Acropolis Cultural Organization (India).



To act in the light of your higher goals in life, is to act with nobility; your actions can never be separate from what they aim to achieve.

THE PRACTICE OF PHILOSOPHY

BY FERNANDO SCHWARZ



Philosophy, or love of wisdom, is not something abstract. It's about how to understand life better and therefore how to live better, individually and collectively.

We all have something deep within ourselves, but sometimes we're afraid to look for it. It's like diving within yourself to look for the inner gold. You need courage to dive into the water, because there are many fears: the fear of drowning, of strong currents, of dangerous fish, and so on.

The practice of philosophy is to go within, but also to act outside. Philosophy has to be practiced, internally and externally, in order to become real. As with any art, whether it be music, gardening, or anything else, in order to learn anything, you have to practice.

KEY PRINCIPLES | The practice of philosophy is based on certain key principles:

- The progressive development and mastery of oneself, which comes about through practice. The deeper we go, the calmer we become. Self-knowledge leads to self-confidence, because if we know who we are we become more stable, more natural and less defensive.
- A real concern for humanity. We can cultivate this concern by a number of methods: first by realizing that we are not unique, then by thinking about the challenges facing humanity. We need to see that there are others and that they are mirrors for us, even when no words are used. We can understand that other people also have fears and aggression due to a lack of self-confidence, due to the need to be loved. We are all part of a human family.
- Seeing beyond appearances. The philosopher tries to establish contact with the being of others and the being of the universe, with people, with countries; to find the identity of things and people, what makes them different, what is best about each person.

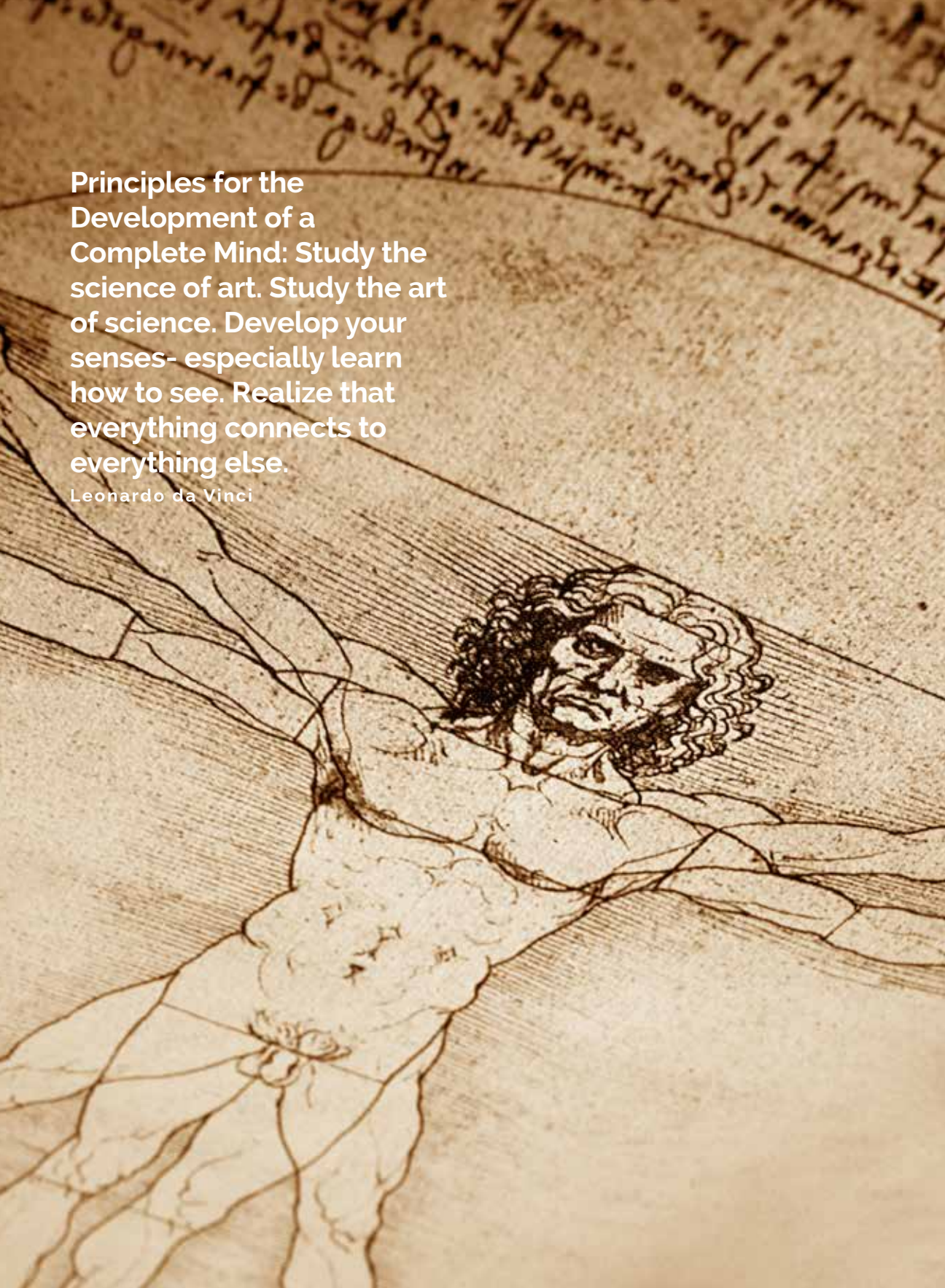
The first objective of philosophy should be to develop self-confidence, which implies accepting the conflicts of life and dealing with them. You can't give someone confidence; there is no 'confidence pill'. That pill is made by your own inner laboratory, but you have to use that laboratory.

As the founder of New Acropolis, Jorge Livraga, once said: **"The application of a teaching depends on ourselves and not on the person who is teaching us." ★★★**

Fernando Schwarz is the National Director of Nouvelle Acropole (New Acropolis, France).

Principles for the
Development of a
Complete Mind: Study the
science of art. Study the art
of science. Develop your
senses- especially learn
how to see. Realize that
everything connects to
everything else.

