

A Magazine on Philosophy, Culture & Volunteering

# THE ACROPOLITAN

The Importance of Context

## FEATURE

Zen Gardens as a Portal to Contemplation

Harmony in the Orchestra of Life!

Travelling Beyond: Egypt  
Explorations with New Acropolis India  
Part 1 – Upper Egypt

Discovering Life's Beauty through Poetry

Unity Through Diversity:  
The Universal Language of Rhythm

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# FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

Dear Reader,

With this issue, we embark on an exploration of the theme of Unity through Diversity. There is an evident intrinsic harmony in the movement and rhythm of nature, exemplified by the cycle of seasons. Winter and Spring manifest differently in nature, providing us with the opportunity to engage with various facets of the same essence.


Similarly, the diversity within humanity presents us with a chance to broaden our perspectives and perceive the world through different lenses. Each unique viewpoint enriches the tapestry of our collective human experience. One notable manifestation of our diversity can be observed in the arts.

Despite the myriad expressions and forms, all classical arts—be it poetry, music, dance, or any other—are fundamentally attempts to connect with and express beauty. Beauty is considered an archetype, a pathway to connect with divinity. Regardless of our differences, there exists a shared resonance with Beauty within us, as suggested by ancient Greek philosophers.

Centuries ago, Zen masters sculpted enigmatic mindscapes of Zen Temple Gardens, inviting inward journeys of self-discovery. Whether through encounters with beauty in nature or moments of contemplation, we may endeavor to awaken the realization of our inherent divinity within us, echoing Plato's concept of Reminiscence.

Philosophy, at its essence, invites us to voyage into the depths of our own selves, where we may unravel the mysteries of existence. We must dare to Discover. Awaken. Transform.

Malini Nair  
Editor



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## **Unity Through Diversity: The Universal Language of Rhythm**

Presented by New Acropolis Culture Circle Mumbai

# THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT



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By Sabine Leitner

“They were locked into a room without food or water, and they did not know how they would be able to get out again.” – Do you find this sentence alarming? Well, it might sound scary, especially if we imagine it was done by an employer to their employees or by a terrorist organization to their hostages. But if this sentence simply describes the situation of one of the popular ‘escape rooms’, then it takes on an entirely different meaning. People do it for fun, they not only put themselves into this situation voluntarily, they even pay for it.

Or what about people being made to drink blood, have spiders, cockroaches and other insects put into their mouths and being forced to endure snakebites? In most cases, this would be considered torture. However, in the context of bushtucker trials on the show ‘I’m a celebrity, get me out of here’ it is considered entertainment. Equally, many Coming of Age Rituals in tribal cultures might seem very harsh or cruel in a modern context, but on the other hand, they have prepared young people for life for thousands of years, enabled them to connect with their own inner resources and take on new responsibilities, and this ultimately guaranteed the survival of the whole.

Philosophers and social scientists agree that human action can only be fully understood by relating it to the context in which it takes place.

Nothing can be understood in isolation from its context, and nothing even exists without a context. It is always the context that gives meaning to what we think and do, and explains why we do what we do.

However, we all know that ‘shocking’ material sells much better and gets many more clicks. It is not surprising that in our current world, with all the powerful means available, there is an ‘epidemic’ of taking things out of context in order to get money or attention. But it is a dangerous path that contributes a lot to conflict and tensions between groups, can seriously harm individuals and can divide and polarize societies.

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*....human action can only be fully understood by relating it to the context in which it takes place.*



This can be seen very clearly in politics, where sound bites are taken out of context to create a narrative that may not reflect the true intentions of the speaker. Here is a political example, which I found on the internet. The following sentence by a very well-known politician was widely quoted in the media and used against them: "We're going to put a lot of coal miners and coal companies out of business."

But here is the full quote:

"Now we've got to move away from coal and all the other fossil fuels, but I don't want to move away from the people who did the best they could to produce the energy that we relied on. So, for example, I'm the only candidate which has a policy about how to bring economic opportunity using clean renewable energy as the key into coal country.

Because we're going to put a lot of coal miners and coal companies out of business, right? And we're going to make it clear that we don't want to forget those people. Those people laboured in those mines for generations, losing their health, often losing their lives to turn on our lights and power our factories."

Another nice example is a famous commercial by the English newspaper The Guardian from 1986. It features a skinhead apparently 'on the run'.

In the second scene he appears to be wrestling a briefcase from the hands of a suited businessman. In the last cut the viewer sees that he is in fact trying to rescue the man from falling bricks.

The award-winning advert was titled 'Points of View' and wanted to demonstrate the importance of seeing the whole picture. It also showed how easily we form an opinion based on first impressions and how quickly we might jump to conclusions.




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*It seems more important than ever to be guided by the values of philosophy, which are a love of truth, of fairness, and of goodness, and to develop our own discernment.*

It is not easy to establish the whole picture and modern technologies make it also increasingly more difficult to know what is true.

Especially if there are certain interests to present something in a particular light. In addition to that, the world is not a unified 'whole' where all human beings share the same context.

There are many different parallel realities and what appears as 'good' or 'bad' in one context, might be the opposite in another context.

It seems more important than ever to be guided by the values of philosophy, which are a love of truth, of fairness, and of goodness, and to develop our own discernment.

May the inner philosopher that is in every human being rise up to meet these challenging times where truth seems to be one of the many casualties. ☪☪



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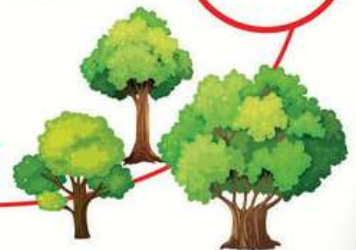
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# ZEN GARDENS AS A PORTAL TO CONTEMPLATION

By Manjula Nanavati

**“To study Zen is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be awakened by all things”**  
 – Dogen Zenji

It is said that the founder of Buddhism in Japan, the monk Mahakashyapa, received his illumination directly from Shakyamuni (Gautama Buddha), during what is known as the Silent Sermon or the Flower Sermon. Buddha held up a white flower to a crowd of assembled monks. Mahakashyapa alone smiled, signifying that he understood the wordlessness of the wisdom that would become known as Zen. Since then, Zen has emphasized understanding through non-verbal, direct transmission, from heart to heart, based on the precept that words, concepts, and categorizations are inadequate to communicate the deepest essence of truth; and Zen gardens are a physical manifestation of this spirit of Zen. Explorer and Art historian Langdon Warner observed that Japanese gardens are designed “to express the highest truths of religion and philosophy precisely as other civilizations have made use of the arts of literature and philosophy.”(1)

Zen Buddhism prioritizes meditation to experience heightened awareness of self, nature, and humanity, and Zen temple gardens were created for monks to immerse themselves in contemplation, either seated (Zazen), or through the work of maintaining the garden. The temple gardens that are karesansui (which is composed of the Japanese characters for ‘Dry’, ‘mountain’ and ‘water’) have particular distinguishing characteristics. They are not intended to stimulate the senses through extravagance, ornate decoration, variety of colour, species of blooms etc. Neither are they spaces to stroll leisurely and admiringly through, but rather invitations to sit down, slow down, and experience stillness. They are often in stark contrast to the natural wilderness or forest that usually surrounds the temple. They were never meant to imitate nature, but using subtle symbolism, to transcend nature, enabling an intuitive leap into the experience of merging with, and becoming one with nature.(2) The Zen gardens that truly deserve that appellation are those that have been created with spiritual insight, and have been maintained and nourished with spiritual practice, as a living work of art that communicates what cannot be directly verbalized.

The result of this is that they exude both a deep, solitary stillness, as well as a vital vibrating energy. These two diametrically opposed sensations were to simultaneously envelop me every time I walked through numerous zen gardens on my recent tour of the temples of Kyoto: an experience of the paradox of emptiness and fullness in the same moment. These paradoxes are at the heart of Zen teachings in the form of *koans* or





unsolvable riddles that force the mind to explore contradictory perspectives in an effort to free the thinking mind and propel it beyond its linear, logical, rational limits.

Zen garden elements and their symbolism (2):

**ROCKS and STONES:** The *Sakuteiki* (*Records of Garden Making*) (3) The first known manual of Japanese Gardening written over a thousand years ago, prescribed specific rules for the selection and placement of stones, how to follow the 'desire' of the stones, and the allegorical and mystical meaning behind rock gardens. Rocks are considered the bones of the earth and symbolize solidity, stability and resonate with timelessness and eternity.

**SAND and GRAVEL:** An integral feature of Zen gardens is gravel, that has been meticulously raked to create ripples or waves symbolizing fluidity and impermanence. Gently undulating lines signify serenity and tranquillity, while swirling patterns symbolize enlightenment.

Not all Zen Gardens are *Karesansui*, which employ the minimalist technique that conjures up an extremely natural landscape of mountains, oceans, streams, islands, and pathways with the precise placement of rocks stone and gravel. Other styles of gardening incorporate elements such as water, bridges and even a moon-viewing platform.



**WATER:** In the form of ponds, streams or waterfalls, water symbolizes purity, transparency, reflection and the ability to go around obstacles.

**MOSS:** Naturally found in ancient forests or growing over untouched surfaces, moss symbolizes age and tradition.

**BRIDGES:** These symbolize the journey between 2 worlds, the outer external world, and the inner reality. It could also tangibly represent leaving behind the material world of humans and moving into a more inclusive world of nature and all sentient beings.

**PATHWAYS:** Created from gravel or stepping stones, curved, twisting and zig zag pathways are not meant to lead you from point to point. Rather they are meant to remind you of your path, of life's twists and turns, and to guide you carefully step by step, towards spiritual awakening.

**STONE LANTERNS:** These symbolize illumination on your inward journey into yourself.



Although Zen gardens may vary widely in size, elements used, and how the landscape is designed, they all serve the same spiritual purpose. The foundational principles that govern Zen Buddhism apply to life in all its dimensions, and Zen priests specifically designed temple gardens to reflect these 7 spiritual principles.[4]

#### 1. **KOKO:** Austerity

*Koko* is reflected in the bare, frugal, ascetic setting of a Zen Garden. It emphasizes absence and omission, to encourage focus and clarity. Limiting yourself to only what is essential allows for the potential of the limitless to emerge.

**“When you go into nothingness, you become everything.”**

**– Buddha**

#### 2. **KANSO:** Simplicity

Simplicity eschews ostentation, extravagance or overstatement as unnecessary. The aspiration is to use the minimum of intrusion to have the maximum impact.

**“Before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water.**

**After enlightenment, chop wood, carry water.” – Zen proverb**

### 3. **SHIZEN**: Naturalness

Moving away from the artificial, incorporating only natural materials, but also adapting to the environment by incorporating natural light, wind, topography into the landscapes, *shizen* implies being part of nature but at the same time subtly reminding you of something greater. For all their naturalness, Zen Gardens have been precisely designed and meticulously created, with each element strategically placed to jolt you out of the comfort zone of a dualist world, into the higher consciousness of unity.

**“Meditation is an attempt of the conscious mind to find its way in the unconscious world” – Zen proverb**



4. **YUGEN**: Subtlety, Mystery, Profound Grace  
*Yugen* implies that what is invisible is more important than the visible. In playing with areas of light and shadows, reflections, and what is partially hidden from view, *Yugen* encourages the use of imagination, exploration and discovery.

