

THEACROPOLITAN

A Magazine on Philosophy, Culture & Volunteering

FEATURE

THE INNER GOLD OF THE ALCHEMISTS

HOW CAN WE HUMANIZE
THE WORLD WE ARE LIVING IN?

PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES OF SANSKRIT

CHANGING THE WORLD
BY CHANGING CONSUMPTION

SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC EVENTS

THE ACROPOLITAN

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FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

Dear Reader,

Advancements in science and technology over the last century, demonstrate our innate motivation to push the boundaries in the quest of the material unknown. However, we are perhaps yet to make equal strides in the meta-physical plane, to give expression to the true potential of Man, beyond the material realm. Ancient traditions have unraveled these secrets and left their unearthed treasures in the nuances of language, in their ceremonious interactions with nature, and the ancient sciences.

There is a need, therefore, to dispel the obsessive desire for the new; for we may not need to invent anything new. Maybe our glory lies in re-illuminating ancient wisdom and discover their relevance and application to our own times. Because ultimately, Man has not fundamentally changed. And although fashions have evolved, language has transformed, and social media has enabled unprecedented real-time connectivity, we continue to ask the same fundamental questions: Who am I? What is my purpose? What does it truly mean to live?

Let us dare to investigate these existential questions, and reinstate the glory of the voyage of philosophy as a truly practical means by which to explore life. In this issue, we invite you to discover, awaken, and transform!

The Editorial Team

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HOW CAN WE HUMANIZE THE WORLD WE ARE LIVING IN?

BY PIERRE POULAIN



When I was a child I was a fan of Science-Fiction books. I remember especially some classics such as the *Foundation* series by Isaac Asimov, and books written by Van Vogt, Philip K. Dick, Robert Heinlein or Philip Jose Farmer, just to mention a few.

While reading those books I was dreaming of the future. We were in the seventies, and this moment of the 21st century was still the future. Some writers imagined a post-apocalyptic world, a result of a nuclear conflagration or something similar, but most imagined the still near future - we were only 30 years from the turn of the century - as a better world where most of the problems would be resolved by science and its applications.

Of course Orwell wrote *1984* and warned us of "Big Brother", but even he could not imagine that this nightmare will actually take the form of a reality show on TV. But is it really just a show?

The concept that underlies Big Brother is the need to control citizens...all citizens worldwide. Why?

They say that they have to protect us...but who has to protect us? And against whom? Or what?

They say that they have to protect us from terrorism, fanaticism, extremism, sectarianism and a bunch of other concepts, *isms*...but who are "they"? And who gave them the mandate to "protect" us?

People are fighting for concepts, but they have vanished under the shadow of those concepts. We don't fight for humans anymore. We fight for concepts.

They say that they are the guardians of Democracy, and they will protect our human rights, give us the right opportunity, our liberty...and other similar concepts.

The world seems to have become a battlefield where the "bad concept" - the *isms* - are fighting the good dudes - the *tys*. But as more time passes, it becomes even more evident that whoever

the winner, there will be one looser for sure: the human being.

People are fighting for concepts, but they have vanished under the shadow of those concepts. We don't fight for humans anymore. We fight for concepts: for democracy, for order, for a tradition, an opinion, or a religion. The concept may change, but it is always a concept.

The future we have dreamed of is not the present we are living in. We have dreamed of a future where science and technology serve humanity, and it appears that what has occurred is exactly the opposite. Technology became a tool to serve ideological concepts, and humanity is reduced to become the experimental laboratory where those concepts are applied.



This became possible as the result of a process of unification and simplification, a consequence of globalization. Let's take for example "Facebook". It is presented as a tool to serve each individual to build and maintain his "social network", which is in fact his relationships: family, colleagues and friends. The idea seems, and is, genuine, but one cannot be reduced to a title of "friend", "relation", "partner", etc. A human being is much more than a title and a category. He has his own feelings, comprehensions, opinions, sensibility, imagination and interrogations, and this wide range of expressions is today reduced to a "Like" option, a push-button on a screen.

The classical philosophies from every culture teach us that man is a complex unity; a subtle union of visible and invisible, material and spiritual. Each human being is particular, each a whole world. Discovering ourselves is always an adventure. There is no readymade response to Socrates' "Know yourself", and this is why this adventure may be the adventure of a lifetime.

The classical philosophies from every culture teach us that man is a complex unity; a subtle union of visible and invisible, material and spiritual. Each human being is particular, each a whole world.

The main problem with Facebook, Google+, and the "social network" phenomenon, is the globalization mentality and its use of technology in general, which resides in the choice of a non-philosophical and materialistic approach, because the unification is done by reduction instead of the management of the complexity.

Let's explain this last point. From a classical philosophical way of thinking, unity is always better than separation. In Buddhism, unity is even the only reality, and separation is considered the greatest illusion, the most powerful and dangerous. Applied to our daily life, this means that we have to consider our identity and our finality in life as part of a Union of human beings - which is Humanity - rather than develop an identity based on the separation - separation of cultures, religions, social status, age, place of living, or any artificial group we would choose to identify with. We are Human beings

before being any "part" of it. We are Human beings before being Jewish. We are Human beings before being Arab. We are Human beings before being anything else.

This is Unity. But in this Unity we must be able to recognize, understand and accept the reality of the diversity. There are two possible ways to reach this unity: by cancelling the diversity and by making all the parts identical...or by understanding that the diversity is the source of the enrichment of the Union. Israel for example is culturally and humanly rich because of the diversity of cultural roots of the Israeli people, rather than because they found their identity in the same elements.

To reach the union by canceling the differences is the choice of Facebook and of Globalization. Of course there is the option to "comment" on your Facebook wall to show your difference...but will it be really different? The syncretic messages we read on walls are usually built from the same mould, and it is hard to see cultural enrichment and dialogue between a "LOL" comment from Asia and the same from the US. Our world has chosen the way of uniting by simplification and reduction; don't be different... or if you are different, show your particularity in a controlled and accepted environment...like your Facebook wall.

The technology, as the omni-present surveillance camera in the main cities worldwide is used to assure respect of this simplification; all real differences have to be reported, more or less openly - depending on the political system in place - corrected or canceled. In any case, it is controlled. So what can we do? Has this situation reached a point of non-return? It is obvious that nobody will stop the development of technology, and that Facebook, Google+, and other social networks are here to stay as long as the Internet will stand. It won't be wise to refuse to use these tools, but we have to learn to use them wisely; to use them for showing our difference and our specificity, to enrich

the web instead of confirming that we are just like anyone else, by pushing a button on a screen.



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Philosophy is about discernment, and we have to find how to use technology to enrich us as human beings, instead of entering a stream of simplification and reduction. "Like" if you want...but only if you can express, show, publish, and demonstrate WHY you like something. Publish something on your wall if this act has a signification, a message to pass, be it through an image, a symbol, a video, text or music. Have the pride not to accept the reduction of your presence on the web to a simple "Like". Be there for something...or don't be there.