Leonardo da Vinci



BIOMIMICRY: HUMAN CREATION INSPIRED BY NATURE

BY FLORA BITTENCOURT DETANICO



"Those who side with any flag other than nature – the master of all masters – labour in vain." - Da Vinci

"The genius of man may make various inventions, encompassing with various instruments one and the same end; but it will never discover a more beautiful, more economical, or a more direct one than nature's, since in her inventions nothing is wanting and nothing is superfluous." - Da Vinci

1. INTRODUCTION

Nature is a source of inspiration for humanity and has always been a mirror to humankind – where the finest works of art and architecture are inspired. The ability of nature to combine beauty, economy and functionality is incomparable and it is not a coincidence that the great inventions through history have their origins in analogous natural elements. The concept of Biomimicry, widely approached by contemporary science, consists of analyzing natural systems and reproducing its principles in solutions, and become outstanding contributions to society.

The solutions offered by nature can contribute to the creative process, both in the form of an analogy, and through its geometric/mathematical patterns. It is possible to observe, for example, constant

mathematical proportions in human, animal and plant constitutions. These natural geometries are often associated with concepts of aesthetics, harmony and balance, constituting true aspects of beauty.

2. WHAT IS BIOMIMICRY?

In areas such as industrial design, architecture, engineering and others, it is possible to observe the constant use of analogies and direct application of principles of nature in the search for conceptual and innovative solutions. Biomimicry is a technologically oriented approach to apply the lessons of natural design that seek to solve the problems of human beings. Biomimetic studies are grounded in natural design solutions, decoding geometries and performance, in search of better utilization and lower energy expenditure.

After her research through a large number of investigations, Janine Benyus documented her findings in *Biomimicry - Innovation Inspired by Nature*. This new term – Biomimicry – is characterized as being broader than the concept of Bionics, known until then. In addition, in order to consider the imitation of biological form, Biomimicry also includes the concept of replicating the behaviour of biological organisms. Benyus's definition of Biomimicry is reproduced below [2]:

Nature as a model: Study models of nature and imitate them or use them as inspiration, in order to solve human problems;

Nature as a measure: Using ecological standards to judge the relevance and validity of our innovations. After billions of years of evolution, nature has learned what works, what is appropriate and what endures;

Nature as a mentor: New way to observe and evaluate nature. Do not worry about what we can extract from the natural world, but what we can learn from it.



Fig 1 - Multi-frequency Bat

According to Benyus [1], for a society that is used to dominating or 'improving' nature, imitating her in a respectful way is a radically new approach, a true revolution. Unlike the Industrial Revolution, the Biomimicry Revolution introduces an era based not on what we can extract from nature, but on what it is possible to learn from it. By doing things the way nature does them, it is possible to change the way we cultivate food, produce materials, create energy, heal illnesses, store information and conduct business. After 3.8 billion years of research and development, failures are fossilized, and what surrounds us is the secret to survival.

By looking deeply into nature, we realize that all human inventions are already present in it, albeit in more elegant formats, with a much lower cost to the planet. Even one of the most intelligent systems of construction – using columns and beams – is already featured in the internal structure of lilies and in bamboo stalks. Central heating and air conditioning are accomplished by termite towers. The best manmade sonar is difficult to hear in comparison to the transmissions of the multi-frequency bat. Even the wheel, which has always seemed to be a uniquely human creation, was found in the small rotary motor that drives the flagella of the oldest bacteria in the world [1].

Living organisms, together, maintain a dynamic stability, like dancers in an arabesque, continuously manipulating resources without wasting them. After decades of study, ecologists have begun to understand many hidden similarities between interconnected systems. From their notes we can extract some principles [1]:

- ***Nature works in the sunlight.***
- ***Nature uses only the energy it needs.***
- ***Nature fits form to function.***
- ***Nature recycles everything.***
- ***Nature thrives on cooperation.***
- ***Nature rests in diversity.***
- ***Nature requires accurate knowledge.***
- ***Nature stops waste from the beginning.***
- ***Nature touches the power of limits.***

According to the biologist John Todd (2000) [6], the Earth's ecology has a set of instructions that we urgently need to decode and employ in the conceptualization of human systems. After forty years of research in biology, ecology and design, Todd emphasizes that it is possible to design with nature. Through eco-design a more advanced civilization can exist, using only a tenth of the planet's resources that industrial society uses today.

Todd and his wife Nancy Jack-Todd (1993)[6], were the first researchers to offer a list of principles of ecological design. The original proposal had 9 precepts, which were later complemented by a tenth point, aiming to highlight the centrality of design as an expression of intentionality in all human interactions:

- ***The living world is a matrix for all design.***
 - ***Design should follow, not oppose the laws of life.***
 - ***Biological equity should determine design.***
 - ***Design should reflect the bioregion.***
 - ***Design should be based on renewable energy sources.***
 - ***Design must be sustainable in the integration of living systems.***
 - ***Design should be co-evolutionary with the natural world.***
 - ***Construction and design should help heal the planet.***
 - ***Design should follow a sacred ecology.***
- We are all designers.***

3. NATURE'S SOLUTIONS AS MODELS

According to Iseman [3], economists and engineers often use biological analogies, specifically from organisms (analogy with evolution, with fractal growth, with the brain, etc.) in order to solve socio-economic phenomena. However, without an associated conceptual framework and in the absence of philosophical enlightenment, the prospect of industrial ecology as a means to understand nature as a model probably remains speculative. It is worth questioning whether the work related to biological analogies results in something new, or if it is just a reordering based in common sense. Strengthening the basis of industrial ecology is useful for protecting the powerful idea that nature serves as a model, rather than just using it as a simple

rhetoric or a note in the literature of environmental management, as a beautiful accessory. The root cause of the total unsustainability of modern civilization lies in the dualistic separation of nature and culture. It is in nature that all people and all species are united in a community of life. However, culture is usually conceived of as something independent and separate from nature. Despite this reversal of cultural values, since the industrial revolution, reductionist science has allowed man to design a series of powerful and manipulative technologies, which are transforming the planet in a devastating way [6].