Sen Rikyu, a 15th Century Japanese Tea Master who redefined the artistic and aesthetic standards of Japanese culture, designed his garden in Sakai so that the expansive view of the sea was hidden; until guests stooping down to wash their hands before entering the tea-garden, and catching a glimpse of the shimmering sea before them, were forced to contrast the relationship of a cupful of water against the boundless ocean, and bring to mind the relationship of themselves as a microcosm of the macrocosmic universe.[5]

**“Enlightenment is when the wave realizes that it is the ocean.” – Thich Nhat Hanh**

### 5. **FUKINSEI:** Asymmetry, Imperfection.

Zen believes that imperfection is part of existence, and one of the most inspirational, impactful and tangible manifestations of this principle is the Ryonji Temple Garden in Kyoto. (1) In Oriental culture the number 15 means perfection while the number 14 means 'imperfection'. The Ryoanji Temple Garden consists of an open courtyard in which 15 rocks are strategically placed on carefully raked gravel, such that whichever angle you view them from you can only see 14. (Unless of course you were somehow floating above the garden). Confronted with this enigmatic mindscape on my visit to Kyoto I was struck with three thoughts: that there is more to reality than what your senses are presently limited to; that while what is visible may be imperfect, it can still be harmonious, balanced and beautiful; that the only way to glimpse the perfection that is lying hidden in plain sight is to raise your consciousness high enough so as to encompass an elevated more wholistic perspective.

**“Nothing we see or hear is perfect. But right there in the imperfection is perfect reality.” – Shunryu Suzuki**

### 6. **DATSUZOKU:** Transcendence, Freedom from habit.

Our conditioning and our belief systems predispose us to think and behave in habitual patterns. *Datsuzoku* is a way to escape conventions and limitations imposed by society, culture or ourselves, to live a freer, more authentic life.

**“Obstacles don’t block the path, they are the path.”  
– Zen proverb**

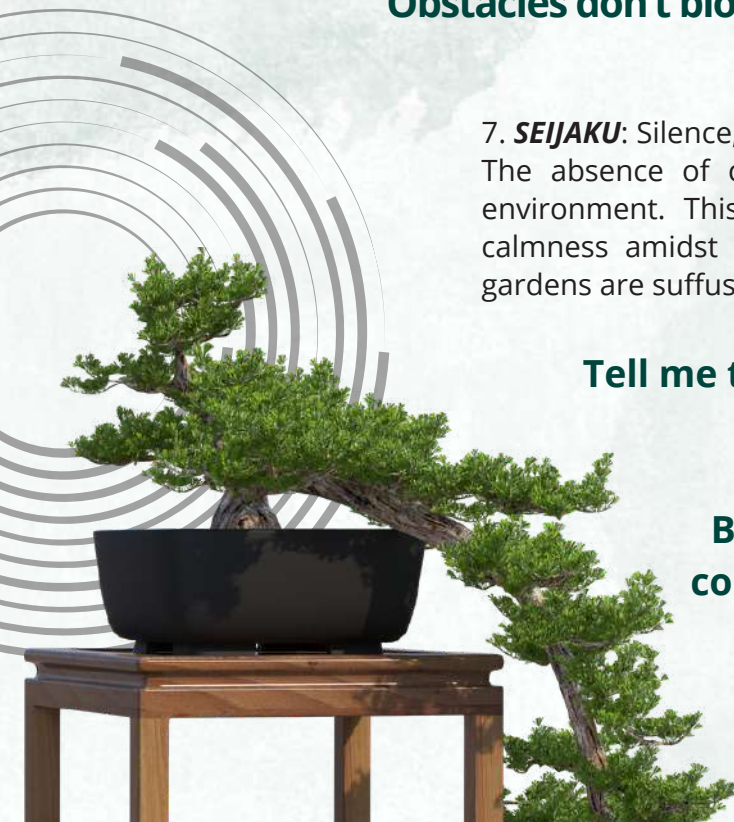
### 7. **SEIJAKU:** Silence, Tranquillity.

The absence of chaos and noise in the body, mind and environment. This principle is about retaining a sense of calmness amidst the tumult and agitation that is life. Zen gardens are suffused with the energy of silence.

**Tell me then, what is the most important principle or teaching of Zen?”**

**“Vast emptiness,”**

**Bodhidharma replied, meaning, of course, the void of nonattachment.**





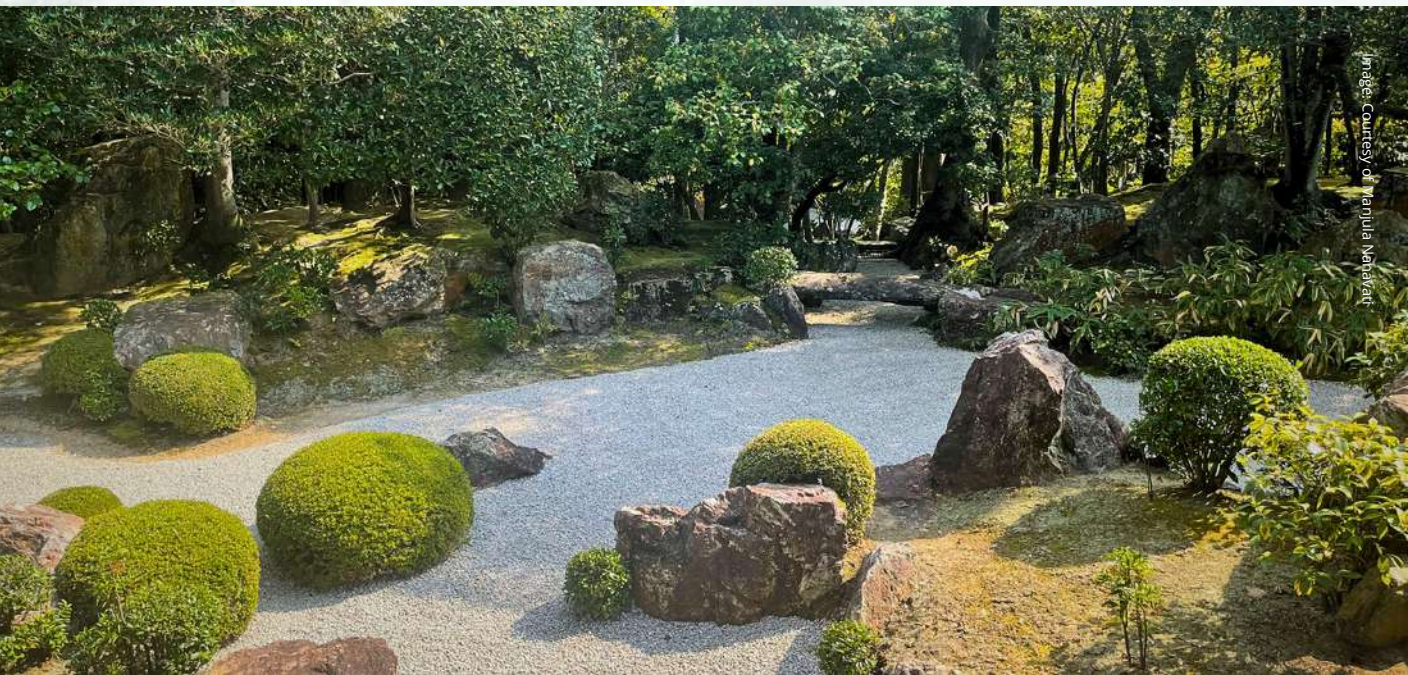
But of all the principles that Zen teaches us, perhaps the most startling and inspiring to me, is the profound realization that we are already enlightened beings, that there is an enlightened aspect of us that is waiting to be remembered: It is our highest potential, our buddha-nature. Whether we come to this realization gradually or in a flash of insight, it is our own assiduous efforts at inner work that will ultimately get us there.

## **“When we discover that the truth is already in us, we are all at once our original selves.” – Dogen**

Centuries ago, Zen masters created the enigmatic mindscapes of Zen Temple Gardens as an invitation to embark on the challenging inward journey, and the tenacious spiritual practise of meditation, towards awakening to the True Reality. But for us that live far away from these mystical fields of subtle energy, life offers many invitations to contemplation. My hope for those of us on the formidable path to remember the essence of who we already are, is that perhaps, on seeing a white flower, we can be reminded of how that fleeting gesture awakened Mahakashyapa; and maybe, we will be nudged into contemplation of the many luminous principles of Zen Philosophy that are embodied in a single simple, subtle, mysterious, imperfect, natural flower. ☸☸

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# Harmony in the Orchestra of Life!

By Gauri Dhawan





*Harmonia*, in Greek Mythology, is the goddess of Harmony and Concord. She is the daughter of *Ares*, the God of War; and *Aphrodite*, the Goddess of Love. At first glance, this could seem strange: a force of war, and a force of love coming together to create harmony. But, let's take a deeper look at the symbolism of this union, which seems to suggest that harmony is the result of an opposition.

while at the same time melting into the whole, creating a mellifluous symphony.

Similarly, in society, harmonious coexistence can only be achieved when our diversity is celebrated; when each one finds their unique place and has a meaningful role to play, a contribution to make. This is how as human beings we can weave amity, not by eliminating differences, but by respecting and valuing them.



**...as human beings we can weave amity, not by eliminating differences, but by respecting and valuing them.**



In music, harmony cannot be created when one note is played alone; it necessarily involves multiple notes being played together, which could potentially challenge each other. It is the manner in which they combine, integrate and balance each other out that creates something which sounds pleasing to the listener's ear. In an orchestra composed of many instruments - violins, flutes, trumpets, harps, cellos, clarinets, to name a few - each instrument plays different parts, retaining its distinct identity

Today we live in a world consumed by competition, where it is easy to forget that there can be no comparison between a violin, a flute, a cello, and a bassoon! An orchestra will cease to be beautiful if it is composed only of violins. In fact, it will cease to be an orchestra! At the same time, if the violin, or any other element of the orchestra is missing, the experience of the listener will not be the same. We are all like the different instruments in the grand orchestra of life, and we do not need to imitate one another. The world is made beautiful by our diversity.


Another interesting concept we encounter in music is that of vertical and horizontal harmony. The terms 'vertical' and 'horizontal' derive from Western music notation where these graphic dimensions are used to prescribe events in pitch and time, respectively.[1] Multiple notes played

together as a chord are an example of vertical harmony. Horizontal harmony, also known as melody, consists of notes played in succession.

Interestingly, in various cultures around the world, the human being is also represented as having a dual aspect: the horizontal, earthly, material self; and the vertical, spiritual self. The horizontal realm includes our physical body, our thoughts, emotions etc which we experience concretely. The vertical is more subtle. It is said to be the source of our virtues. Our ability to be kind and compassionate, our courage to overcome challenges, our inherent resonance with beauty, etc come from this part of us.

Melody has its own characteristics and identity, while the addition of the vertical element of harmony enriches it and gives it another dimension. We can continue to exist merely in the horizontal dimension, the one that we are more familiar with, or, we can allow the vertical aspect of us to inspire and enhance our experience of life. Instead of spending our life merely chasing physical comfort and other desires, can we perhaps seek to live a more virtuous life?

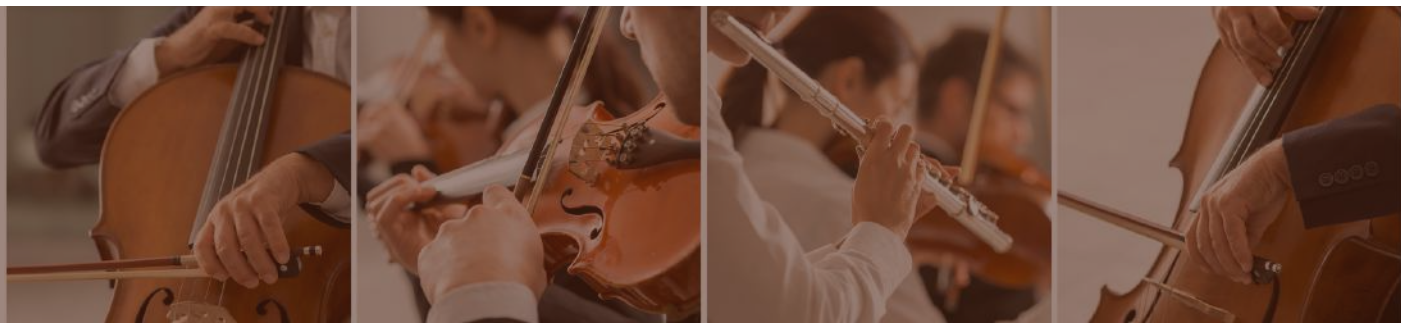
This pursuit of virtue can express in the largest and simplest of our actions, like honoring our decisions by following through with them. For e.g., when we set the intention and the alarm to wake up early in the morning and exercise, if we can stick to that rather than falling into the comfort of snoozing the alarm the next morning, we have expressed virtue. The continual practice of sticking to our word will also make us more reliable and dependable to others. When a task is given to us with a deadline, we will not need to be reminded or constantly chased down. Others will be able to trust and rest assured that the task will be done in time.