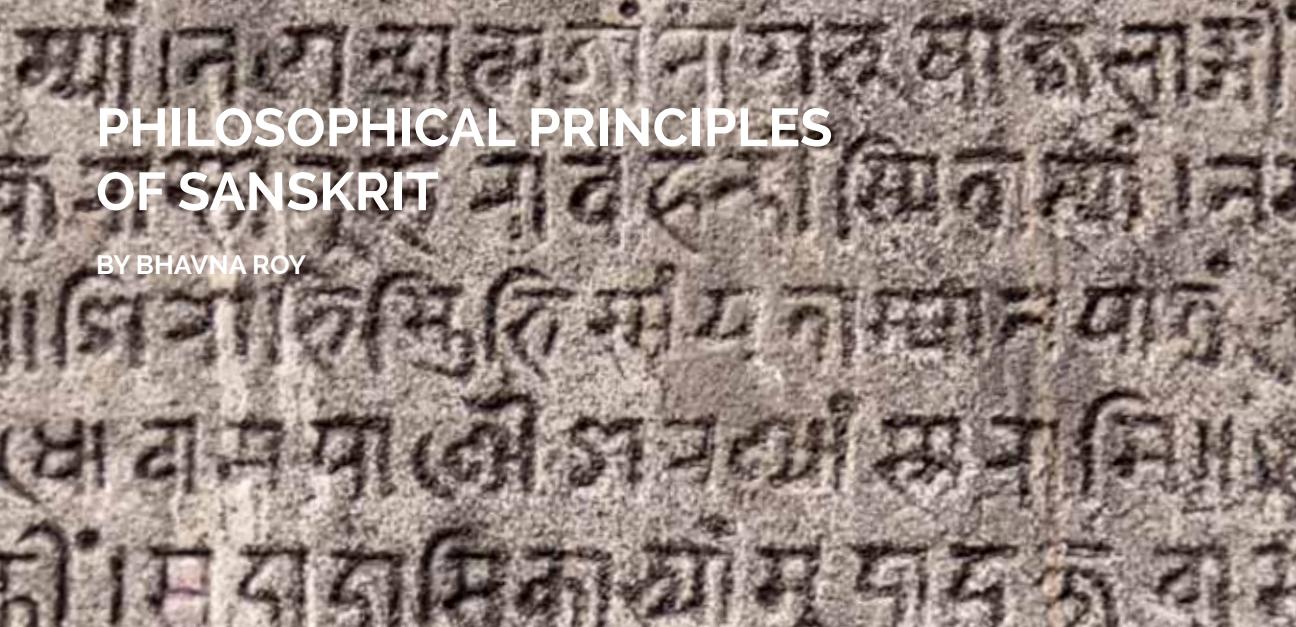
The real issue is not Facebook, but the fact that we are enchaining ourselves by following the illusions of liberation which in reality, keeps us deeper in the cave, away from the real sun which is shining outside the cave. But just like in Plato's myth...the key is always ours, and the condition of our enslavement, or freedom, depends only on us.

See you on Facebook...I have my page at <http://www.facebook.com/pierre.photos.art> and you can comment...but I only publish pictures...don't expect me to respond with a "like". ★★★

This article was first published in Hebrew in November 2011 in the Acropolis Magazine of Israel. Mr. Pierre Poulaïn is the Founder and National Director of New Acropolis Israel.

PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES OF SANSKRIT

BY BHAVNA ROY



"In the beginning was the word, and the word was God." - John 1:1

"Om is everything; the past, the present, and the future is an expression of Om." - Mandukya Upanishad

As if echoing these ancient scriptures, quantum physicists state that creation began with the Big Bang - a first pulse of vibration; vibration is sound. The beginning of creation is therefore conceived as a primordial word. As creatures evolved, creation itself developed protocols to interact within the created world. When exactly did humans develop a flair for ordering, organising and harmonising sound within layers of the complexity and sophistication of language? I guess we will never know!

Languages are born in the crucible of a core culture, which shapes its nuances and its very nature, in a subtle though seminal fashion. Classical Sanskrit emerged from the minds of a people whose life was defined by a philosophical exploration of the myriad components of life. Blessed by nature, these prescient people observed the mathematical precision and harmony that exists in the world of

form: the plants and animals, the sun, the moon and the stars - the very universe that they believed they were an intrinsic, if infinitesimal, component of. Sanskrit, known as *devabhasha*, the language of the Gods, as if pre-existing, is said to have been re-discovered as a process of this philosophical exploration, and demonstrated the precision and wisdom woven into its very structure. The language can therefore be understood at a deeper, more philosophical level; for it was a language which did not aim to spread or conquer, but to explore and decode life. Communication was a valid, though minor aspect of its overall purpose.

Classical Sanskrit emerged from the minds of a people whose life was defined by a philosophical exploration of the myriad components of life.

The rules of Sanskrit, orally preserved since times immemorial, got codified around 6th and 5th century BCE by Panini, whose *Ashtadhyayi* is the foundational text of Sanskrit grammar as we know it

today. Intriguingly, its grammar nudges one toward introspection, the world within, something unmet by many modern languages.

The Vaidika people discovered and adhered to some foundational concepts in early mathematics. This mathematical understanding is reflected in the rules and governing principles of Sanskrit, which are logical and therefore inflexible, requiring no exceptions. It did, however, allow for flexibility within the rule, for example: $1+3+5+2 = 3+1+2+5 = 11$. In keeping with this mathematical truism, unlike in English, the position of the subject, object, verb, preposition, etc. do not change the meaning of a sentence! This perhaps suggests the inherent importance of the conveyed essence of a sentence, rather than a preoccupation with the form (the sentence structure) in which the essence is conveyed - for the world of form, the *rupa*, is conceived of as an every-changing realm of illusions through which an investigative philosopher must traverse to grasp the essential, the principle, the eternal.

Furthermore, the Sanskrit alphabet - *varna* - has two types of syllables:

1. *svara*, the 16 vowels, considered *sampurna* or complete sounds
2. *vyanjana*, the 33 consonants which are *a-sampurna*, or not-complete sounds.

The consonants therefore need to 'mate' with the vowels in order to emerge as sound. The emergent consonants are systematically categorised after analysing the anatomical and vibrational basis of the sound: gutturals, linguals, palatals, dentals, labials, and nasal. The nasal sounds are further sub-divided into the *Soorya* (Sun) section, which is the right side of the nasal stream, and the *Chandra* (Moon) section, which is the left side of the nasal stream.

Sanskritologists and sages of the past asserted that each sound has a vibrational effect on the energy pathways of the human body, resulting in a physiological impact. Words and *mantras*

(incantations), were therefore designed deliberately to alter the material state of the body. And, since Man is an integral part of nature, it follows that the same laws apply to every other aspect of nature. Therefore, by extension, the transformative impact of the sounds would conceivably affect also the world around, indeed the cosmos. The language therefore might have been an essential tool to interact with the world, and serve it by transforming it, bringing alignment to areas of imbalance. Interestingly, recent research validates this self-transformative impact: on physiological health as well as elevation in consciousness.



There is an intriguing philosophical twist to the word that can be used for the object, in a sentence. The object is the result of an interrogative pronoun: WHO, WHAT, WHICH, WHOSE, WHOM. For instance, when a devotee, deep in *bhakti*, professes his love for the divine, he might say, "I love Raam." Note each component of the statement:

	English	Sanskrit
Verb	to love	<i>snih</i> – conjugated with 'I' as <i>snihyaami</i>
Subject	I	<i>aham</i>
Object	Raam	<i>raamam, raamaay, raame</i> – depending on intended meaning

If there is an expectation of return in the act of loving, for instance, then we may use the *dvitiya* (accusative) form of the object:

aham snihyaami raamam

raamam implies that the speaker expects a return for his act of loving, perhaps blessings.

If, on the other hand, there is no expectation of return in the act of loving, we may use the *chaturthi* (dative) form of the object. Introspective wisdom was built into the very grammar of the language!

aham snihyaami raamaay

raamaay implies that the speaker chooses to love Lord Raam and simply rejoice in that bliss, without any expectation.

Finally, the object can also be expressed in the locative case (which corresponds to the English prepositions IN, ON, AT, BY):

aham snihyaami raame

By using *raame* the speaker declares with a flourish: my love locates me within Raam.