The great biomimetic innovations of mankind alert and question: What will the Biomimicry Revolution do differently than the Industrial Revolution? Who can assure that the thunder of nature will not be stolen and used in a campaign against life? This is not an infantile concern; one of the most important biomimetic inventions was



Fig 2 - Kingfisher

the airplane, inspired by the flight of birds. Men flew for the first time in 1903, but in 1914, were already dropping bombs from the sky. Maybe what is really necessary is not a technological change, but an internal change of mentality that allows for sensitivity to nature's lessons [1].



Fig 3 - Corrugated Shell, Pecten

4. EXAMPLES AND APPLICATIONS

Some examples of design, art, engineering and architecture are direct applications of solutions based on principles of nature. These principles can be expressed in mathematical patterns, geometric shapes or functional propositions that resemble, or seek inspiration in, natural references.

Leonardo da Vinci, an exponent of the field of engineering, said that despite its great genius, mankind will never find a more beautiful, economical and objective invention than nature. The observations and experiments described in his journals, among which it is possible to find the first idea of submarines, hang gliding, war tanks, bridges and dozens of mechanical pieces, are clear examples of the inspiration he derived from natural models [6].

In the field of architecture, there are two examples, both built in China, for the Olympic Games of 2008: the Water Cube and the Bird's Nest – inspired by

elements of nature, and named after them. The basic structure of the first building is based on bubbles and, although none look the same, they all follow the same general pattern (Fig 9). The second building is based on the plots and tresses of a nest, replacing the traditional straw with steel (Fig 4).

Turning to industry and mechanical engineering, one cannot overlook the invention of the airplane based on the analogy of birds, and also respects the golden ratio. Another smart creation that simultaneously solves the problem of high resistance and lightness of mechanical parts is the honeycomb, developed from the geometry of the honeycomb of beehives (Fig 7). Also within the industry, it is interesting to highlight the creation of Velcro (Fig 6), based on the structure of bur (Fig 5).

Robert Le Ricolais (1894-1977), a French architect and engineer, used the reticulated pattern of Radiolaria (Fig 10) – marine protozoa – as inspiration. Through his research, he developed structural principles that resulted in strong, light weight and durable structures. The goal was to build "infinite strength and zero weight" structures. The same researcher studied the corrugated shells – Pecten (Fig 3) – producing rigid plans and corrugated surface tubes [4].

Frei Otto, from the Lightweight Structures Institute, University of Stuttgart, organized a program with biologists, architects and engineers (also mathematicians, ecologists, philosophers and sociologists) with the objective of extracting useful ideas from biology. These can be found in the tensioned structures that he used to cover the Olympic Stadium in Munich (Fig 8), among other structures. These membranes were inspired by the horizontal webs built under water by the aquatic spider, *Argyroneta*, known to retain air for the sub aquatic development of their eggs. This concept was also used by Jacques Rougerie in the design of an underwater village to accommodate 250 divers [4].



Fig 4 - Bird's Nest Olympic Stadium, Beijing

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Fig 5 - Bur inspirates Velcro

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Fig 8 - Olympic Stadium, Munich

by /erfalcon | Flickr | CC BY 2.0



Fig 6 - Velcro

by kudumorni | Flickr | CC BY 2.0



Fig 7 - Honeycomb Geometry

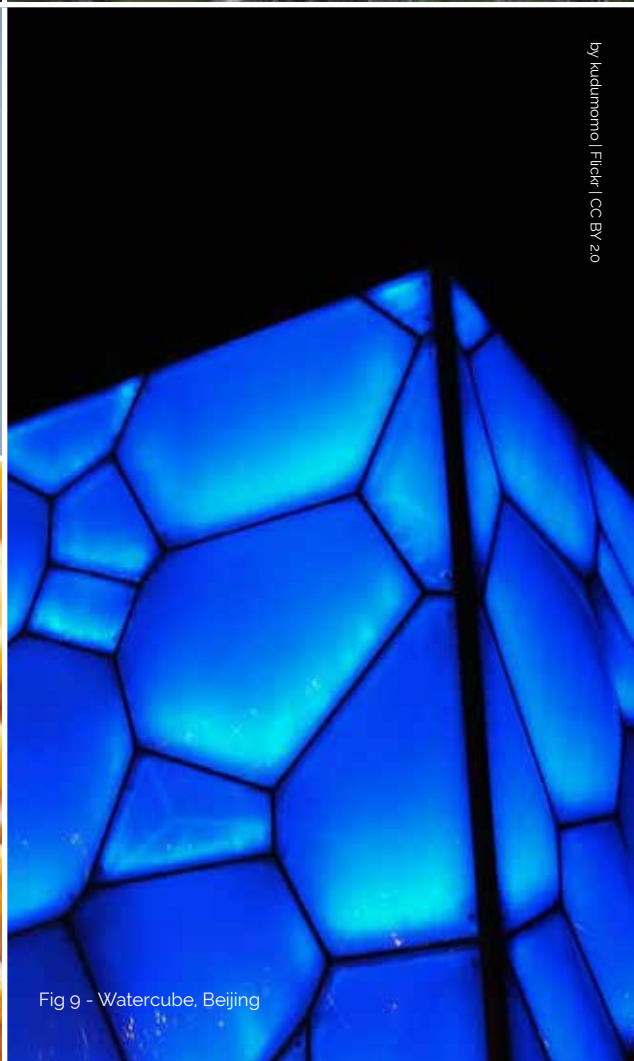


Fig 9 - Watercube, Beijing

Another interesting natural structure to be studied is that of the sea urchin. The foam-like structure that connects the thorns to the main body of the sea urchin (Fig 11) gives support to the thin outer wall, resists buckling up, and allows it to bend without breaking. In their research, Lorna Gibson and GN Karam distinguished different internal structures of the tubes, which were analyzed as cylindrical cartridges. The theory of cellular material shows that the rigidity of the cell structure is a result of the densities achieved, which can vary according to the geometry of the cell structure. The recent development of the process that allows the production of metal cylindrical tanks, having a foam or honeycomb core, demonstrates the importance and applicability of the research carried out.

The knowledge that was concealed in nature can now be extended to lightweight tubular supports, such as the ones found in the suspensions of race cars.