We can offer our virtue to the world around us, and start to become an integral part of the music of life. Just like every musician practices their instrument and builds skill, in turn enhancing the orchestra, we too can undertake the inner work to identify the virtues lying dormant within us, and strengthen them, making our own music more vibrant and melodious, and ultimately contributing to the unity and harmony of the Orchestra of Life! 

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**TRAVELING  
BEYOND**  
Explorations with New Acropolis

# TRAVELLING BEYOND: EGYPT

Explorations with New Acropolis India  
Part 1 – Upper Egypt

By Suresh Motwani

New Acropolis India's 'Travelling Beyond' initiative curated its inaugural exploration, a 10-day journey to Egypt in January 2024. Led by a senior instructor on Egyptian Symbolism and a very good local Egyptologist guide, the trip immersed its 32 participants in the culture, history, mythology, and philosophy of ancient Egypt. While the whole group sought to explore the beauty of Egypt's pyramids, temples, and the Nile, for many, including myself, who are deeply fascinated by Khem (the Ancient name for Egypt), it was with an equal measure of an inward journey of learning and contemplation catalyzed by the civilization's sacred expression via its great mythology, theology, knowledge of astronomy, and architecture.

Before the trip, Yaron, our National Director, had advised us... 'Don't go with an expectation of how Egypt will display its mystery or beauty to you, but go with the intention to offer yourself, to humbly offer your consciousness.'


Since the Mysterious Sphinx, Pyramids of Giza and Saqqara with all their enigma, deserve an entire piece in itself, I am dedicating this one only to some highlights amongst Temples of Upper Egypt.

The ancient name of the city of Luxor is 'Thebes'. Jorge Angel Livraga Rizzi, the founder of New Acropolis International (OINA) in his book 'Thebes' calls the city the material birth place of the archetype of all humanity/Heavenly Man.

Over thousands of years, the monuments here have retained that sense of the mysteries and the expression of harmony between this world of the 'living' and the other invisible world of the 'afterlife', in its sculptures, tomb paintings and carvings, depicting the eternal nature of the soul, and its journey in the Duat (the underworld/Afterlife).

*...it was...an inward journey of learning and contemplation catalysed by the civilisation's sacred expression via its great mythology, theology, knowledge of astronomy and architecture.*





*'Don't go with an expectation of how Egypt will display its mystery or beauty to you, but go with the intention to offer yourself, to humbly offer your consciousness.'*

The **West Bank of Luxor** is a haven of small villages, swaying palm trees and here the western horizon is dominated by the **El Qurn**, the pyramidal peak that rises above the tombs of ancient nobles cut into the hill side. Behind them, excavated into the dry river beds of the desert, is the mysterious **Valley of Kings** with about 63 tombs. The stunning artwork inside the descending staircases through moodily lit ancient carved corridors, leading to the burial chamber, truly disconnects one from phenomenal reality for a short while, giving you a glimpse of another reality that is said to be our true home. We saw the awe-inspiring artwork of the tomb of the Pharaoh Kings, Ramesses 3's tomb and Merenptah's massive cathedral like burial chamber.

**Spanning over 200 acres, the Temple of Karnak is the largest religious complex ever constructed.**

Imbued with enigmatic depth and whispers of a glorious past is the ancient village of **Deir el-Medina**, which stands in a small natural amphitheatre within walking distance of the Valley of the Kings. Here we explored the ruins of small houses, once occupied by the families of the artisans who cut and decorated the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings. Then the extremely alluring temple dedicated to the longest serving female pharaoh - Queen Hatshepsut (r. c. 1472-1457 BC) at **Deir el-Bahri**, leaves one astounded.

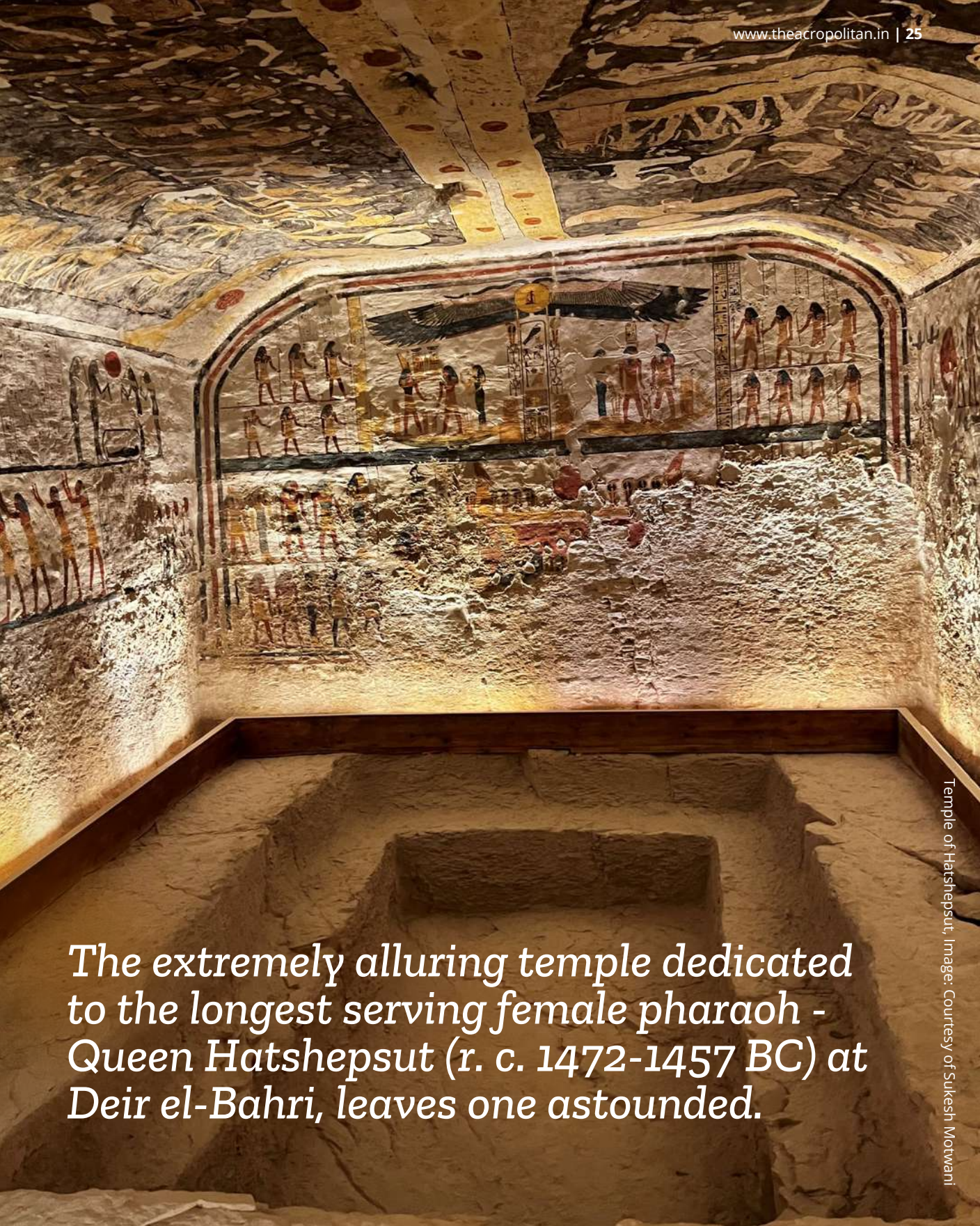
Spanning over 200 acres, the **Temple of Karnak** is the largest religious complex ever constructed. This took about 2,000 years to build, with contributions from several pharaohs. And also because of its long functionality, and the number of gods worshipped here, displays the long historical range of its changing ancient religious practices and beliefs.

At the heart of the **precinct of Amun-Ra**(1), stands the Hypostyle Hall, an incredible forest of 134 colossal stone columns, some reaching heights of almost 70 feet. When light strikes the column, surreal ancient carvings come to life. The tallest surviving obelisk dedicated to Queen Hatshepsut stands at a staggering height of about 29 metres.

1. The meaning of Amun translates to the Hidden one or the mysterious one. A combination of two deities Amun, the god of Air and Ra, the god of Sun, worshipped as the creator of all things.







*The extremely alluring temple dedicated to the longest serving female pharaoh - Queen Hatshepsut (r. c. 1472-1457 BC) at Deir el-Bahri, leaves one astounded.*

As a group, we were fortunate to be led by our guide to the **Sekhmet(1) Shrine** at a far corner in the complex, perceived by some to have very special energies. Our guide convinced the priest guard at the Sekhmet shrine, to allow us inside. The peculiar darkened atmosphere of the shrine, helps one quietly wade into inner silence, as one sits in admiration close to the mysterious Sekhmet statue rendered visible by light streaming through a zenithal opening in the ceiling.

Also worth speaking of is the architectural marvel of **Luxor Temple** with a stunning Great Colonnade, on a beautiful moonlit night. The entrance is flanked by the colossal seated statues of Ramses II. Despite their monumental size, these temples were designed with precise mathematical calculations and astounding astrological alignment with celestial bodies, especially the sun.

North of Luxor, we visited one of the most colorful temples in Egypt, **Temple of Hathor(2) at Dendera**. Inside, one is enraptured by the temple's masterpiece of ceiling which is said to be 2 milleniums old. Bright tones of blue spring from its surface. 24 stunning columns about 15 metres high. Gods sail in boats among the stars, or stand in adoration of human-headed birds. A Wedjat-eye(3), carved within a disc, symbolizes the moon and its phases.

The sky goddess Nut, her body stretched across a full strip of ceiling, swallows the sun at dusk. She will give birth to him at dawn, just as she does every day. There are signs of the zodiac. Planets. Colourful hieroglyphs. Together, these diverse images represent a complex astronomical scene, revealing Egyptians' detailed knowledge of the day and night sky.