Incidentally, the root word for love, *snih*, is in practice only combined with the locative form of the object: *aham snihyaami tvayi*, meaning I am located in you. Not *aham snihyaami tvaam*, which would be the accusative and therefore a 'separating' form of the object. These philosophers recognised the very nature of love as unifying, locating oneself in the other, and not separating; and they took care to weave this attitude into the grammar associated with the language. So much for the bland, "I love you!"

While all modern languages have singular and plural forms, in Sanskrit each noun also has a dual form: the one, the two, and the many. The ancients had a clear conception of the divine unity, The One which expresses itself into duality, bringing forth the plurality of creation. This principle was embedded into the language itself.

A 'mood' is suggestive of the manner in which a verb is used. In the English language, there is no imperative or benedictive mood in the first person singular that

can be used as an ending of a sentence; meaning that the speaker cannot permit or request himself to act, except when part of a larger group. For instance, we cannot say, "Love I". However, both the imperative mood (*lot*) and the benedictive mood (*asheerling*) in Sanskrit, imagine grounds for the existence of the first person singular as an ending! I can permit myself to love me, tutor me, lead me, berate me...! This suggests a dual sense of self; perhaps a higher (the eternal) and lower (the personality which is conditioned by ever-changing circumstances, and through which one interacts with the manifest world). So I, the lower self, can aspire to earn the blessings of I, the higher self! No doubt, English too gives space to the philosophical idea, "I bless me." However, in doing so, the grammar of English treats 'me' as an object to I, rather than as the subject!

Be it in the seemingly simple aspect of the locative case being necessary for the root verb "to love", or in the seemingly complex ocean that is the self-confronting tense of *lot* and *asheerling*. Sanskrit has the capacity to shift the axis that balances the experience of life. We can choose to check in at the kindergarten level and learn to speak a language. Or, if suitably adventurous in a philosophical sense, we can unleash the very potential of what it means to be human, through a language that gently shepherds us into discovering principles of life, and therefore also our true selves. Are we ready to undertake this journey in this lifetime? ★★★

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THE INNER GOLD OF THE ALCHEMISTS

BY JULIAN SCOTT



Alchemy seems to be an almost universal science. Not only do we find it in Medieval Europe, but also in China and India, amongst other places. This is perhaps because it is not just a primitive forerunner of modern chemistry, but a sacred science in its own right, which was studied wherever esoteric knowledge has appeared.

The first thing I would like to do is to sweep aside the false image of the bumbling medieval alchemist who tried vainly to turn lead into gold, as a way of getting rich. If there was not some substance behind alchemy, surely people would not have been so universally foolish as to spend the best part of their lives pursuing a mere chimera.

As in all the magical arts, there are fakes and fools alongside saints and sages. Alchemy is no exception. But the names of eminent alchemists include the greatest scientists and intellects of the Middle Ages.

Although Western Alchemy first appeared in late classical times, and probably had its origin in Egypt ("Al-Kem", Kem being the Egyptians' word for Egypt), the first cited Alchemists appear in the Arab world, from where this science passed to the West.

One of the most famous Arabian alchemists was Avicenna (980-1037), a man of immense knowledge and reputation, equivalent to a Plato or Aristotle in Greece. Extraordinary stories about him abound. It was believed, for example, that all the Spirits of the Elements were subject to him. There is also a tradition that, owing to his knowledge of the Elixir of Life, he still lives, as an adept who will disclose himself to the profane at the end of a certain cycle. At the opposite end of the scale, he was said to have drank so excessively that he was sacked from his job as Grand Vizier and died in comparative obscurity. In view of his enormous literary output and skill as a doctor, this seems rather unlikely, but the point is this: would such a great scholar and sage have wasted his time on a superstition?

In Europe, alchemy is represented by such towering figures as Roger Bacon, "Doctor Mirabilis", who invented spectacles and predicted many phenomena such as aeroplanes, microscopes, steam engines and telescopes. The long list also includes Paracelsus and John Dee. Both of the latter were again extremely powerful minds, John Dee being a genial mathematician and Paracelsus a brilliant doctor. Such people cannot be dismissed as charlatans, quacks or eccentrics, because their results speak for themselves. Paracelsus, for

example, was once accused of being an impostor and "not a real doctor". He thereupon challenged his accusers to hand over to him some of their own "incurable" cases. In a very short time he had cured them all, a fact which was then testified to by several witnesses at the town hall.

The external aim of alchemy is to transmute base metals into gold, an aim which is commonly thought to be impossible. Nowadays, however it is possible, by altering the atomic structure of an element. But this requires such intricate knowledge of the nature of the atom and such sophisticated equipment that it is presumed impossible for medieval alchemists to have achieved it.

The evidence is against such a presumption. There are many testimonials from alchemists and others of cases of genuine transmutation. Even in our own times, we hear of a French alchemist who in 1969 produced gold and had it analysed by German and Swiss laboratories. It was declared by them to be "a new state of matter".

This occult science has several fundamental principles, one of which is that matter does not only consist of the visible elements, but also of normally invisible elements, more subtle states of matter visible only to clairvoyant sight.

So how did these alchemists in the "pre-scientific age" achieve such extraordinary results? The only explanation that I know of is that these men were well versed in "occult science"; that is, they studied in a tradition of knowledge which gave access to a deep understanding of nature, visible and invisible.

This occult science has several fundamental principles, one of which is that matter does not only consist of the visible elements, but also of normally invisible elements, more subtle states of matter visible only to clairvoyant sight. Another principle is that the more dense level of matter (the physical) is only a materialisation of the more subtle levels of matter. In terms of scientific research, this means that if you can look into the subtle planes of nature, you get a clearer and more real view of the nature of things and you can deal with their causes. So, for example, if you are a doctor, you can find the causes of an illness on the subtle planes, and cure it at its root, rather than its symptom.

But to see on these planes and to work on them effectively, you have to purify and work on yourself so that you awaken consciously on those inner planes. This requires training yourself to be aware of subtle elements and to control and direct them. We all know how difficult it is to control a feeling; and even more difficult to control a thought. It is also difficult (though less so) to control our energy levels, to the extent that we can overcome tiredness for example. These are the subtle planes of nature (The alchemists called them the Four Elements) and as we work upon them we become increasingly conscious of them until eventually we start seeing things clearly in those regions and our control over them becomes perfect: we can work on them as easily as a sculptor can work on stone.

So the alchemist does the same: he seeks the root of matter, the "Prima Materia" (an invisible and formless matter on the most subtle plane of nature) and out of this, through a long and painstaking process he forms what is known as "the Philosopher's Stone", a (physical?) object with apparently miraculous, transformative and healing properties. With this Stone, or Tincture, he can transmute baser metals into purer ones, heal diseases and increase longevity.

What the Alchemist is doing, then, is following the process of natural creation. Thus, Paracelsus speaks



of "Natural Alchemy": "Natural Alchemy causes the pear to ripen and produces grapes on a vine. Natural alchemy separates the useful elements from the food that is put into the stomach, transforms it into chyle and blood, into muscles and bones, and rejects that which is useless. A physician who knows nothing of alchemy can only be a servant of nature... but the alchemist is her lord."

The teacher of Paracelsus, Johannes Tritheim, Abbot of Spanheim, speaks of the process of materialising subtle elements in alchemy:

"The art of divine magic consists in the ability to perceive the essence of things in the light of Nature, and by using the soul-powers of the spirit to produce material things from the unseen universe... You will learn the law by which these things are accomplished, if you learn to know yourself... Gold is of a threefold nature, and there is an ethereal, a fluid, and a material gold. It is the same gold, only in three different states; and gold in one state may be made into gold in another state."