The examples discussed above demonstrate the existence of intelligence in nature, responsible for the constitution of every little particle. In nature, nothing seems random and everything has its place and shape needed to better serve the whole. The wisdom of nature has still much to unveil to man, but this will only be possible, as the philosophical traditions say, when humans actually feel committed to their surroundings and responsible for the proper application of the teachings. ★★★



Fig 11 - Sea Urchin

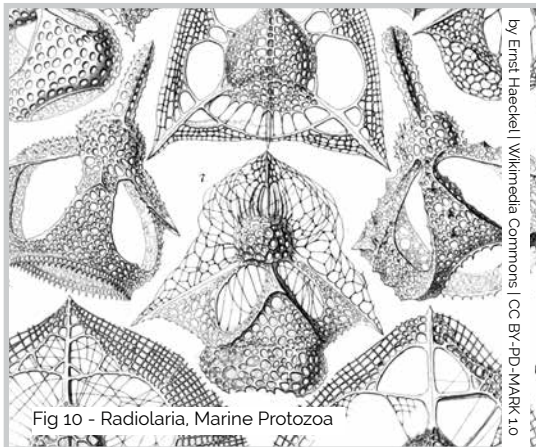


Fig 10 - Radiolaria, Marine Protozoa

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CUSTODIANS OF CULTURE

IN CONVERSATION WITH
PADMASHRI SHEKHAR SEN

BY HARIANTO H MEHTA



Shekhar Sen as Surdas

Padmashri Shekhar Sen, accomplished actor, singer, lyricist, and music director, is perhaps most celebrated for his unique mono-act theatrical renditions, through which he brings to life master poet-philosophers Tulidas, Kabir, Surdas, and Vivekananda. Last February, New Acropolis (Mumbai) had the privilege to host an evening performance of a medley of Shekhar ji's moving works. Ever since, I have been longing for an opportunity to unravel the man behind the masks. Seated on the cozy sofa of his Versova home, over a hot cup of masala tea, the opportunity presented itself. Delightedly looking back at his visit to the Centre he shares, "Any place I go that I sense is truly spiritual is very special for me. In a place like New Acropolis, where so much good is fostered, I just hoped to absorb some profound inspiration, like baby Krishna steals away butter!" Our conversation naturally arrived at unraveling the true role of an artist in society, and Shekhar ji playfully wove poetry and rhyme into his evocative explanations.

"An artist is first a seeker", explains Shekhar ji. "We've been told that the sun rises in the east. But don't just accept it. Go out. Look to the east. And see if the sun actually rises from there. Realize it from your own

experience. This realization is essential. Without it, we can easily fall into the realm of belief...in our tradition, we've been taught to know, not to believe." This is the reason, he claims, that Sanskrit has over 200 words to refer to the sun; every observer was encouraged to investigate and recognize its attributes for himself, each resulting in a different name. He continues, "Everything is a question. Start with 'I' and go to eternity. When you seek, never get satisfied by an answer. Keep asking. Because tomorrow you will find a new facet of the answer." Melodiously he muses,

Yeh ishq nahi asaan itna samaj lijye

Ek aag ka darya hai aur doob ke jaana hai

Understand that love is not easy,

It is an ocean of fire, traversed only by drowning into it.

Equating Love with Investigation, he suggests the importance of drowning oneself in wonder and exploration, and insists that it is essential to engage with life. "Our relationships and daily activity is part of Life." Through them, one arrives at answers; not by running away. He borrows from Vivekananda, saying that "the tapasya of the householder is the most difficult because he must tend to the welfare of his family...and his obligation to society, all the

while moving towards his essential goal... But that is the fun! The ups and downs of life add flavor; sweet and sour, spicy and bitter. From each, answers must be sought. And only by engaging, will you find meaning." He recites an example:

*Jal mein kumbh hai, kumbh mein jal hai,
Bahar bhitar paani.*

Water inside a pot, and water outside,
Water both inside and out.

Kabir demonstrates that our physical body is like a pot. And both on the inside and outside, analogous to water, is the divine. "Until this pot exists, we must celebrate both these expressions of the divine. Try to understand both inside and out."

Investigation allows you to "understand the essence. One cannot arrive at conclusions without going through a proper process of investigation. Usually we don't want to put in the effort of the process; we just want the fruits. But one cannot extract butter, without first procuring milk. This wisdom is butter. It has been handed down to us. But do we read it? Understand it? Instead we look for an expert who can summarize it for us within a half hour. We want everything as per our convenience. The thousands of hours of effort gone into compiling these gems, causes us boredom in a matter of minutes."

He recollects a verse from the Upanishads:

*Asato ma sadgamaya
Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya
Mrtyorma amrtam gamaya*

*Lead me from the asat to the sat,
Lead me from darkness to light,
Lead me from death to immortality.*

This is not a Hindu hymn. Upon investigation one realizes that "there is no mention of any religious icon in this verse. It is simply a prayer seeking guidance, to emerge victorious, and bring light to darkness, the darkness of ignorance and avidhya. However small a flame of light, it causes the

darkness to disappear. It's magical. Even just a small realization in life, causes you to see that the darkness we've been fighting, the darkness that instills fear, does not actually exist. It's just that we never bothered to light the inner flame. This is the work of different people, in different ways." This is poetically demonstrated by Kabir:

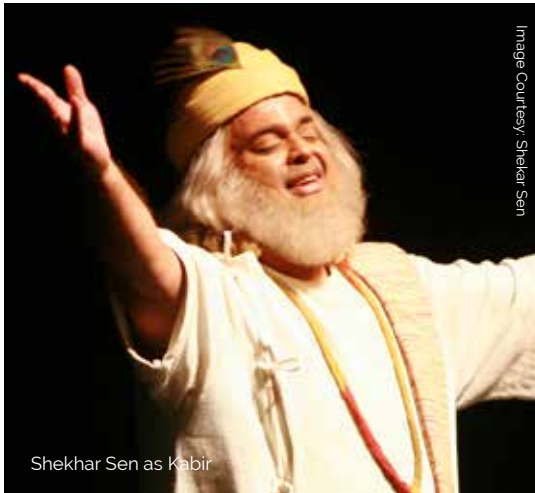
*Boond samaye samudhra mein; ye jaane subh koi
Par samudhra samaye boond mein; bhooj birla koi
A drop dissolves into the ocean; This is understood by all.
An ocean lies within the drop; This is recognized by just a few.*

"We all know that the atma is part of the great divine. But very few discern that within that same atma the entire divine silently resides. If within the atma, I am able to recognize the divine, then how can I ever be violent towards another being? Violence is only possible by he who has not yet realized the presence of the divine in every atma, because he has not yet recognized it in himself. It's like you are gold, but you are not yet aware of your value. So it's ok to be ignorant. But your worth doesn't reduce due to the ignorance. This is Kabir; only a bright person will really understand his similes."