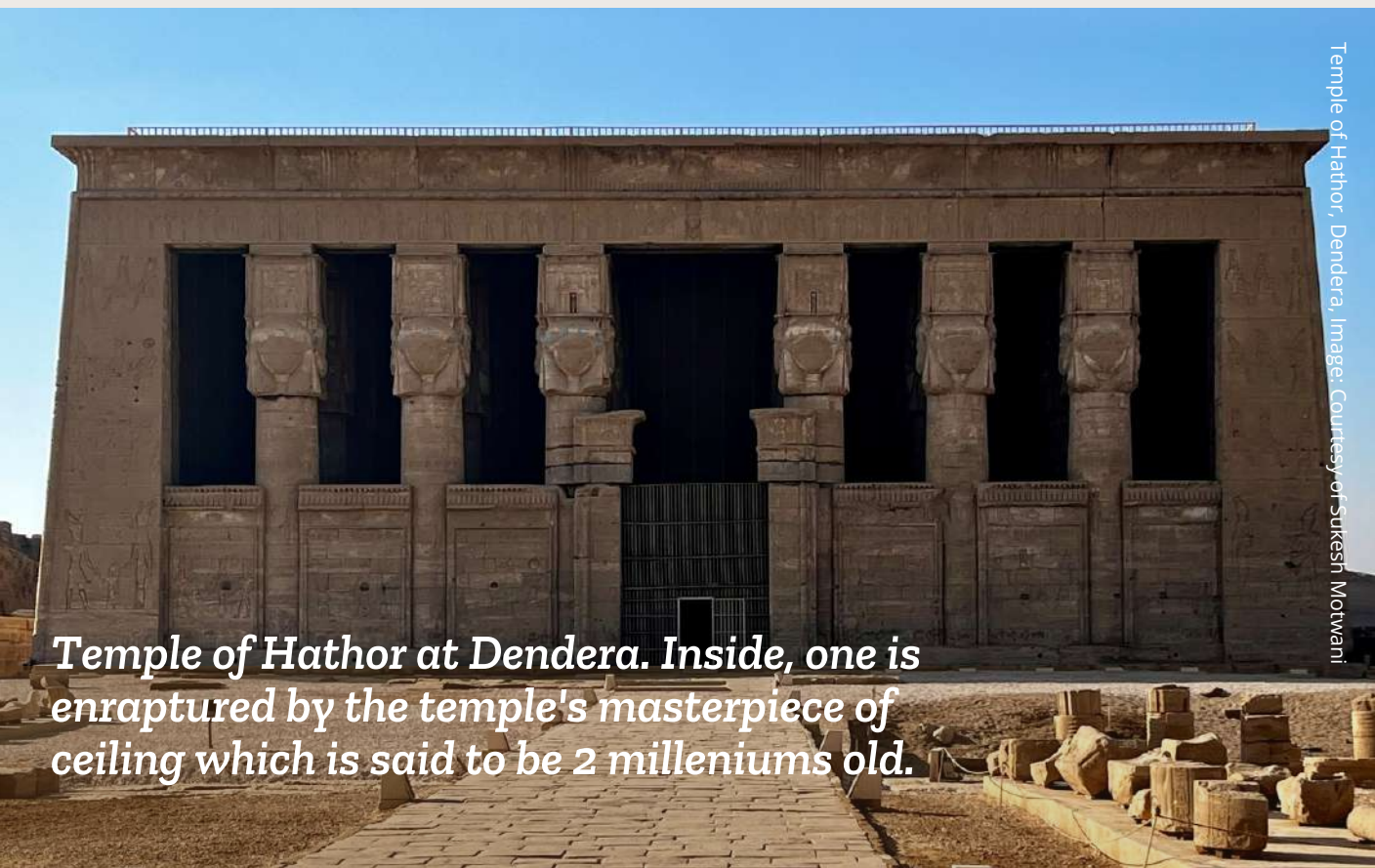
A 90-minute drive further north, beyond low beige hills dotting sandy plains, takes us to the little town of **Abydos** ...which, to me, seems to have a mystical aura, where the boundaries between the physical and spiritual blur. As we stare into the abyss below, we see **Osireion**, a vast cemetery, a grey stone slab structure, surrounded by a moat of green water. An eerie tomb considered to be the final resting place of Osiris – King of the Afterlife. God of Regeneration. According to a great Myth, Osiris was attacked by his brother Seth for the crown of Egypt, under an aru-tree and thrown into the water. All of it is said to have happened in Abydos.

We spent four nights on a luxurious cruise that sailed alongside the emerald banks of the Nile, and left me deeply affected by its serene waters, lush greenery, palm trees, water hyacinth, tall grasses etc offset by farms, or minarets, or an occasional ibis. The cruise took us to Edfu's surreal **Temple of Horus**, known for its fabulous

1. Sekhmet Goddess embodies the fierce and powerful aspects of the divine feminine as the lion-headed Goddess.
2. Hathor is a major goddess in ancient Egyptian pantheon. She was the female counterpart to God Horus and Sun God Ra, both who are connected with kingship. Thus she is the symbolic mother of their earthly representatives, the Pharaohs.
3. The healed eye of God Horus; associated with healing and wisdom.



Karnak Temple, Image: Courtesy of Sukesht Motwani



Temple of Hathor, Dendera, Image: Courtesy of Sukesht Motwani

*Temple of Hathor at Dendera. Inside, one is enraptured by the temple's masterpiece of ceiling which is said to be 2 milleniums old.*

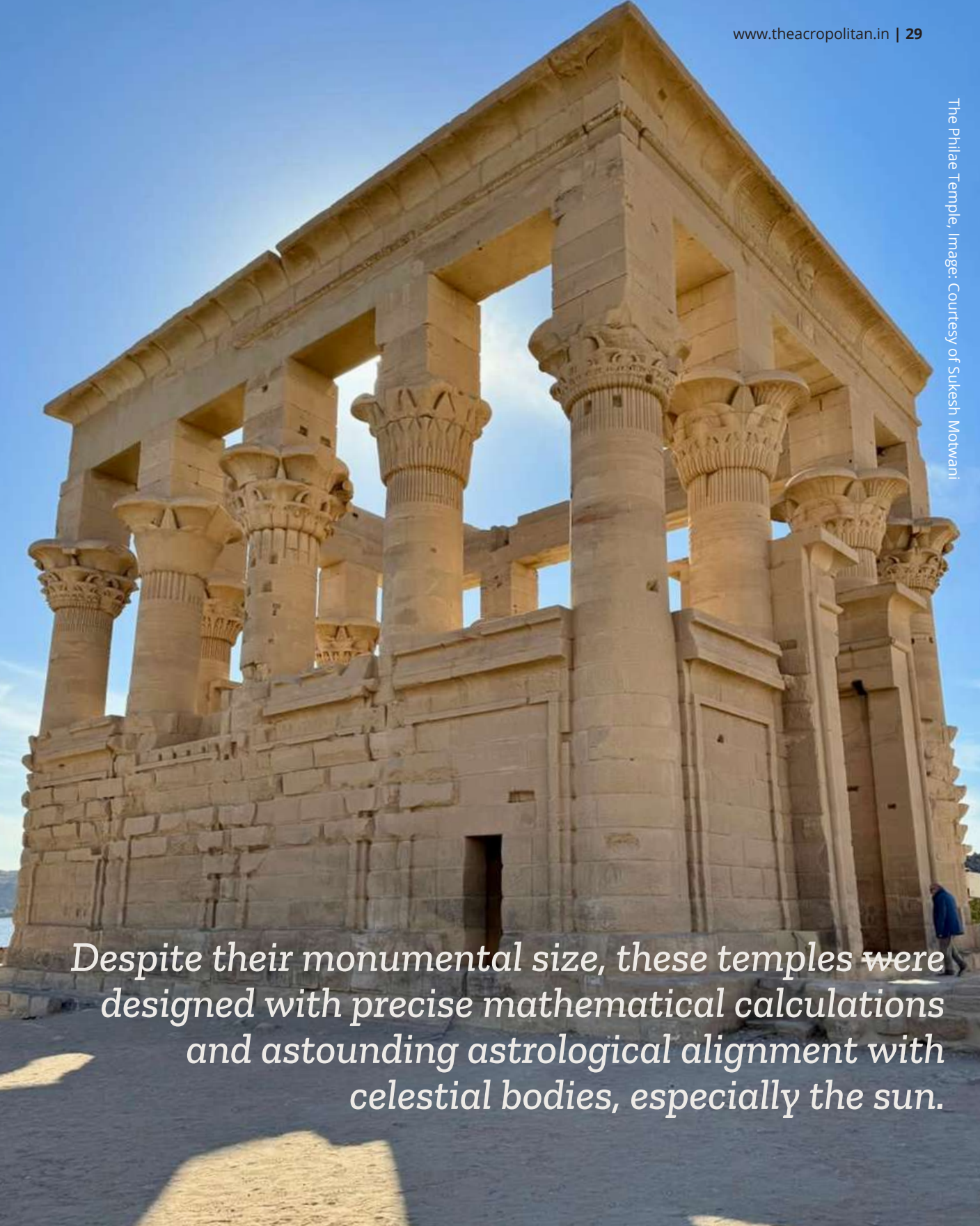
drawings depicting the myth of the battle of Horus and his uncle Seth, symbolising the eternal struggle between myth and chaos. Also ethereal is the manner in which the **Kom ombo Temple** is captured by our approaching cruise, wonderfully unravelling its beauty, on the western banks of the Nile.

We were fortunate to witness the dramatically beautiful **Abu Simbel** temple complex on the western bank of Lake Nasser, lit up by the first rays of sunrise that illuminated the colossal facades of the two rock cut temples. The ancients engineered the Great Temple such that twice a year, on February 22 and October 22, the sun's rays penetrate the temple to illuminate all the statues in the innermost

sanctuary, leaving only the statue of Ptah, the god of darkness, in shadow.

Finally our last day was spent on the **island of Philae**, built by the last dynasty of ancient Egypt, the Ptolemaic. Dedicated to Goddess Isis, Osiris and Horus. The temple walls contain scenes from Egyptian mythology of Goddess Isis bringing her dead husband Osiris back to life, giving birth to Horus, and mummifying Osiris after his death. Isis mourning for Osiris became a symbol of grief in Egypt, painted on tomb walls and coffins. She represented motherhood, magic and healing, and became a popular Goddess because of the universal relatability of her grief at her husband's death and her need to protect her son Horus from the enemy Seth.





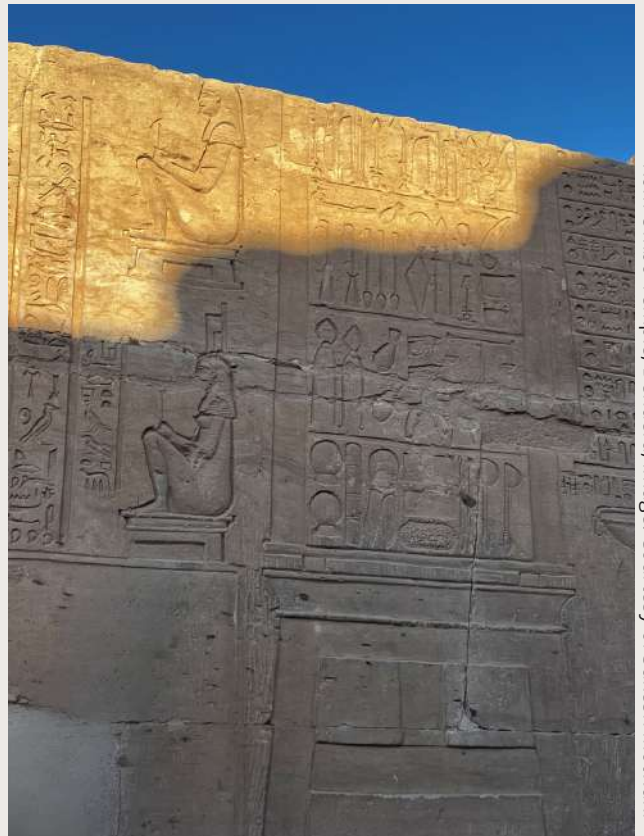
*Despite their monumental size, these temples were designed with precise mathematical calculations and astounding astrological alignment with celestial bodies, especially the sun.*

Every stone, hill, temple and town on the journey of Nile is said to have a sacred meaning, tied to the actions of Divine forces.