So we come now to the Inner Gold of the Alchemists. In Plato's Republic, Socrates suggests a myth that there are four different types of men, each of whom have a certain type of metal in their souls: Iron, copper, silver and gold. The men of gold are the Philosophers (in the true sense of Lovers of Wisdom, those who love wisdom more than fame or wealth). Paracelsus speaks of the philosopher in a similar way. He says: "We know that a lover will go a long way to meet the woman he adores – how much more will the lover of wisdom be tempted to go in search of his divine mistress!"

In alchemy, there is the idea that, in the metallic kingdom, the object of nature is invariably to create gold. The production of the baser metals is an accident of the process, or the result of an unfavourable environment. Gold is therefore the archetype or goal of the metallic kingdom, and in a similar way, the Man of Gold is the Archetype or Goal of the Human Kingdom. The idea is that one day, all metals will be gold and all men will be 'philosophers', pure and incorruptible, as luminous and giving as the Sun itself.

The men of gold are the Philosophers (in the true sense of Lovers of Wisdom, those who love wisdom more than fame or wealth).

Plato also said of those philosopher-kings of his Republic, that, since they would have gold in their souls, they should have no desire for physical gold. And this seems to have been true of the great alchemists of the Middle Ages. People like John Dee and Paracelsus were not rich. Roger Bacon was a monk. Such people were obviously not motivated by the desire for gain, because they had sufficient wealth in themselves. As H.P. Blavatsky says in her "Isis Unveiled": "Illuminated with the light of eternal truth, these rich-poor alchemists fixed

their attention upon the things that lie beyond the common ken, recognising nothing inscrutable but the First Cause, and finding no question unsolvable. To dare, to know, to will and REMAIN SILENT, was their constant rule..."

Another alchemist, Agrippa von Nettesheim, declared: "I could say much more about this art, were it not for the oath of silence usually taken by initiates into the mysteries".

The inner gold of the alchemists could therefore be defined as Wisdom, or Sophia. It is the knowledge of the full majesty of the universal creation in all its facets.

The inner gold of the alchemists could therefore be defined as Wisdom, or Sophia. It is the knowledge of the full majesty of the universal creation in all its facets... and the experiential knowledge that that majesty is also expressed through oneself. As above, so below: Man is a microcosm of the macrocosmos. Man contains within himself the whole mystery of life. As the Greeks used to say on their temples: "Know yourself and you will know the universe and the gods".

What is the path towards this divine wisdom? One alchemical writer put it thus: "Patience is the ladder of philosophers, and humility is the key to their garden". Another (F. Hartmann, in his biography of Paracelsus), states: "The highest form of alchemy is the transformation of vices into virtues by the fire of love for the good, the purification of the mind by suffering, the elevation of the divine principle in man over the animal elements of his soul". Having achieved this process of sublimation, however, it is possible to return to the world of matter and improve it. For as the same author states: "By the power of

the spirit, material elements may be sublimated into invisible (astral) elements, or invisible substances may be coagulated and become visible". It could perhaps be compared to Plato's myth of the Cave: the philosopher emerges from the cave of the senses into the light of truth, and then returns back into the cave to illuminate his fellow human beings. Alchemy is about this two-way process which is symbolised by the three main stages of the work: the black (nigredo) of dissolution; the white of Sublimation (albedo); and the red of "exaltation", corresponding to the philosopher's stone which produces gold. Hence, returning to the men of gold in Plato's Republic, it is significant that they were not only philosophers, but kings (red being the royal colour), they were in the world, working for the good of humanity, but not of the world.



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Many learned works have been written concerning the distinct phases of the work of alchemy and their significance, whether from a moral, psychological or physical standpoint. But I am purposely not going to go into detail on this matter, since it is a specialist field of study which in most cases is of a very speculative nature; and without the guidance of an initiated teacher, or a special illumination, as A.E. Waite points out, "the student is likely to be adrift and the Prima Materia will forever escape him". It is not possible to commence the work of Alchemy without this Prima Materia and, as it is never clearly specified exactly what it is (presumably because

it refers to matter in a highly ethereal state), it is impossible to discover without such guidance. On this point there is a fascinating story told by the Italian Renaissance philosopher and alchemist Pico della Mirandola of "a good man who had not a sufficiency to support his family and was reduced to the last extremity of distress; with an agitated mind he went one night to sleep, and in a dream he beheld a blessed angel, who, by means of enigmas, instructed him in the method of making gold, and indicated to him, at the same time, the water he should use to ensure success. At his awaking he proceeded to work with this water, and made gold, truly in small quantity, yet sufficient to support his family. Twice he made gold of iron and four times of orpiment. He convinced me by the evidence of my own eyes that the art of transmutation is no fiction".

Alchemy should therefore be redefined as one of the lost spiritual sciences which, like its sister Astrology, combines the deep study of nature with the study of man, and enables the adept (he who has attained) to bring both man and nature to perfection. Paracelsus said that there were three qualities necessary for the work of alchemy: Prayer (meaning a strong desire or aspiration for what is good); Faith (not a blind faith, he says, but one which is based on knowledge, an unwavering confidence); and Imagination (which he describes as "being sunk into deep thought, drowned in his own soul").

Alchemy should therefore be redefined as one of the lost spiritual sciences which, like its sister Astrology, combines the deep study of nature with the study of man.

The inner gold of the alchemists is the perfected individual and the philosopher's gold is the



Portrait of Paracelsus

perfection of nature. Both man and nature are evolving towards this perfection, but man can help in the evolutionary process by understanding and working on himself and on nature. Working only on the material level is a very poor kind of science which, one day, will hopefully be expanded into the greater Science of Life (sometimes known as "Magic").

Far from being the deluded individuals which the history of science so likes to imagine, the true alchemists were great initiates who, in many ways, knew more of nature than our scientists of today. Masters both of nature and themselves, they always placed that mastery at the service of God and Humanity and never employed it for their own petty gain. ★★



CHANGING THE WORLD BY CHANGING CONSUMPTION

BY DILIP JAIN

One of the world's leading voices on the issue of climate change and protecting the environment at the 2015 Paris Climate Conference was Dr. Jane Goodall, a renowned primatologist. In one of her interviews, she explains that she came to Paris for the UN climate summit "to save the rainforests" from corruption and intensive farming. "Well, the thing is, it's not about one person, and can they make a difference? Everybody everyday does make a difference. And if we think about the consequences of the choices we make — what we buy, what we eat and consume, what we wear—and we start making the right ethical choices, then when that's multiplied a thousand, a million, a billion, several billion times, we see the world moving towards change. So the most important thing is to give people hope. I have seen areas that have been destroyed that have come back to be beautiful again and support life. Nature is resilient. Animal species on the brink of extinction can be given another chance." (1)

In December 2007, Annie Leonard and her friends at Free Range Studios put together a 20-minute movie about the way we make, use, and throw away stuff, unleashing a torrent of pent-up demand for honest conversation. The movie investigates the

impact of our consumer-crazed culture on people, and the planet. In the six years since *The Story of Stuff* (www.storyofstuff.org) was released, Annie's 'cartoon about trash' has had over 40 million views worldwide. This video can be seen at <https://youtu.be/gGorqroigqM>. (2)

We hate the economical, environmental, political and social destruction that is happening around us...but most of the time, we feel helpless... What can we do? What can I do?

In a way, these efforts by Dr. Goodall and Annie are motivated by their concern for us. We too are concerned about the problems that are affecting our societies, our cities, our countries and our planet. We sense them daily in various forms and try hard to protect ourselves and our dear ones from their dangers. We hate the economical, environmental,

political and social destruction that is happening around us...but most of the time, we feel helpless... What can we do? What can I do?

Amongst various other things, one thing that can make a lasting impact is being more aware and conscious about our consumption habits.