This then, for Shekar ji, is the inspiration for his own role as an artist. Early in his career he rejected mainstream commercial genres that may have provided financial security, "because for me music was always *nada-brahma*, meaning 'divine sound'. Music is a form of *bhaktimarg*, a path of devotion, of surrendering. That's why music accompanies every milestone of life. A boy is born, we sing. His head is shaved, we sing. To mark his thread ceremony, we sing. At his engagement, we sing. For his wedding, we sing. He dies, again we sing. Music is part of our life. It's almost like breathing. If anything is part of our life, how can it be so meaningless? It must have some meaning, purpose."

Nostalgic about his early interactions with the renowned Pandit Narendra Sharma, one of the finest poets of our times, he recalls that Pandit ji

explains to him that an artist is not just a representative, but a custodian, of culture. He is entrusted with a tremendous amount of wealth which he must guard from adulteration. But he is not its owner. And therefore must always be alert, and like a doctor diagnose and



Shekhar Sen as Kabir

administer the artistic medication needed at every point of time. "If I see that language is not well spoken, then I [the artist] will speak well and inspire you to speak well. If you don't listen to good songs, well then I will sing good songs. It is easy to blame and curse our world today...don't do this. That is not your job. God did not make you a critic. He made you an artist. Behave like an artist." Kabir says:

*Saanche koi na ptiyayi; jhoote jag patipaaye
Gali gali go raas phire; madira baith bikaye
Nobody believes the truth, the false gets hold of all.
The milkman treks door-to-door, while seated is liquor sought.*

"The vulgar is always attractive. This caused me to contemplate how to really leave a positive lasting imprint on my audience. How do I demonstrate, that if we eat up all the seeds, the next generation will have no harvest. Instead, how do I inspire others to plant seeds? I was looking for a way to inspire people not to cut away so many trees, that our grandchildren don't get chairs to sit on; not to remove so much oil from the ground that in a mere hundred years humanity if forced once again to

use bullock carts. Whether it be art, literature, or education – but as an artist it is my duty to remind you that this life that you call your life, is not yours! It belongs to all. There is no chant in our tradition that seeks individual happiness. The mantras echo a universal prayer: 'May all be at peace.' Because only in the peace of all life, of plants, of animals, of the celestials, can I truly be at peace. I can never just think about myself."

Recalling an International Ramayan Congress, held in the US, to which he had once been invited as a singer delegate, Shekhar ji expresses his astonishment at meeting a Chinese professor, the head of the Hindi Department of Beijing University, who had just completed his translation work of the *Ramcharitmanas*, into Chinese, maintaining the original rhyme. Perhaps in those few days, Shekhar ji came to appreciate the heritage that he later took on as his responsibility to share. "During those seven days, in my heart, the entire play [his first, Tulsidas] was prepared. I could visualize the scenes and read the dialogues as if it was already written somewhere. And it came out bursting. And I became restless. Like a pregnant mother in labor, for whom it is impossible to delay child-birth. When the imagination takes grip internally, you become restless, until it finds expression. It is as if your breath will leave you if you don't write it down." He shows me his immaculately handwritten manuscript, and



Shekhar Sen as Swami Vivekananda

expresses that he "cannot take credit for it, because I have not penned it in the way an author writes. It's not my creation. If I had created it, and thought and planned each sentence myself, than I can take credit for it. But this happened to me. I recognized the responsibility given to me."

In a sense then, the role of an artist, compares to the true role of a sanyasi, which in the classical tradition was more than just a saffron clad nomad. Shekhar ji explains that nyas literally translates to 'trustee', and therefore a sanyasi is a trustee of the culture or community, to whom he dedicates his body, knowledge, and actions. Hence it describes a state of mind, wherein the needs of the society are given the highest priority.

He says, "Culture is that which makes a man a Human Being and teaches him how to live his life meaningfully." Unlike any other animal, a man is unable to do anything independently when he is born. He must wait several months before he takes his first steps, and several years before he is able to feed himself. "It is necessary to 'culture' him, to nurture him". Through culture, a man is taught to recognize aesthetics – beauty – the gurgling river in the countryside or the colorful canvas of a sky at sunrise; the recognition of Beauty inspires man to emulate that Beauty, and therefore touch the divine. He continues to define divinity as anything that "lends a hand and shows you the right path." And I ponder, that in a sense then, every member of the community too has a divine purpose, is a bridge, in service of others.

He explains that an artist can never allow himself to get stuck. "I feel like an artist must continue flowing like a stream until his voyage is not complete, until he finds the ocean." Along the way, "God always gives you signals. If you are able to read them, you'll say that he exists...but there are a lot of people who don't share this conviction, and seem exceedingly happy. But dear – I, even in recognizing my suffering, am rejoicing!" In deep gratitude, he concludes, "I am a truly blessed soul, since I'm able to live their

[medieval poets] moments for those two hours that I'm on stage. I get strength from these characters." As a result he is able to extract new realizations from their legacy every day. "And so any spiritual journey means that I have to go on, and find new horizons and new skies." ★★★



Shekhar Sen performs at
New Acropolis (Mumbai), Feb 2014

Note: Hindi/Sanskrit verses transcribed and translated by author of this article.



INNER FREEDOM

BY GUNER ORUCU

Freedom is a concept that has always preoccupied mankind. We all want to be free; but free from what? Do we really know what kind of freedom we are looking for or how we can reach that freedom?

We are going to use philosophy to investigate and to understand freedom with an emphasis on inner freedom, which is more important and valuable than the physical freedom that is popular today. Inner freedom is the freedom of our mind, emotions, and actions. What are those forces, which prevent us from finding inner freedom? What are the factors which prevent our free thinking, free feeling and free action?