Reaching Egypt can be an opportunity to find escape from the flame of separateness. We realized why we can call our trip a pilgrimage, because we attempted to consciously elevate ourselves to find meaning. With keen preparation, attention and love for the philosophical path on which we attempt to walk, we humbly offered our presence, love and respect to the ancient land, and came away having being marked indelibly by experience. ☪☪



Abydos Temple of Seti I, Image: Courtesy of Suresh Motwani



Kom Ombo Temple, Dendera, Image: Courtesy of Suresh Motwani

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### Sources:

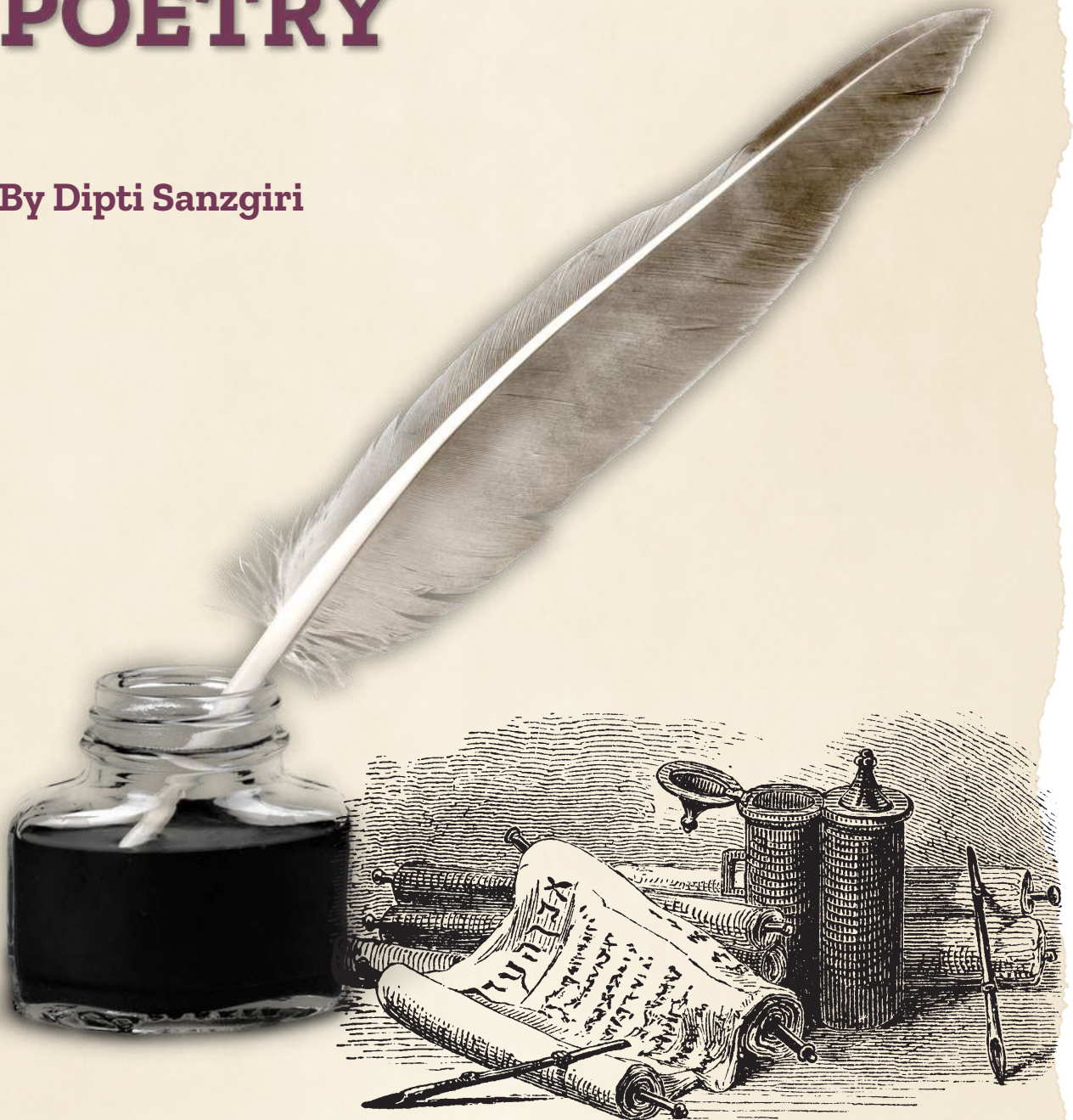
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<https://anthropologyreview.org/history/ancient-egypt/ancient-egyptian-temples/>

# DISCOVERING LIFE'S BEAUTY THROUGH POETRY

By Dipti Sanzgiri



What is beauty? How do we define it? What happens to us when we encounter beauty?

It is an experience that is so profound that many poets have expressed in many beautiful ways.

### ***My Heart Leaps Up***

*My heart leaps up when I behold*

*A rainbow in the sky:*

*So was it when my life began;*

*So is it now I am a man;*

*So be it when I shall grow old,*

*Or let me die!*

*The Child is father of the Man;*

*And I could wish my days to be*

*Bound each to each by natural piety.*



**- William Wordsworth**

Throughout the ages, the nature of Beauty has been very difficult to characterize. The dictionary defines beauty as that which *brings pleasure to the senses*. But that can be a highly subjective gauge: What one finds beautiful, another may perceive as ugly, thus affirming the proverb, "Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder".

There are, however, some things that everyone who encounters them, experiences beauty in. Like the rainbow! Our hearts leap up at its sight!

According to ancient Greek philosophers, beauty is difficult to define because it is an expression of the divine in life. And something like rainbow elevates us towards divinity! Almost as if it is a bridge for us to cross over!



Plotinus, the Greek philosopher, said that the divine emanates; and in emanation, its expression is Beauty. Plato spoke of Goodness, Truth, Justice and Beauty as the 4 divine archetypes or the four sides of a pyramid, meeting at the peak which is the One, Unity. Beauty then seems to be one of the facets through which we get a glimpse of the divine.

And perhaps, the reason why we resonate with the beauty that resides in a rainbow is because it reminds us of beauty that resides within us. Plato's idea of Reminiscence supports this thesis by pointing to an eternal, unchangeable essence of who we truly are, encapsulated in a quote generally attributed to him, "Man you are God, but you forgot". When we encounter beauty, the experience touches a chord, awakening something hitherto hidden from us, that now slowly rises towards the surface of our consciousness, remaining there.

In his poem Daffodils, Wordsworth relives the uplifting memory of seeing a field of dancing daffodils:

### ***I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud***

*I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.*

*Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.*

*The waves beside them danced; but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:*

*A poet could not but be gay,  
In such a jocund company:  
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:*

*For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.*



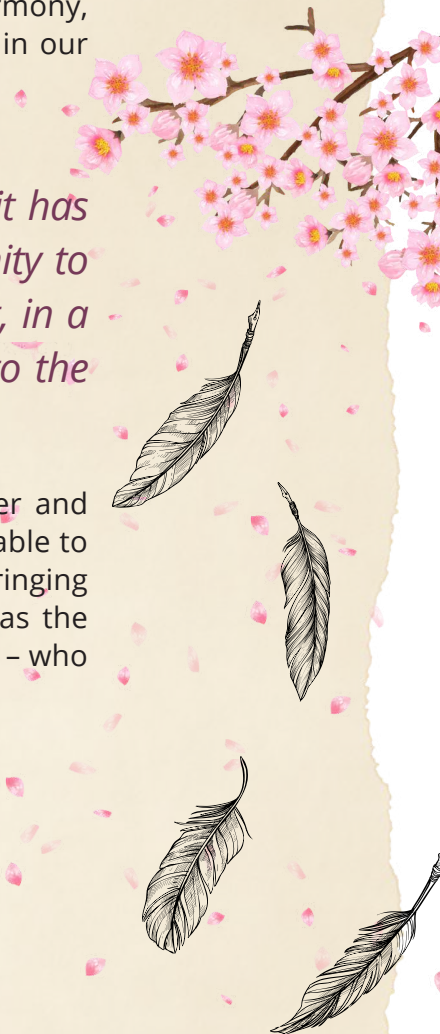
What makes this poetry so popular and why do so many admire its beauty? Perhaps because the poet describes beauty in words which create such powerful imagery that you feel as if you are in a field of daffodils. It captures a range of emotions, contemplation and connection with nature as one might experience. And there is rhythm in the meter of this poetry which gives a sense of harmony, constancy, and serenity. Such poetry remains in our heart as a memory, in our treasure chest that we can keep going back to.

What is it in the blooming of a flower that makes it universally beautiful? Maybe we perceive the blossoms' transition to their full potential thereby fulfilling their purpose, just by being who they are. They are not 'doing' anything, they just are, in full bloom. And in their being, we recognize the fundamental principles such as Harmony, Proportion, Order, Unity, and realise the need to bring them in our own lives.

As Tagore observes,

*"..... a work of beauty has no question to answer; it has nothing to do, but to be. It reveals in its form a unity to which all that seems various in it is so related that, in a mysterious manner, it strikes sympathetic chords to the music of unity in our own being"*

When we encounter something truly beautiful, all other inner and external distractions seem to cease bothering us, and we are able to just focus and concentrate on the beautiful object, bringing calmness and serenity within us. Often these moments, act as the conduit to bring forth the questions that reside deep within us – who am I? what is the purpose of my life?



Rumi offers us an answer:

*There is a fountain inside you. Don't walk around with an empty bucket.*

*You have a channel into the ocean, yet you ask for water from a little pool.*

*Beg for the love expansion. Meditate only on THAT.*

*There is a basket of fresh bread on your head, yet you go door to door asking for crusts.*

*Knock on the inner door, no other.*

*Sloshing knee-deep in fresh river water, yet you keep asking for other people's water bags.*

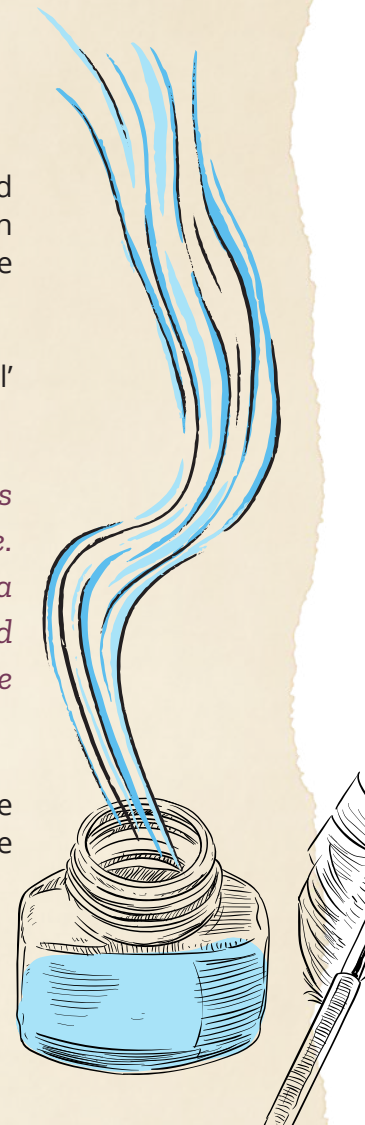
*Water is everywhere around you, but you see only barriers that keep you from water.*

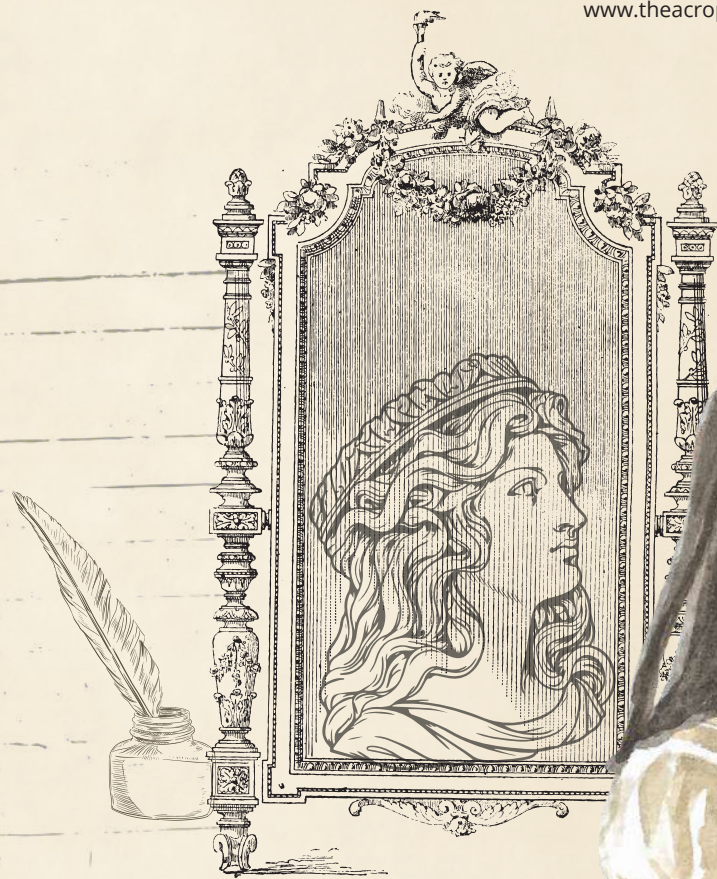
Quite like the flower, to be able to bring beauty in our lives, we need to blossom and expand - elevate ourselves by removing from within us, barriers such as fears, jealousy, envy, anxiety. We will then be able to see clearly the beauty both inside and outside of us.