Today we find that modern cities are planned around vast Shopping Malls! And most of us are heavily influenced by what we see, what we hear, and what we are made to feel.

We buy and consume a variety of products and services every day. Beyond basic needs, these include luxury items and technological innovations meant to improve efficiency. Such consumption, beyond the basic needs, is not necessarily a bad thing in itself. Throughout history we have always sought to find ways to make our lives a bit easier to live. However, there are important issues around consumerism that increasingly need to be addressed.

How are the products and resources we consume actually produced? What are the impacts of that process of production on the environment, society and on individuals? How do consumption habits change as societies change? How much of what we consume is influenced by external factors versus our real needs? How do material values influence our personal values and relationships with our surroundings? And so on...

The consumption habits of each one of us, good or bad, aggregates and become the consumption

habit of the community that we belong to. Either some influential person sets the standard that the community follows or we follow what most other people in our community do. At one end, a village named Piplantri in Rajasthan plants 111 trees on the birth of a girl child. On another end, most other villages in Rajasthan spend insanely and lavishly on marriages. In both cases, one individual set the habit of the community and that became the de facto social norm. An ordinary man has too many motivators to follow the herd and too many fears to go against it.

It is important to remember that not too far in the past, before globalization and the advent of modern technology; most people consumed local products and services. For thousands of years, physical limitations coupled with spiritual awareness influenced the consumption habits of men driven by the need to survive and thrive.

For instance, ancient Athens was built around the Acropolis, a higher city located in the center of the city. It was the place for inspiration and wisdom, the place where the temples and academic institutions were located. This inspiration is said to have motivated the transformation of each citizen into fulfilling a spiritual destiny.



Today we find that modern cities are planned around vast Shopping Malls! And most of us are heavily influenced by what we see, what we hear, and what we are made to feel. Marketing and the media

influences our choices and drives our decisions, fueling the fundamentally flawed concept of consumerism. Victor Lebow an economist wrote a very pertinent account of modern consumerism in his paper, *Price Competition in 1955*, published in the 1955 Spring Issue of the *Journal of Retailing*.

"Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfactions, our ego satisfactions, in consumption. The measure of social status, of social acceptance, of prestige, is now to be found in our consumptive patterns. The very meaning and significance of our lives today expressed in consumptive terms. The greater the pressures upon the individual to conform to safe and accepted social standards, the more does he tend to express his aspirations and his individuality in terms of what he wears, drives, eats, his home, his car, his pattern of food serving, his hobbies.

These commodities and services are offered to the consumer with a special urgency. We require not only "forced draft" consumption, but "expensive" consumption as well. We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced and discarded at an ever increasing pace. We need to have people eat, drink, dress, ride, live, with ever more complicated and, therefore, constantly more expensive consumption." (3)

Karma can be seen here and now. Amongst other repercussions, the effect of excessive consumerism has resulted in the following...and this is just the tip of the iceberg:

1. Misallocation and misuse of finite natural resources like minerals, trees, etc.

Although everyone has the same basic needs, those who can afford more end up consuming more. This begins a vicious cycle that has a multiplied negative effect on the collective well being of society. For example, water was freely available to all just a few

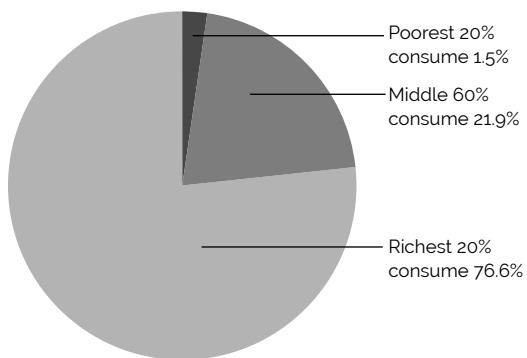
decades ago; water conservation and preservation was a community agenda. Perhaps, the advent of bottled mineral water that only few can afford, has contributed to the fact that many are now left without drinking water sources, and are unable to afford bottled mineral water.



The Human Development Report 1998 of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) quoted, "Today's consumption is undermining the environmental resource base. It is exacerbating inequalities. And the dynamics of the consumption-poverty-inequality-environment nexus are accelerating. If the trends continue without change — not redistributing from high-income to low-income consumers, not shifting from polluting to cleaner goods and production technologies, not promoting goods that empower poor producers, not shifting priority from consumption for conspicuous display to meeting basic needs — today's problems of consumption and human development will worsen.

- The real issue is not just consumption but also its patterns and effects.
- Inequalities in consumption are stark. Globally, the 20% of the world's people in the highest-income countries account for 86% of total private consumption expenditures — the poorest 20% a minuscule 1.3%.
- Runaway growth in consumption in the past 50 years is putting strains on the environment never before seen." (4)

Global Private Consumption



Source: *World Bank Development Indicators 2008*

2. Pollution through mass scale production, transportation and disposal of goods.

Most of us are conditioned to believe that to reduce, reuse, and recycle is for those who cannot afford! Currently, we are cutting down trees faster than they can re-grow, we are catching fish faster than the oceans can restock, we are pumping more water out of rivers and aquifers than rainfall can replenish, and we are emitting more climate-warming carbon dioxide than oceans and forests can absorb.

It is pertinent to note that according to research from WWF and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), the earth has lost half of its wildlife in the past 40 years! Creatures across land, rivers and the seas are being decimated as humans kill them for food in unsustainable numbers, while also polluting or destroying their habitats.

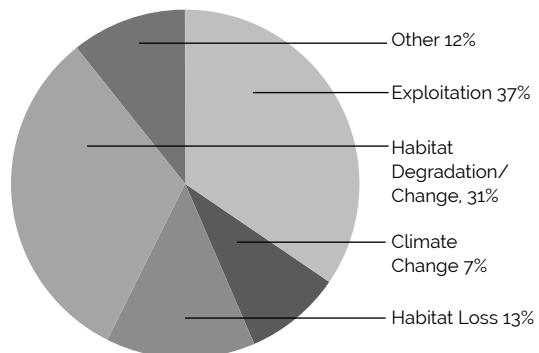


"If half the animals died in London zoo next week it would be front page news," says Professor Ken Norris, ZSL's Director of Science. "But that is happening in the great outdoors. This damage is not inevitable but a consequence of the way we choose to live...nature, which provides food and clean water and air, was essential for human wellbeing."

"We have lost one half of the animal population and knowing this is driven by human consumption, this is clearly a call to arms and we must act now," says Mike Barratt, director of science and policy at WWF. He urges that more of the Earth must be protected from development and deforestation, while food and energy be produced sustainably.

"We have all heard of the FTSE 100 index, but we have missed the ultimate indicator, the falling trend of species and ecosystems in the world," says Professor Jonathan Baillie, ZSL's Director of Conservation. "If we get [our response] right, we will have a safe and sustainable way of life for the future." (5)

Causes of Wildlife Decline Globally



Source: WWF's "Living Planet Index", based on population analysis of 3430 species

3. Dilution of human values as we are caught in the vicious circle of fulfillment of unending wants.

We end up neglecting what really matters and

chase after what money can buy. We seek to satisfy ourselves with the feel-good factor that we think buying and consuming generates, blind to the fact that it is but an elusive gratification. Consumerism brings with it ego and makes us lazy, complacent and arrogant. This ego likely causes us to neglect our internal challenges and development potential that can be achieved through disciplined effort of mind and body.

Excessive consumption is perhaps one of the biggest causes of the economical, environmental, political and social destruction. The first step is to be conscious and aware of this. The next step is to work towards inner change.