We need to know about the nature of human beings to be able to deal with the problem of freedom. Philosophy has been seen as a way to know oneself in Ancient Greece and Rome. Knowing oneself allows us to know how we think and feel, to recognize the obstacles to inner freedom. Discovering our human nature will help us discover the kind of freedom we deserve to have.

Freedom is a state of mind and heart, not dependent on any circumstances or person, yet not isolation

or immobility either. The concept of "dependency" plays an important role in understanding freedom. To be independent does not mean to be isolated from people or actions, which can lead to change things but rather not to be dependent on conditions and other people in our thinking, feeling and actions. In relation to dependency, any attachment to a condition, an object, status, career, or a person means the loss of our freedom, as the attached condition will determine our thinking and feeling.

Human beings are in a constant battle of various internal forces and freedom is the action stemming from our intelligence and free will among these many forces. Freedom means not to be controlled and driven by these forces but by our intelligence and free will. What are these other forces; hatred, anger, envy, prejudices, mental and emotional habits, automatism are some of them.

If we take anger as an example; when anger is present in our mind, it tries to control our thinking and actions and if it does, then it begins to drive us in the direction it wants to go. It tries to unload its destructive energy on something or someone. We, as a being of intelligence and free will, have to stand against our anger, not to be controlled by it

but to control and root it out. How can we achieve this? First of all, by becoming aware of our anger, accepting the existence of this destructive emotion within us. And then we need to know more about it; how it prevails upon us, what are the conditions that help it to grow and bring it to power, why it never helps to resolve problems, why we regret at the end when our actions were driven by anger. As we know more about our inner enemies, we shall be more advantageous before them so we can develop better strategies to battle them. Martial arts aim to develop these strategies to defeat our inner enemies.

Another example is our mental habits. We tend to think in patterns, which is easier than thinking in a creative and free way. These mental patterns might be developed by different factors such as society, religion, fashions, family, education, media, etc. If we begin to think in the way a religion, or an advertisement, or a society or a fashion taught us, we lose our free thinking ability because we don't think but follow a mental pattern, which has a determined destination for us. Thinking always reaches the same result at the end of a mental pattern. We cannot be creative and innovative under the pressure of a mental pattern. We cannot see different aspects and depth of a problem when we follow a mental pattern.



Superstitions are extreme cases of mental patterns, where a mental pattern becomes so strong and deep in the mind. It is too difficult to get rid of the pressure of a superstition. When we look at the history of humanity, we find some periods of suffering in which a society is driven by some superstitions such as during the Middle Ages of Europe. Superstitions also trigger off different types of fears that rob us of our freedom.

We, as a being of intelligence and free will, have to stand against our anger, not to be controlled by it but to control and root it out.

What about prejudices? Societies or individuals turn a previous experience into a mental pattern and begin to follow it in similar circumstances. A prejudice prevents us seeing things as they are because we see them through the lens of a mental pattern engraved in our mind. For example, a painful experience with a friend in the past might turn into a prejudice that makes us think that people are not trustworthy as friends. This prejudice prevents us from establishing new relations freely. It is a loss of freedom in the way of making new friends. Being cautious is different from following a prejudice blindly.

You can see some tendencies in the society to think in a particular way on some subjects. We are not talking about Common Sense, which is related with wisdom of the society. For example, we might think that happiness comes with having a car, a career, or a holiday, as it is associated with these things. We think with concepts, which are defined by media, religion, friends, society or education unless we bother to investigate and learn more deeply

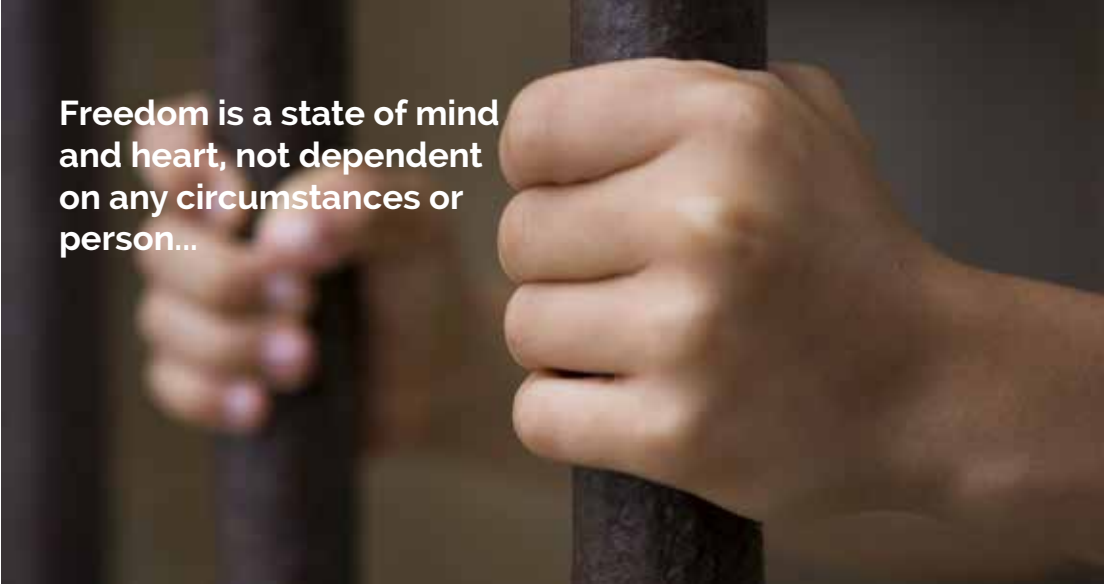
ourselves. In this case, when we use a concept to think, we think with the meaning given by a religion, media, the age, culture etc. For example, freedom is generally understood as physical freedom today. The freedom to buy what you want, the freedom to go wherever you want, the freedom to do whatever you want. Another example is the term philosophy, which has lost its classical meaning today. Philosophy simply means love of wisdom but we tend to think of "philosophy" as a boring and useless thing, an intellectual occupation far away from practical life. We despise our friends by saying, "do not philosophize" when they talk outside of mainstream society or outside of the usual conventions. We don't feel any need to spend time on philosophy as we see it aloof and alien to life.