And in today's world, we can begin by cultivating basic 'civil' behaviour.

Tagore says, *"Civility is beauty of behaviour. It requires for its perfection patience, self- control, and an environment of leisure. For genuine courtesy is a creation, like pictures, like music. It is a harmonious blending of voice, gesture and movement, words and action, in which generosity of conduct is expressed. It reveals the man himself and has no ulterior purpose."*

In this, is a unification between our idea of civility, our choice to be civil, and our expression of civility; and beauty is in this unity. Can we create such a unity within us?





Maybe our purpose in life is to constantly make ourselves better – more generous, more loving, more accepting, less fearful and thereby bringing more beauty in our lives. Can we make our lives a poetry that keeps unfolding its beauty by our honing the art of living?

*"Withdraw into yourself and look. And if you do not find yourself beautiful yet, act as does the creator of a statue that is to be made beautiful: he cuts away here, he smooths there, he makes this line lighter, this other purer, until a lovely face has grown upon his work. So do you also: cut away all that is excessive, straighten all that is crooked, bring light to all that is overcast, labour to make all one glow of beauty and never cease chiselling your statue, until there shall shine out on you from it the godlike splendour of virtue, until you shall see the perfect goodness surely established in the stainless shrine."*

- Plotinus



# UNITY THROUGH DIVERSITY: THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE OF RHYTHM

Presented by New Acropolis Culture Circle Mumbai





Unity of all mankind may seem at first a lofty and utopian concept, but the actualization of this intention is perhaps the realization of one principle: recognition and respect for the diversity of the human race. We must understand each other, honour each other's cultural identity, and value each other's way of life.

To attempt to bridge the gap between distant geographies and distinct traditions, to engender an appreciation of the astounding treasure-trove of knowledge, encompassing arts and science, customs and traditions, and the mythologies and belief-systems, that make up our rich and varied multi-dimensional universe, New Acropolis explores and celebrates the idea of Unity Through Diversity.



Towards this end, New Acropolis Culture Circle Mumbai, hosted Kathak Exponent Aditi Bhagwat who is also passionate about *Lavani*, and Flamenco Dancer Bettina Castano to present and discuss their unique dance forms and explore the Universal Language of Rhythm. Here are excerpts from the free-flowing conversation which took place between presentations of the various techniques and styles of dance, which served to illustrate the essence of the discussion.

**Culture Circle:** Rhythm unites all life, because everything in life moves in a harmonious relationship of time and space, very much like dance.

**Aditi:** Isn't movement integral to all of us? Even right now, everyone is moving in some or the other way, right? Nobody is ever steady. Movement suggests life, it suggests growth. And we all must move to feel alive. Where does this movement begin within us? Any guesses? The heart. That's the first thing that moves, which suggests life. And that is where rhythm is born within all of us, a very basic one- two beat, the beat that we first learn in classical as well as folk dance.

Over time, as the complexity of beats increased we needed a way to express and memorise these rhythms. So, a specific language was born from the language of the sound of the *tabla*. Sounds got codified, written, and documented. That's when Indian music and dance became more sophisticated, documenting notations and mathematical formulae for creating and recreating rhythm.

*Here we were treated to an explanation and demonstration of the synchronisation of the language of rhythm of the tabla and Aditi's ghungaroots, or ankle bells. As Aditi's feet flew faster and faster keeping perfect pace, the ghungaroots served to accentuate the rhythm of the dance and allow her complex footwork to be heard by the audience.*

**CC:** Unity in rhythm is not just in these beautiful classical dance forms or music, but they are also in the movements of the universe which align to an order, a rhythm, which form a bigger picture. Each single movement, each single rhythm is part of the formation of the entire universe. And perhaps our role, since we are part of nature, is also to find this movement and find our rhythm, one that unites with this universal rhythm.

**Aditi:** Yes and this next piece I composed especially as a reflection of the speed of life using the three primary speeds of dance: *vilambit* (slow), *madhya* (medium), and *drut* (fast). it's an *abhinay* piece, that emphasizes expressions and emotions in dance.



*Aditi then gave us a riveting performance of 3 vignettes around letter writing: the first, a love-lorn maiden writing to her lover and waiting for a reply. Aditi's languorous movements and expressions that moved from coy to longing, captured the dream like pace perfectly. The second depicted an efficient office girl, typing a letter, and attending to her work with crisp, economical gestures and footwork, that adroitly captured the idea of dynamic competence. The last, a harried, disorganized character, trying to do everything at once, typing, answering phones, chatting to colleagues, sharing lunch, all at breakneck speed, and accomplishing nothing. The performances were skilful and dazzling and had the audience laughing out loud at Aditi's playful, tongue in cheek yet always graceful depictions of the three wildly different characterizations!*

**CC:** I think that was something we can all really reflect on: what rhythm do we live our life with, and how it affects us. Perhaps an insanely fast -paced rhythm of life can be a meaningless, superficial life devoid of purpose. And I think through your artistry and humour it was very revealing. You showed us that rhythm gives meaning, that we work with meaning through rhythm. But we need to realize what we're doing and really ask ourselves the philosophical question of why am I here, and how can I live life with meaning and joy? So, could you just share with us very simply, what are some meaningful values and virtues that you learned through dance?

**"Movement suggests life, it suggests growth. ... Where does this movement begin within us? Any guesses? The heart."**

**Aditi:** The values of perseverance, absolute devotion and dedication which my mother and my Guruji's, Roshan Kumariji and Nandita Puri both taught me. The relentless love and affection for your art form. I often tell my students that your dance or music has to be like your lover or your best friend. It's a love relationship; the more time you spend with your art, the more it grows with you and you begin to love each other and you miss each other more and more. That's how you nurture this relationship and build the bond with yourself and your dance, because your dance is you, your art is you.

But by discipline, I mean the constant reaching out and seeking your art form, seeking you in that art form, and constantly sticking to it. From early childhood my mother would make sure that I practice every day for at least five minutes. And later, I would do my best performance and she would say, "*theek hai*" (that's okay). That was all that I got from her for the longest time.





So primarily, discipline, and respect for other people's journeys, because I know how tough it has been for me, and I respect what it takes to be where they are. There have been times when I wanted to detach myself from dance also, but no, that discipline, that integrity, and humility is the biggest one. Because you're never there, you have to always seek more and more knowledge. Like they say in Marathi, *vidya vinayana shobhite*: if you have *vinay*, if you have humility, that is when knowledge beautifies you. Truly, knowledge looks beautiful on you. So that "*theek hai*" by my mom was basically to teach me humility and keep me grounded. No matter what you do, there are people who have struggled more than you. There are people who have achieved more than you. So, respect, discipline, humility those are primarily the things that dance really taught me.



**CC:** At New Acropolis, we believe culture is a human legacy passed down through generations and across traditions, to recognize the beauty of our diverse human expressions and to discover that, though forms and expressions are different, it is always an expression of one life, our shared human spirit. Culture can allow us to see what unites us over what separates us, perhaps something we need more in our times today.

**Aditi:** Let me share my experience at a festival in Korea. The festival had six artists, and I was the finale. It started with monk dancers, so obviously, a slow meditative pace. There were modern, contemporary Korean dancers who were dancing to silence so there was no sound at all. And the first day of the rehearsal, I thought, when I present the *Lavani*, this is going to be very embarrassing, because this folkdance

requires that I keep going at full speed and full volume. And finally, they were all seated because everybody was done, and I was the last performer to go on. And to my surprise, as I started, I heard everybody clapping, whooping, stomping; how did this happen? I think that is where rhythm binds everybody. The minute there's a two and a four, we all feel it regardless of culture, race, colour, anything.

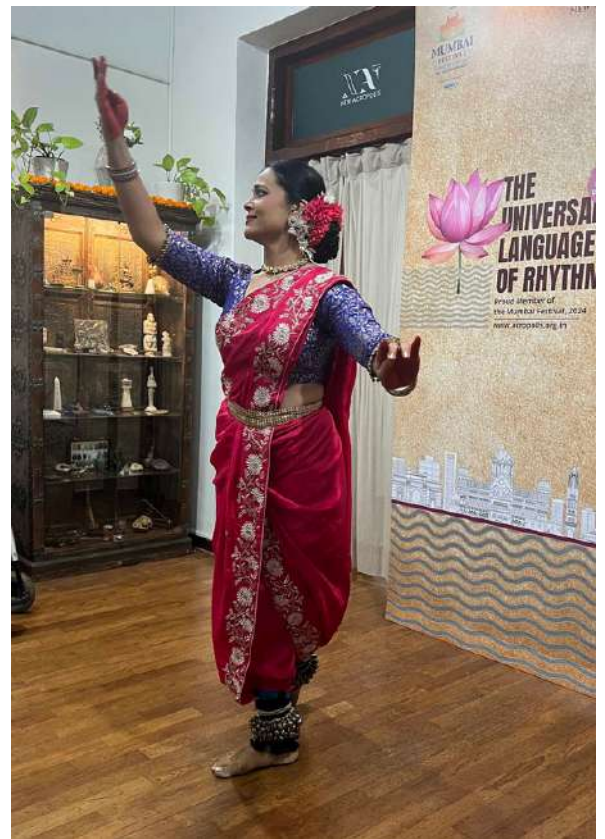
And this is truly unity in diversity; all these different forms of music and dance that I got to experience because I'm a Kathak dancer and then I could collaborate on different platforms. Whether it was an American banjo, an Iraqi dulcimer, a Venezuelan cuatro, or Spanish music, or jazz, the sky is the limit. All you need is to accept, explore, expand, and tolerate each other's values and each other's views. To illustrate this, I'm going to invite Flamenco dancer Bettina to join me on stage.

*Here Aditi and Bettina together presented a breath-taking glimpse of part of a 90 minute collaboration of Flamenco and Kathak: Aditi's graceful mudras (hand gestures) and fleet yet perfectly precise footwork accentuated by her ghungaroor showcased Classical Kathak, yet were in perfect sync with Bettina's regal Flamenco, and her clicking castanets, majestic arm flourishes, and staccato footwork. Each dance form had its unique characteristics in arm gestures, foot flourishes, facial expression, costume and body language, but the common element that bound them and the audience together was the universal language of rhythm.*

**...reflect on: what rhythm do we live our life with, and how it affects us.**



**Aditi:** Now, this was, of course, exploring art forms going beyond boundaries, beyond international borders, but then there is so much here in India itself that one can explore. And that took me to *Lavani*. A Maharashtrian folkdance. I am a Maharashtrian, and just like all other people from different communities, I enjoy my folk music. And what better way to enjoy it than by performing it, studying it, and passionately bringing it to everybody.