In his book *Man's Search for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl wrote the following about what a person goes through when possessed by a feeling that he refers to as an existential vacuum: "No instinct tells him what he has to do and no tradition tells him what he ought to do; sometimes he does not even know what he wishes to do. There are various guises under which the existential vacuum appears. Sometimes the frustrated will to meaning is vicariously compensated for by a will to power... the will to money...the will to pleasure." (6)

Unless we address the underlying reasons we buy so much, we will never truly feel that we have enough. Unless we understand why stuff keeps coming through the door, it matters less and less

how we organize it, curate it, or dispose of it when we're done. We're not buying things because we have money to burn. We aren't doing it because we've got space to fill. We're probably doing it because it gives us the false feeling of happiness. But, studies repeatedly hammer home one simple truth: It's the experiences and the people in our lives that bring the most happiness. Not the stuff. Never the stuff.

Excessive consumption is perhaps one of the biggest causes of the economical, environmental, political and social destruction. The first step is to be conscious and aware of this. The next step is to work towards inner change, in order to set our priorities right; to recognize that inner fulfillment can never be attained through material consumption. By reducing consumption, we might recognize other invisible factors of life. If each one of us was to manage with a little less, we might directly and indirectly impact a lot. And this can be achieved at our individual level without depending on external factors.

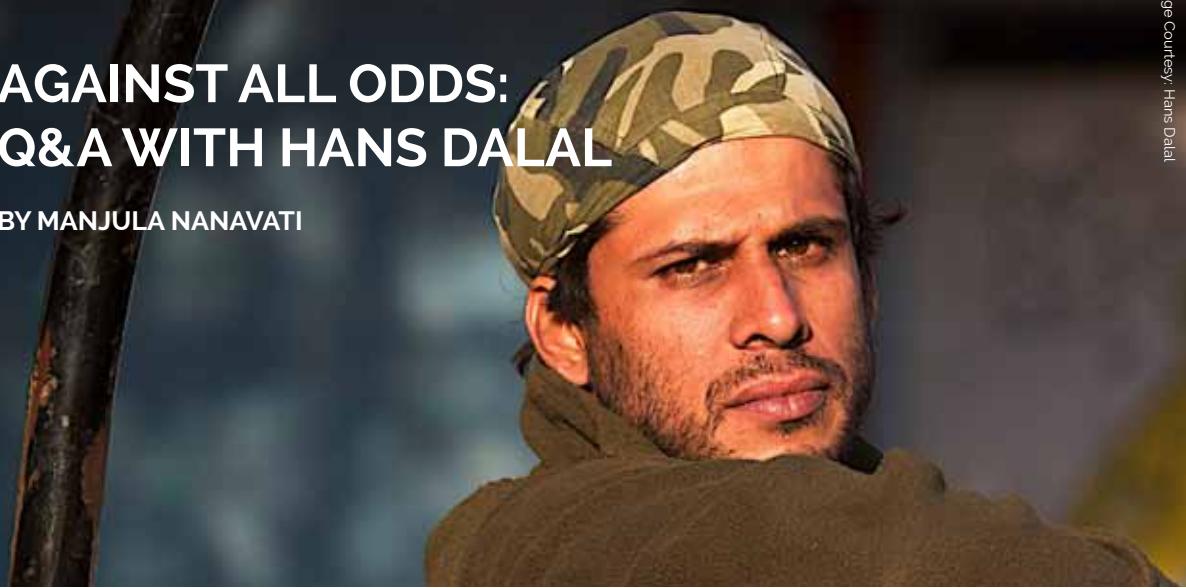
Mahatma Gandhi said, "The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed." ★★

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AGAINST ALL ODDS: Q&A WITH HANS DALAL

BY MANJULA NANAVATI



Hans

Dalal wears many hats: Wild Life Conservationist, Tiger Tracker,

Forest Guard, Poacher Community Rehabilitator, Trekker, Sound Engineer...and he was born with cerebral palsy, a fact that he refers to easily and casually. His speech, though effort-full, is extremely articulate and expressive; his voice strong and passionate even as his tongue hesitates and elongates a word. His balance is slightly unsteady but his actions are purposeful and confident.

After his recent presentation at a TEDx Conference in Mumbai, I had the opportunity to investigate the spark that drives him. The man sitting in front of me has bright, alert eyes, a quick and easy smile, and exudes optimism, determination and pluck. He describes himself as "an intelligent mind trapped within a stubborn body." Here are excerpts from our conversation.

The Acropolitan (TA): Tell us about your journey so far.

Hans: I was born with cerebral palsy. After school and on weekends my mother would take me for physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy. I couldn't walk or talk till I was nearly six, but I went to a mainstream school and my parents

worked hard at giving me as normal a childhood as possible. But I was never allowed to go on school field trips. My teachers thought it was too much of a responsibility. However, my uncle would take me fishing, into the mountains and jungles. So I grew up very close to nature.

I was always fond of music and played the keyboard, but my timing was always a little off. I realized that if I wanted to be part of the music industry, it would have to be in sound engineering.

So I went to Australia to qualify, came back, and worked with a sound studio for two years. Then I ran my own recording studio for 5 years doing ads, voice-overs, and producing music albums. I was comfortable and what you might call happy.



In 2007, on a trip to Kanha, I saw my very first tiger. It was just 5 seconds. But something inside me took an abrupt u-turn. Something within my soul turned upside down.

TA: Or perhaps the right way up?

Hans: Well, retrospectively speaking, yes. I came back to Bombay and began researching everything I could about these majestic creatures: why were their numbers steadily dwindling? Within a year, I closed down my recording studio and started volunteering at an NGO called TIGER WATCH in Ranthambore. Two years later my wife and I set up PROWL, an NGO dedicated to the Preservation Of Wild Landscapes.

One thing that continues to surprise me is that whenever I ask people for support to save the tiger or save the forest, the reaction I get is 'what's in it for me?' We are here because of nature. We are all part of nature, part of the interconnected web of life.

Since the beginning of time man has prayed to the sun, the ocean, the rain and the mountains. This was his way of showing respect to all of Nature and recognition of his place in the web of life. But somewhere down the line we have forgotten this, forgotten who we are, and in our arrogance we have lost respect for our surroundings.



Highways and railway tracks are being built through forests. In the Spiti Valley cement companies have blasted away an entire mountain...off the face of the earth! It just doesn't exist anymore. The consequence: Earlier, the mountain blocked the rain clouds, resulting in rain for the valley below. Now the clouds float past, and there is a drought. Who is responsible for this? We are!

The dam that is slated to be built in Panna will submerge 60% of the Panna Tiger reserve. Tigers will be forced to come closer to the outlying villages as they look for new territory. Conflict will increase. Once a tiger starts killing people he is labeled a man-eater and is shot down or sent to a zoo. But how is it his fault? We destroyed his home. We don't value other lives. We only value our own. Of all the species on earth, man has been the cause of the most destruction to the planet.

But somewhere down the line we have forgotten this, forgotten who we are, and in our arrogance we have lost respect for our surroundings.

TA: It must have taken a lot of courage to follow your dream.

Hans: No, not really. People get bogged down with societal pressure, family pressure, and peer pressure. Even in my own experience, while part of my family is very supportive, some think I've completely lost the plot. They think it was stupid to throw away a career and start an NGO.

But if I can't put my heart and soul into what I'm doing...then why do it? Only when you do something that makes you happy does your heart sing, and you will find the resources to go beyond yourself and your limitations to touch excellence.



Image Courtesy/ Hans Dalal

TA: It is an unusual quality today to use happiness as a barometer for a successful life, instead of money.