The loss of freedom ends in suffering. Even when you look at the world of animals, you can clearly see how painful it is for them to live in a cage or a confined space. Birds have become the symbol of freedom in many ancient traditions; especially confining a bird into a cage, taking away its freedom to fly does not make sense when we are that sensitive about our own freedom. We know the pain when freedom is lost, so why do we want to inflict the same pain on animals?

The discovery of ourself is a long but necessary journey that we all have to make and philosophy has been the best company of mankind in this long and arduous journey.

The discovery of ourself is a long but necessary journey that we all have to make and philosophy has been the best company of mankind in this long and arduous journey. This is also a journey to our inner freedom, which cannot be taken away by any outer factor or condition but comes with the self-knowledge.

Let's remember the famous motto from Greek philosophers; "Know thyself", and make it a guide in our lives to find out the freedom that we long for. ★★★



Freedom is a state of mind and heart, not dependent on any circumstances or person...

BOOK REVIEW

BY MANJULA NANAVATI

THEBES

BY PROF. JORGE (GIORGIO)
ANGEL LIVRAGA RIZZI

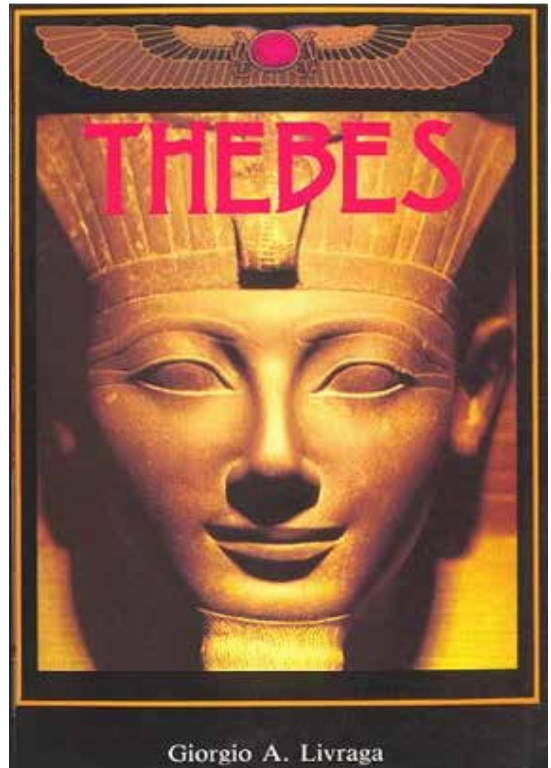
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Perhaps no other civilization captures the imagination of intellectuals and dilettantes alike, as does Ancient Egypt. Arguably one of the earliest, longest lasting and most influential civilizations of history, it is recognized for its stupendous artistic, scientific, social, and spiritual achievements. In this slim volume Livraga gives us a penetrating and reflective insight into Ancient Egypt, its highly developed culture, its enigmatic symbols and its sacred philosophy.

Known in antiquity as Kem, or the enigmatic realm, it was a land shrouded in mysticism, and Thebes was its flourishing capital. The city lay proudly astride the Nile, which flowing south to north, formed a distinctly visible vertical axis, while the sun's arc across its sky from east to west marked an impalpable horizontal one. Along its eastern riverbank, under the rising sun grew a bustling city, culturally wealthy and spiritually rich, the Land of the Living.

And along the Nile's western bank bathed in the rays of the setting sun, as reminder of the transience of the manifest life, lay a majestic necropolis, The Valley of the Kings, resplendent with its magnificent pyramids, funerary temples and the spectacular stone sculptures of the Colossi of Memnon. It is said that pilgrims journeyed from near and



far to hear the seven primordial notes that they once emitted at dawn.

Yet these two cities stood side by side, resting in perfectly balanced equilibrium, complementing each other. One was small and personal, built of ephemeral mud and sand, a reminder of the limits of human existence, and the other lofty and resplendent in solid granite, embodying eternity, the universality of all things, and the certainty of an 'other world' far greater than human comprehension. The architects of Thebes seem to have planned the city itself to tangibly remind its people that this life was but a preparation for a more glorious one to come. Even the annual flooding of the Nile that periodically destroyed the mud houses along the eastern riverbank was

celebrated, and new homes were built during a festival that commemorated the renewal of life.

Death, therefore was viewed as a natural continuation of the journey of life, and their grief could be translated into what today we might feel at the permanent departure of a loved one who sets out on a long and arduous journey. Their lives were centered around esoteric teachings recognizing the visible and invisible realm of existence, the inner constitution of man and the universe as reflected by their temple architecture and burial rituals, and the persistent effort to ensure that life moved ever forward and upward.

Regretfully much of the knowledge of the mysteries of Egypt is lost to us. Yet what has survived in the form of books, maps, pictures, and symbols painted on the ceremonial sarcophagi, pictorial stories on the walls of the burial chambers and artistic and enigmatic artifacts buried within the tombs, all tell of a rich and exultant culture with a spiritual philosophy emphasizing truth and justice, cultivating within every citizen the capacity to perceive his true Self and elevating the consciousness to recognize the invisible reality of Life.

To the extent that this was the whole purpose of existence in Thebes, the city was not a physical place alone, but rather symbolic of a 'state of consciousness', where every element of life, inspired the search for the highest aspect of oneself. Livraga reports that it was often said of this wondrous citadel, "Blessed is he who lives, blessed is he who dies in Thebes."

This then is the *raison d'être* of the book: throughout the history of the world, trail-blazing cultures have evolved that have been able to tangibly evoke a refined sense of morality, ethics and sacredness as part of the everyday lives of its citizens. Society itself fostered the awakening of the invisible core that exists within every one of us, which inexorably pushes us to the limits of our own potential. The citadel of Thebes exists within us all and the question

we must grapple with is: how can we cultivate our own intrinsic spirit to swell and bloom from seed to bud to flower, without the nourishing philosophical infrastructure of Ancient Egypt?

Thebes, the city was not a physical place alone, but rather symbolic of a 'state of consciousness', where every element of life, inspired the search for the highest aspect of oneself.