## The minute there's a two and a four, we all feel it regardless of culture, race, colour, anything.

*Lavani* somehow is frowned upon even today. And that is sad. Because *Lavani* speaks so much about philosophy, about life. There are *Lavani*'s which talk about domestic violence, about social reformation. *Lavani* as an art form was also used during the freedom struggle to gather people to spread the message of freedom, of the movement of Swaraj. And that's why *Lavani* holds such a crucial place in our culture, in building the value systems of a community and truly empowering women because *Lavani* is the only folk-art form which is a solo female art form. Only women perform *Lavani*, depicting their lives, their problems, from pregnancies to female infanticide. I don't think any other art form is dedicated to only women. And look at when it started, back in the day, which is why I highly respect *Lavani* and it's truly taught me a lot.

I look at Kathak with a lot of reverence. So do I with *Lavani*. But *Lavani* helps me explore that side of my personality which otherwise is a little sobered down in Kathak dance. And I would like to again present a very, very small little piece from the entire *Lavani* repertoire. This is based on rhythm only. There's no song or spoken word.

*What followed was a vigorous, spirited, effervescent performance with nimble footwork, and agile leaps across the stage, all executed with effortless vivaciousness.*



**Aditi:** Just imagine letting your body go and dancing in sync with life. That's what dance does for me. It absolutely elevates me to another level. I bring my movements together with the reverence to the one, the maker, the one who made music for us, the one who made dance for us, the one who made this world for us, the ultimate one in that time cycle that we go back to and meet, the Ultimate Truth. It is absolute immersion, in rhythm and no inhibitions at all. When I teach my students, I say let go of inhibitions, leave them aside, face the world with whoever you are, with whatever best you can do, and the best part of you.

CC: At Acropolis, we too believe culture ennobles us. We understand culture as the cultivation of all that is best in every human being, as that which helps us to transform ourselves, to touch upon perhaps the noblest parts of us, finding the unity in the multiplicity of life. And today's event is a tribute to this idea, thank you so much Aditi and Bettina for being here today, sharing your insights and taking us through this wonderful investigation together. ☺☺

Here are some of the activities conducted by New Acropolis India (North) during the months of January, February and March, all with the spirit of philosophy, culture and volunteering at their essence.

## PHILOSOPHY

Various talks, open to public, were held in Mumbai and Pune. DECODING SYMBOLS, that postulated that universal ideas like Goodness, Generosity and Compassion, required one to view life through the 'heart', from the best version of ourselves. Participants along with Acropolitan volunteers crafted symbols to take home as a reminder to pursue these ideals in their day to day lives.

Lessons from nature show us that the universal principles of life are very obviously evident all around us, if we only open our consciousness to them. Harmony, Integrity and Resilience are principles that we could imbibe if we could LEARN TO SEE DEEPLY and allow ourselves to be mentored by nature.

In the POETIC PATH TO LIFE'S BEAUTY, an English poet, a Greek philosopher, a Sufi saint and Indian polymath showed us how to engage with Beauty, both in our external world, and in the beauty that lies latent within us.



On March 21st, some members gathered together at dawn to celebrate the SPRING EQUINOX, and the beginning henceforth of the gradual lengthening of daylight hours in the Northern Hemisphere. Many communities welcome this day as the beginning of the season of renewal and growth. In Mumbai, participants gathered at a picturesque location overlooking the Arabian Sea, and in Pune amidst nearby hills as the first rays of the rising sun lightened the sky, those assembled were encouraged to look inward, reflect and choose a virtue that they wanted to nurture, and renew to bloom within them. There were also vibrant celebrations, in Mumbai and Pune branches, as members came together to partake of food and enjoy music and drama presentations. Though the sun had long set, the gaiety and cheer lent a warm glow to the festivities.

## CULTURE



## TRAVELING BEYOND

Explorations with New Acropolis

The Highlight of this quarter was a new initiative launched by New Acropolis India (North): TRAVELLING BEYOND. Not just a scenic walk-through of a country's most well-known sights, this is a journey through the culture, history, mythology and philosophy of a civilization through its art, architecture, monuments and museums, as well as the contemporary culture around its food, trendy experiences, shopping bazaars and modern ethos.

The first undertaking was exploring the wonder that is Egypt, and alongside the fun and camaraderie of an amicable group dynamic, the wide range of experiences, extremely knowledgeable guides, augmented by the valuable insights from the New Acropolis teachers leading this expedition, resulted in a deep understanding and broad appreciation of the height and breadth of Egypt's astounding achievements. This was not just a journey through Egypt: It seemed to have touched the inner core of the travellers, making it also a journey into oneself.



Philosophy

Culture

Volunteering

Below are some reactions from participants:

*“Our trip to Egypt was so so special. I was a bit apprehensive about the trip because it was a group trip and I have never done an organised tour. Usually I am in control of the organisation and planning to the last detail. It was quite challenging to accept that I need to go with the flow. All my fears were unfounded. Being with this wonderful group of people brought with it, its own energy. I loved getting to know everyone in the group much better, and the shared camaraderie, laughter, sharing of food and jokes! Egypt also spoke to me at another level. Connecting to the invisible is something which is difficult to comprehend. Being in Egypt changed that for me. The invisible in some sense almost became visible”.*

- Statira

*“The Temple of Isis in Philae had a special energy which stood as a testament to the spirit of timeless endurance. After being nearly submerged in a dam, it was reconstructed brick by brick until it stood tall again. Truly inspirational! What stood out was how alive everything still seemed so many centuries later. Whether it was the artwork etched on the walls or the majestic architecture or the stories we were told. Or whether it was even a simple evening cruising down the river Nile. Every moment was filled with life, mystery and meaning.”*

- Atmika

*“The land of Egypt, with all its mysteries and precise structures, is a testament to the heights a civilisation can reach when it is united in its love and devotion towards the divine.”*

- Gauri

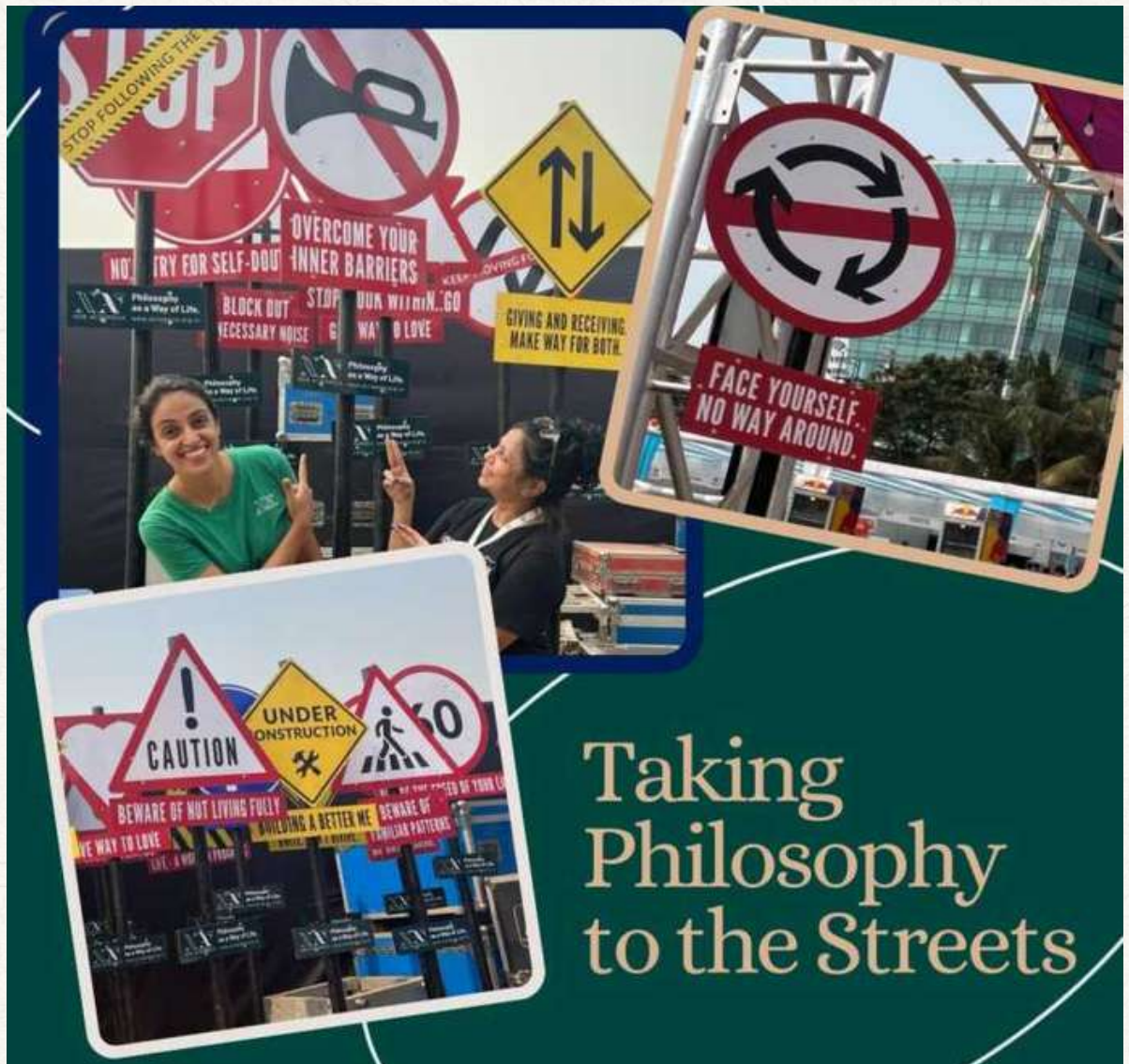


In exploration of the theme of Unity though Diversity, New Acropolis Mumbai, hosted a synergy of dance styles in an event entitled the UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE OF RHYTHM. Aditi Bhargava showcased Kathak from the Indian Classical Tradition together with Bettina Castano who danced the Spanish Flamenco. Though these diverse dance forms seem so disparate, yet the ghungarooros on Aditi's ankles kept perfect rhythm with Bettina's castanets and the synchronicity of hand, arm and foot movements of both dancers left the audience wowed.



## VOLUNTEERING

Taking philosophy to the streets through a thought - provoking initiative at the Maha Mumbai Expo, volunteers from New Acropolis Mumbai, re-interpreted UNIVERSAL TRAFFIC SIGNS, making them into beacons of inspiration and humour, encouraging and reminding Mumbaikars that there are ways to navigate personal roadblocks and the tricky intersections of Life.







On 17th March, New Acropolis hosted its 6th edition of **Philofair**, a vibrant day full of fun and meaningful interactions. With over 400 attendees from all age groups, they were treated to a wide variety of stalls from food, fashion & jewellery, art & craft, games, life style and home décor products. Participants engaged in DIY Activities such as exploring miniature natural worlds through making Terrariums, experimenting with healing Essential Oils, working with beauty & harmony to create their own Mandalas and learning through art. Enthralling workshops through the day kept participants engaged - from Creating harmonious flower arrangements through the art of Ikebana, discovering easy tips to making delicious dessert and learning to develop concentration and Rhythm through Movement. The day ended with an entertaining Open Mic Session, giving the opportunity to individuals to showcase their talents and creativity featuring poetry, a magician, music, dance and more!





## And Congratulations!

**On 23rd February 2024, New Acropolis Pune Branch inaugurated their new home at in Koregaon Park.**

This move is a clear reflection of the enthusiasm of the members of the branch and the encouraging participation of aspiring philosophers who visit the branch for its various activities. The inauguration was a joyous celebration with the special presence of the National Director of New Acropolis India, Yaron Barzilay and other members from the Mumbai branch as well. The celebration was enlivened by a song performed by some members related to the idea of "Hope".