Hans: Your brain will always vacillate between two states: 'Do it' or 'Don't do it'. Intellectually you can weigh the pros & cons of every decision endlessly. But your heart always knows. So don't allow your mind to confuse you. Follow your heart; listen to your deepest feelings. At first, what you hear might seem tough to do. But when you take the leap you realize that in spite of fatigue and discomfort, you are happier. Most people are scared to take steps down the "road less travelled" because of the comfort of where they are. But being *comfortable* and being *happy* are two extremely different things. We should not confuse one for the other.

TA: Tell us about the challenges you have faced?

Hans: Everybody faces challenges in life; you just have to find a way around them. I can't cross a stream by jumping over it. So I take off my shoes and socks and wade across. It's just another way, a more suitable way for me. It takes me 5 hours to complete a trek that the team completes in 4. But I choose to think that I have had an hour more to enjoy the experience.

Only when you do something that makes you happy does your heart sing, and you will find the resources to go beyond yourself and your limitations to touch excellence.

However, It is disheartening to see other people's reaction to those of us who are different. Because my co-ordination is affected, I walk funny, and I come across as drunk. In crowded places people stop to stare at me. At airports mothers pull their little children away. I get questioned and stopped at malls, movie theatres, and nightclubs.

What people need to understand is that, if I need your help I will ask for it. Constantly offering me a wheelchair at airports is not being 'nice'. It is a put down. I would like to be treated normally. And most often it is 'normal' people that actually make the handicapped feel 'handicapped'. But the real fact of the matter is that they don't know any better. Everybody lives in a bubble and every bubble is uniquely different. Understanding that is the challenge.

TA: The kind of empathy you bring to all your interactions is truly amazing; especially the generosity with which you treat the poachers, a community that is condemned and vilified and been given criminal status by the government.



Hans: They are just like you and me. I hung out with them, I chilled with them, ate with them, and talked to them. Let me give you some history. Ranthambore was the private hunting ground of the Maharaja of Jaipur who fled into the jungle with his hunters and courtiers when the Mughals attacked. Over time some of them settled there with their families and as skilled hunters they managed a good life. After independence, when the Indian Government decided to make these forests into reserves, and poaching became illegal, these people were given a piece of land outside the jungle, and forbidden to go back. But no one taught them how to cultivate the land or how to till the soil. For generations, they had made their living as hunters and they had no other skills to support themselves. In hard times, they would slip into the jungle to hunt deer or bison, depleting the population of prey. As a consequence, a woman collecting firewood in the forest might be killed by a tiger. It's a vicious cycle. But it can be stopped.

TA: How do you hope to make a difference?

Hans: We work in Tadoba, Pench, Ranthambore,

Corbett, and the Sunderbans; most of the Tiger Reserves in India. We work to uplift local communities and reduce their dependence on the forest. This includes conservation education, poacher rehabilitation and identifying alternate employment opportunities; e.g. hotel and tourism industries, as nature guides, or as auto mechanics. We also support the Forest Department and work closely with the Forest Guards, training and helping in camera trapping, tracking, and providing first aid. In the future we would like to set up schools and provide mentoring programs for the children, to widen their horizons.

Intellectually you can weigh the pros & cons of every decision endlessly. But your heart always knows.

There's so much to do. In the field, I'm up at 4.30 am, out trekking till 6pm, 12 kilometers a day, sharing a room and one toilet with sometimes 30 forest guards, but every moment is a joy.



Image Courtesy: Hans Datal

TA: What is your advice to us on how to bring about a change of perspective?

Hans: One person at a time. Change the thinking of just one person, who will then change one more. Five will change five others, and so on exponentially. All each one of us has to do is to take the responsibility to positively influence just one other person. ★★★

SACRED GROVES

BY UBAI HUSEIN



"The forest is not merely an expression or representation of sacredness, nor a place to invoke the sacred; the forest is sacredness itself. Nature is not merely created by God, nature is God. Whoever moves within the forest can partake directly of sacredness, experience sacredness with his entire body, breathe sacredness and contain it within himself, drink the sacred water as a living communion, bury his feet in sacredness, open his eyes and witness the burning beauty of sacredness."

- Richard Nelson

India has a long tradition of the creation and maintenance of sacred groves; there are about a 1000 square kilometers of undisturbed sacred groves, scattered in patches all over the country. The groves vary in size, from just a few trees to large expanses of dense forests, and lie mainly in the hilly and mountainous areas of India such as the Himalayas, the Western Ghats and central India, where some ancient practices have survived, sometimes still in their pristine form. Even today, many communities remain devoted to protecting their local groves. Within these groves, typically no one is permitted to cut any tree or plant, kill any animal or bird, or harm any form of life; all creatures within the grove's confines are given

protection by a presiding deity. In the evolution of religion across the world, sacred groves once played a vital role; it rests on the earliest conceptions of the unity of life in nature, in the sense of communion and fellowship with the divine center and source of life.

"People have worshipped forests since the Paleolithic age, thereby preserving them. In ancient Greece and Rome, initially these forests began as open-air temples. Many contained streams and lakes that were also considered sacred, and no one was allowed to fish or pollute them." (Fazer, 1890)

There is very little evidence of temples existing in India during the Vedic period, nor can many be found in the pre-Buddhist period.

"The various gods and goddesses, whom the indigenous population of India worshipped, were not accustomed to dwell in the secluded atmosphere of temples; they were placed in the open air." (Hastings, ed. 1934)

Even today, for the gramadevata, or village goddess, of South India there are no temples in many villages. The deity may be in the shadow of a big

tree or lodged in small shrines. In a good number of villages no object is placed to represent the deity and a tree itself is regarded as the embodiment of the deity. One of the most widespread traditions prominent today in India is the protection of Ficus trees, varieties commonly known are the Banyan and Pepal trees, which dot the countryside and are often the only large native trees found in the midst of towns and cities.

Studies of sacred groves reveal that they are priceless treasures of ecological and biological value.

"The sacred grove was at the origin of the temple, whose columns were initially trees, and later of the Christian church which still evokes it by the alignment of its pillars, the semi-darkness within it, and the soft colored light that filters through its stained glass windows." (Brosse, 1989)



Apart from historical, cultural and spiritual significance given to sacred groves one cannot dismiss the huge ecological impact that such groves have. Studies of sacred groves reveal that they are priceless treasures of ecological and biological value. In India, these are often the only remains of the native flora, whose presence in the landscape is dramatically observable on large deforested and terraced slopes. In my recent trip to Meghalaya the original vegetation could only be found in sacred groves which are found scattered in small pockets amongst the vast rubber, spice and beetle-nut plantations. Coupled with heavy pressure of population growth, these groves remain the last refuge for rare plant and animal species that once covered these lands.

"Sacred groves probably represent the single most important ecological tradition of ancient Indian culture. Their conservation is a long tradition of conserving nature by giving it a spiritual dimension." (Krishna and Amrithalingam, 2014.)

The survival and evolution of man does not need to be in an either-or kind of relationship with nature.

On a planet where today man seems to be in constant battle for survival through maximum exploitation of every natural resource, perhaps the key to our survival lies in our own past; in understanding the role of man as integral to nature and not that of opposition or competition. The survival and evolution of man does not need to be in an either-or kind of relationship with nature; rather it would be worthwhile for us to study core ethical and philosophical practices from various civilizations of the past like the Native Americans, Egyptians, Mayans, etc. who learnt not only to survive, but flourish over thousands of years in perfect harmony with their surroundings. It is said



Image Courtesy: Ubai Hussein

that the forests and mythical gardens of Babylon vanished after the disappearance of humanity from the valley. This lends support to the idea of the symbiotic relationship that man had in the use and maintenance of these spaces; the disappearance of the civilization refers not only to the disappearance of human beings, but the entire ecosystem that supported life and nurtured the civilization.