Jorge Angel Livraga successfully gives us the tools to help us unravel some part of the conundrum of spiritual wealth that was Ancient Egypt, but leaves it to us to interpret, analyze, and assimilate his illuminating work for ourselves. Perhaps, he hopes that in the process of doing so, we might reactivate the spark of soaring potential that lies dormant within us.

He lays out a synopsis of Egyptian history and makes a convincing argument that the widely accepted scientific and archeological research is simply ill equipped to fully explain the astounding advances that Egypt nurtured, in what is comparatively a remarkably short period of time. His book is an impassioned plea to his readers to be both scientists and philosophers in their quest to understand the mysteries of Egypt, to weigh, consider, reflect and only then "Let each one choose what his culture, his imagination and his intuition dictate." ★★★

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. Livraga leaves behind a legacy of a youthful and philosophical spirit.

SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC EVENTS



HERCULES: A GLORIOUS HERO

Lecture

Saturday, 11th April 2015

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

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More than any other hero, Greek mythology celebrates the glorious feats of the mighty Hercules. Half-god half-man, Hercules is especially famed for the completion of 12 tasks, through which he fulfills the purpose of his life. Join us for an evening of storytelling, through which we investigate ways that this hero may still be relevant to our lives today.



PHILOSOPHY OF ECOLOGY

Seminar

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10:00am (5hrs), FREE ADMISSION

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TICKING THE TOCK: MANAGE TIME

Lecture

Saturday, 25th April 2015

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

@ New Acropolis Mumbai

We live life at a grueling pace, and yet we seem always to be running out of time, unable to complete the tasks we plan. And then, suddenly a few hours of available time, simply pass away in unproductive inertia. But what if managing time was a skill that can be developed? Would you not like to be a master of your twenty-four hours, rather than engage in a futile race?



CULTIVATING CONCENTRATION

Lecture

Saturday, 16th May 2015

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

@ New Acropolis Mumbai

Plagued by perpetual confusion due to the unending triggers of the material realm, we are unable to focus on identifying the eternal truth of the Self. As a result, rarely are we able to discover the true meaning of life. This responsibility can only be accomplished by the elimination of constant mental confusion, by cultivating the delicate Art of Concentration.

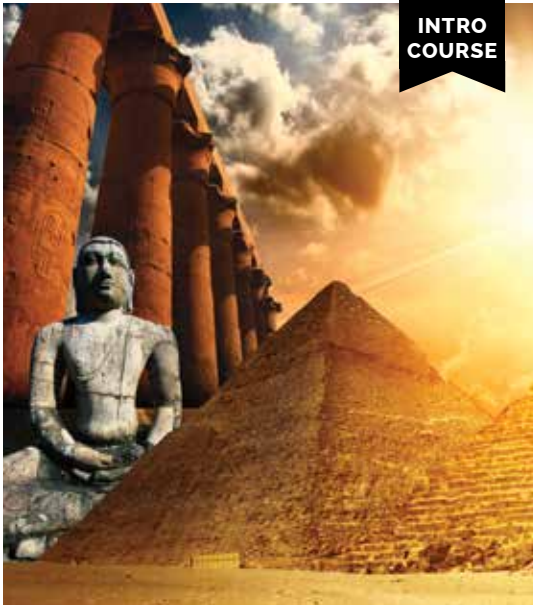
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MYSTICAL 7

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6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

@ New Acropolis Mumbai

The number 7 seems to reappear time and time again, in a variety of contexts, across countless cultures. 7 days of the week. 7 notes of music. 7 colors of the rainbow. What is the alluring mystique of this number? Can we use some of its magic in our own lives?

SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC EVENTS



By Gerard Mercator / Wikimedia Commons / CC-PD-Mark

KARMA, DESTINY, AND FREE WILL

Lecture

Saturday, 13th June 2015

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

@ New Acropolis Mumbai

"Life is like a game of cards. The hand you are dealt is determinism; the way you play it is free will." - Nehru
 Is Man ultimately bound by Destiny? Or is he entirely free? This question has preoccupied human beings since ancient times, but is arguably one of the most misunderstood philosophical subject. Join us as we investigate these laws of life, and extract their relevance to daily life.



THE WARRIOR ETHOS

Lecture

Saturday, 27th June 2015

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

@ New Acropolis Mumbai

The warrior cultures that have emerged through history were more than just clans of bloodthirsty savages. Instead, they were governed by strict codes of honor. Whereas the origins are said to lie in fundamental human principles such as fraternity, courage, and discipline, the external warrior might just have been a reflection of an inner state of consciousness, ever-aspiring for harmony and the expression of virtues, traits of the true identity of human beings. Perhaps the ethos that inspired the Spartans, the Samurai, and the Vikings, are relevant and applicable in our lives as well, as we fight the everyday battles that life brings us.

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LIVING PHILOSOPHY

Discover. Awaken. Transform.

Introduction to Philosophy
in the Classical Manner

Course Syllabus, 16 Sessions (32 Hrs)

KNOW THYSELF

Living Philosophy - Need for Inner Change
Investigate the Ancient Indian understanding of Man
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
Svadharma and Karma Yoga
Themes from The Bhagavad 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

Making your Actions meaningful and sacred
Justice, Ancient Egypt
Harmony, Confucius
Path of Happiness, Aristotle

THE ARTIST, THE LOVER, THE PHILOSOPHER – WHO ARE YOU?

Macro-bios: The Living Universe
True Freedom, Stoic Principles
3 Paths to expressing Unity, Plotinus
Neo-Platonism

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIO-POLITICS

The role and importance of Society
The Maieutic Approach, Socrates
Education and Justice in Society, Plato
The Metaphysical Disaster

THE ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE

The last School of Mystery, Pythagoras
Allegory of the Cave, Plato
The Political & Philosophical Ideal
Founding Principles of New Acropolis

TYPES OF GOVERNANCE

4 Types of Man
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

WHEN MYTH AND HISTORY MEET

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

SUMMARY

So, where do we go from here?

PRACTICAL EXERCISES

**Students earn diplomas certifying completion of the
course having attended at least 75% of the classes.**

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See page 31 for detailed Course Syllabus

Free Intro : Wed, 20th May 7.30pm
Course Starts : Wed, 27th May 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