# PUBLIC EVENTS NEW ACROPOLIS MUMBAI

**Sat**  
**13 Apr**

Free Workshop

**6 pm (2 hrs)**  
**at Mumbai Center**  
**(Colaba)**

[Register Here](#)



## BEYOND LIMITATIONS: TURNING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

"When confronted with our limits, we often take it as an indication to stop moving forward. But perhaps, if we are able to develop the right tools and keys, our limitations can serve as doors – waiting to be opened to reveal something we cannot yet imagine. Join us for a special workshop to explore how we can approach everyday challenges with the spirit of a philosopher - to discover the gift of growth and strength that our limitations can offer.

**Sun**  
**28 Apr**

Free Talk  
& Workshop

**6 pm (2 hrs)**  
**at Mumbai Center**  
**(Colaba)**

[Register Here](#)



## MANY SEEDS ONE GARDEN: WISDOM OF SACRED GROVES

*Celebrating International Mother Earth Day*

Sacred Groves represent an age-old tradition of environmental conservation based on indigenous knowledge, culture and religious practices. Apart from being a repository of rich biodiversity harbouring many rare species, sacred groves are a living example of the strong symbiotic relationship between human beings and Nature.

On the occasion of International Mother Earth Day, New Acropolis Mumbai invites you to embark on a journey of rediscovering Sacred Groves. Through a talk & practical activity, we will explore hidden secrets of plants and dive deep into the wisdom that nature offers. And perhaps in reviving our connection with Mother nature, we will learn to revive and deepen our connection with our own selves.



**Sat**  
**11 May**

Free Talk  
& Presentation

**6 pm (2 hrs)**  
**at Mumbai Center**  
**(Colaba)**

[Register Here](#)



## WISDOM OF OUR SUN: FROM ANCIENT MYTHS TO MODERN INSIGHTS

The Sun... the heart of our solar system, gives life and light, warmth and energy to everything it touches. All living beings are naturally aligned to its cycles of day and night, and seasons. Ancient traditions from the east and west, revered the sun as a source of life, and modern science continues to make incredible discoveries about its nature. What secrets and lessons for life can we learn from our Sun? Join aspiring philosophers of New Acropolis to explore!

# PUBLIC EVENTS NEW ACROPOLIS **MUMBAI**

**Sat**  
**25 May**

Free Talk  
& Workshop

**6 pm (2 hrs)**  
**at Mumbai Center**  
**(Colaba)**

[Register Here](#)



## **TRANSFORMING IMPERFECTIONS: INSPIRATION FROM JAPANESE CULTURE**

The Japanese art of Kintsugi, entails repairing broken objects with golden lacquer – highlighting rather than hiding their cracks, and thereby transforming them into more beautiful objects. Can we develop the art of working with our own imperfections, and learn to transform ourselves into more beautiful and authentic human beings? Let's explore philosophy as a way of life to discover some practical answers.

**Sun**  
**9 Jun**

Free Event

**6 pm (2 hrs)**  
Venue TBD

[Register Here](#)



## **MANY TRADITIONS, ONE ESSENCE: SEEKING BEAUTY THROUGH DIVERSITY OF EXPRESSIONS**

"Each of us can have our tone, our particular quality, but all together we can make something beautiful and worthy of being lived." - Delia Steinberg Guzmán (former Honorary President of New Acropolis)

New Acropolis, Mumbai invites you for a special evening of the Arts, Beauty and Inspiration - Celebrating the remarkable ability of the Arts to transcend barriers of race, gender, language and speak directly to the Human Soul.

We investigate how diverse forms and expressions are united in their seeking for Beauty; how Beauty, when attained, enriches not just our day to day lives, but has the power to unite us through a shared Human experience, opening and elevating the Heart and Mind.

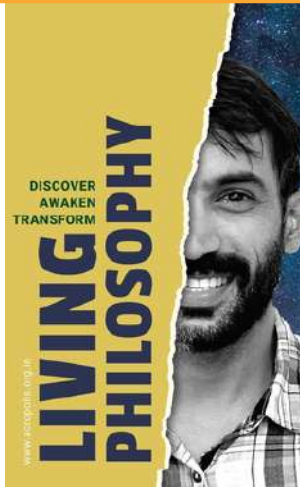


**Wed  
19 Jun**

Free Introduction

**7:30 pm (2 hrs)  
at Mumbai Center  
(Colaba)**

[Register Here](#)



## **FREE INTRODUCTION TO LIVING PHILOSOPHY COURSE**

**2 hours once a week | 20 weeks  
to discover Philosophy as a Way of Life**

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

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

**Sat  
22 Jun**

Free Workshop

**6 pm (2 hrs)  
at Mumbai Center  
(Colaba)**

[Register Here](#)



## **KNOW YOURSELF: THE GREATEST ADVENTURE!**

*A glimpse into Living Philosophy*

We look to travel the world, gain knowledge and information from around us – all in search of answers on how to live a meaningful life or what makes us happy. But wise men and women from every tradition or civilization from across the world remind us that the real answers always lie within ourselves. How can we embark on this great adventure - of traversing unexplored terrains, navigating road bumps and external distractions, in order to come closer to our true nature? Let the pursuit of wisdom by seekers across traditions light our way. Let's set forth on an inner-adventure.

# PUBLIC EVENTS NEW ACROPOLIS PUNE

**Sat**  
**13th April**

Free Talk and  
Presentation

**6 pm (2 hrs)**  
**at Pune Branch**

[Register Here](#)



## MOVEMENT TOWARDS HUMANISM – LESSONS FROM LEONARDO DA VINCI

The period of the Renaissance in Europe revived humanism giving rise to a cultural flowering of the arts, literature, science, education and religion. Join us as we celebrate the birth anniversary of the renaissance philosopher, Leonardo Da Vinci, and investigate his relentless pursuit of truth and beauty. Perhaps we can draw inspiration on how we can bring about a renaissance in our own times today.

**Sat**  
**27th April**

Free Talk and  
Presentation

**6 pm (2 hrs)**  
**at Pune Branch**

[Register Here](#)



## MANY SEEDS, ONE GARDEN: LESSONS FROM SACRED GROVES OF INDIA

*Celebrating International Mother Earth Day*

India has a tradition of growing and maintaining sacred groves. There are thousands of sacred groves in India. These are natural or near-natural vegetation that is preserved by the local communities and is believed to be presided over by a deity who offers protection to all life forms within the groves. In addition to having cultural significance, it serves as an ecological and medicinal reserve, helping to conserve biodiversity.

As part of celebrations marking International Mother Earth Day, we invite you to a talk by the National Director of New Acropolis, Yaron Barzilay, who will share with us his insights from his philosophical experience and his explorations from the sacred groves of India on how we could live and thrive in union through all our differences.

**Sun**  
**28th April**

Hands-on Activity  
(For Members,  
Friends & Family)

**11 am (3 hours)**  
**at Pune Branch**

[Register Here](#)



## MANY SEEDS, ONE GARDEN: GROWING TOGETHER

*Celebrating International Mother Earth Day*

To nurture a seed, and to pay attention to its protection, growth, and nourishment demands constancy, concentration, love and sensitivity. To be a good gardener demands a process, which needs patience and love for learning.

This Mother Earth Day, volunteers of New Acropolis Pune, a school of philosophy, will work towards developing symbiotic relationship with nature, starting with our own terrace and gardens. We will investigate techniques for gardening, learn about the needs of various different seeds, set up kitchen beds and learn principles of composting. Volunteers will adopt and care for these plants and learn to grow with them over time. May be, nature will open her secrets if we learn to open our hearts in union.

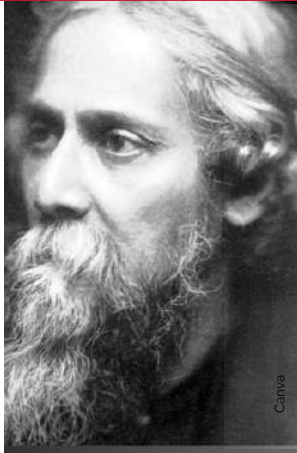
# PUBLIC EVENTS NEW ACROPOLIS PUNE

**Sat**  
**11th May**

Free Interactive  
Talk

**6 pm (2 hrs)**  
**at Pune Branch**

[Register Here](#)



## **YEARNING FOR UNITY – LESSONS FROM TAGORE**

"Everything comes to us that belongs to us if we create the capacity to receive it."

Rabindranath Tagore is a Poet, Writer, Artist and Philosopher. He brought together the aesthetic sense of the artist and the searching conscience of the poet-philosopher. Tagore's life is an example of dedication, and personal example.

Marking Birth Anniversary of the Poet Philosopher born on 7th May 1861, this talk explores keys to how we could develop this approach in our lives today by delving into his life, work and inspirations.

**Sat**  
**25th May**

Free Talk and  
Workshop

**6 pm (2 hrs)**  
**at Pune Branch**

[Register Here](#)



## **ART OF COMMUNICATION - BUILDING BRIDGES ACROSS HEARTS**

In the age of fast-paced technology in communication, are we communicating more effectively – with more meaning? Let us revive the art of listening and the art of speaking, so that we can learn to connect better with our own self, with others and with life.

We will also look at some practical ways to listen effectively, and connect from the heart and to build bridges between humans.

**Sat**  
**1st Jun**

Free Interactive  
Talk

**6 pm (2 hrs)**  
**at Pune Branch**

[Register Here](#)



## **FINDING STABILITY AMIDST CHANGE**

*A glimpse into Living Philosophy*

Amidst distractions and uncertainties around us, can we discover a more stable centre within ourselves, that can serve as our anchor and compass despite the changes? Explore how the path of Philosophy can help us build inner stability and strength in our times today.

Join us as we learn from the personal experience of how inner calm can strengthen the spirit to bring clarity, stability and strength in challenging times.

# PUBLIC EVENTS NEW ACROPOLIS PUNE

**Sun  
09th Jun**

Free Event

**11 am  
(Day-long event)  
at Pune Branch**

[Register Here](#)



## **MANY TRADITIONS, ONE ESSENCE: SEEKING BEAUTY THROUGH DIVERSITY OF EXPRESSIONS.**

A true artist who seeks beauty, whether through an artform, or in daily life, has to embark on a process of learning the importance of proportions, the keys of harmony, the power of silence and concentration, and the value of patience that is needed in a philosopher's search. If there is an artist inside you, who is yearning to experience 'unity' and develop 'beauty' inside and around, you may want to join us in order to awaken some inspiration, and to revive the search of beauty through the diverse expressions.

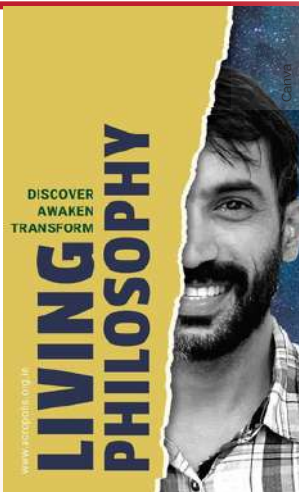
Join us on a daylong celebration of culture at New Acropolis Pune. We will have literary reading and theatrical exercise session related to Shakespearean plays, poetry writing session of Japanese Haiku, an origami workshop, a talk and workshop on silent carpentry, a talk by an expert on music and architecture, followed by an evening of classical musical/ dance recital.

**Wed  
12th Jun**

Free  
Introduction

**7:30 pm (2 hrs)  
at Pune Branch**

[Register Here](#)



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Discover Philosophy as a Way of Life**

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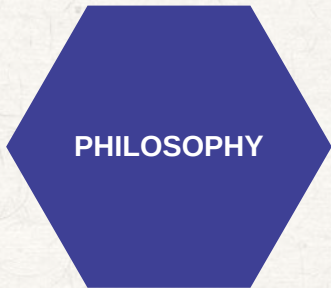
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Philosophy, when it is practical, is educational. It helps us to know ourselves and to improve ourselves. To be a philosopher is a way of life committed to the best aspirations of humanity.



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



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

## OUR CENTERS

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