Says Ashton (1988), a tropical forest ecologist, on the traditional Indian perceptions of the sacred in nature: "*The ancient tribes of settled people, saw themselves as one with the natural world, as both custodians and dependents. Even today the people of India continue to harvest an astonishing diversity of products from the forest. Forests of the mountains and watersheds have traditionally been sacred; springs and the natural landscape in their vicinity have attracted special veneration. We can learn from our predecessors of a millennium ago, through mythology, sociology and a study of ancient methods of irrigation that this system of maintaining a natural balance has enabled the most intensive yet sustainable agriculture humanity has so far devised.*"

A study of ancient texts and philosophical ideas from around the world suggests that man is a unique link in the evolutionary chain, with the possibility to clearly understand where we are coming from,

where we need to go, and what we need to do here today in order to get there. It suddenly opens up a whole new and refreshing perspective with which to interact with our planet and the way we relate to other beings that occupy it.

What differentiates man from other living creatures is his ability to think. With this, perhaps, comes a responsibility. The role of man is that of support and never of exploitation and destruction. We are all part of one world and our evolution as a species is intrinsically connected to everything else in it; may it be mineral, plant or animal.

The disappearance of sacred groves is not coincidental. In fact, it can be seen as a direct reflection of the state of our relationship with the natural world. In working with nature as an intrinsic part of our lives there may be a hidden key that may help us recognize, and practice, our role of being human. ★★

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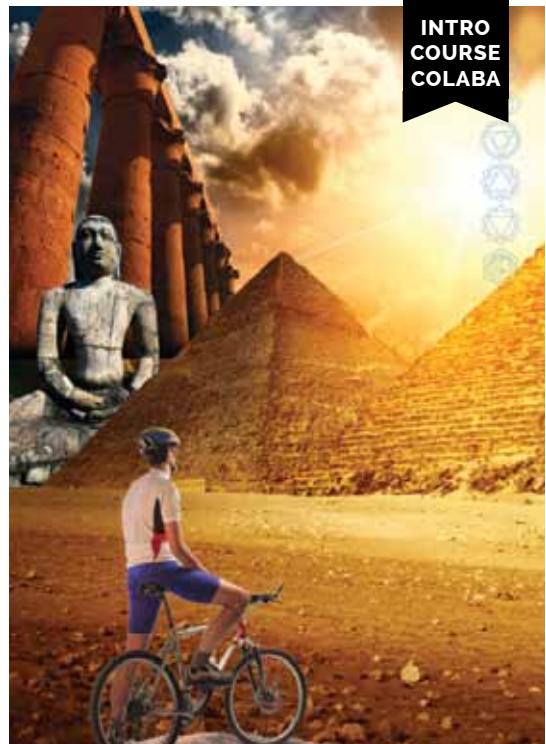
DARING TO CHOOSE

Lecture @ Khar

Saturday, 9th April 2016

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

Our choices determine how happy or satisfied we are in our life. How do we make truly meaningful choices in life? Join us as we explore what it means to be an individual and how daring to choose can be the secret to attaining true freedom.



CONCENTRATION AND INNER AWAKENING

Lecture @ Colaba (Main Centre)

Saturday, 16th April 2016

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

Presented by National Director of New Acropolis Cultural Organization, Mr. Yaron Barzilay, this talk investigates the value of Concentration as an essential ingredient of a fulfilling life. Through Tibetan iconography, we shall investigate how to cultivate this human ability.

LIVING PHILOSOPHY: DISCOVER, AWAKEN, TRANSFORM

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Course @ Colaba (Main Centre)

FREE INTRO:

Monday, 18th April 2016, 7:30PM (2hrs)

Course Starts:

Monday, 25th April 2016, 7:30PM (2hrs)

This course establishes the foundation for every aspiring Philosopher by presenting a comparative study of Classical Philosophies, and helping students to develop a sensitivity towards the fundamental Laws that govern Nature and Humanity. In an attempt to preserve this universal heritage, the course serves as an introduction to ancient cultures and investigates the origins of humanity – a time of wonder and mysticism when the invisible world was respected. Course Duration – 16 Sessions. FEES APPLY.

COLABA (MAIN CENTER)

A-0 Ground Fl, Connaught Mansion,
Colaba (Opp. Colaba Post Office),
Mumbai

T: 022 3192 0515

KHAR

Ashray, 2nd Floor, 19th Rd,
Between 13th Road and Khar-Danda Road,
Khar (W), Mumbai

T: +91 98330 33239



KARMA, DESTINY AND FREE WILL

Workshop @ Colaba (Main Centre)

Saturday, 30th April 2016

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

Is Man ultimately bound by Destiny? Or is he entirely Free? This question has preoccupied human beings through our history. Join us as we investigate Karma and Dharma, and extract their relevance to daily life.



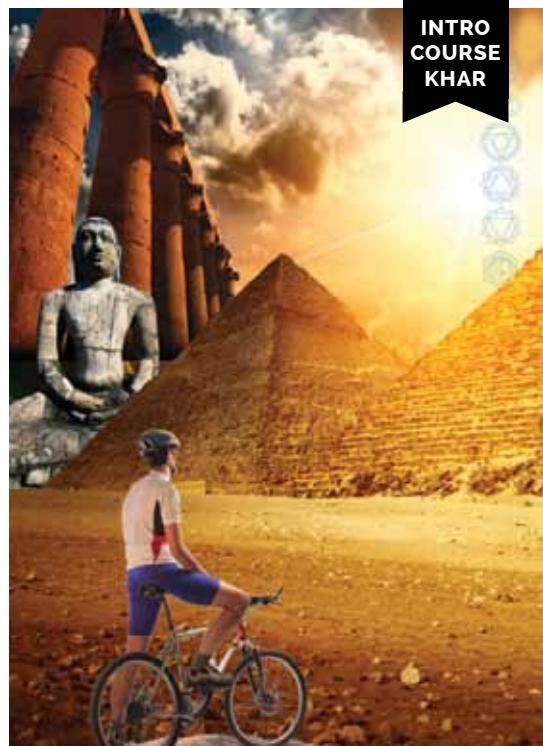
HABITS: OVERCOMING LIMITATIONS OR HARNESSING POTENTIAL?

Lecture @ Khar

Saturday, 30th April 2016

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

Most of our daily actions arise from our physical or emotional habits. But are we aware of our habits? How might we cultivate good habits to help us fulfill our potential?



LIVING PHILOSOPHY: DISCOVER, AWAKEN, TRANSFORM

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Course @ Khar

FREE INTRO:

Tuesday, 3rd May 2016, 7:30PM (2hrs)

Course Starts:

Tuesday, 10th May 2016, 7:30PM (2hrs)

This course establishes the foundation for every aspiring Philosopher by presenting a comparative study of Classical Philosophies, and helping students to develop a sensitivity towards the fundamental Laws that govern Nature and Humanity. In an attempt to preserve this universal heritage, the course serves as an introduction to ancient cultures and investigates the origins of humanity – a time of wonder and mysticism when the invisible world was respected. Course Duration – 16 Sessions. FEES APPLY.

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NAVIGATING THE MINEFIELD OF EMOTIONS

Lecture @ Colaba (Main Centre)

Saturday, 14th May 2016

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

Emotions can be a powerful tool in enabling us to live to our fullest potential or an insurmountable distraction taking us away from our goals. Join us as we explore how we can rise above our emotions and use them as a tool to move beyond our limited selves.

RE-EVALUATING THE MEANING OF SUCCESS

Lecture @ Khar

Saturday, 7th May 2016

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

If we investigate our purpose as human beings, can we really define success by financial or emotional security, or are there other parameters of success that may allow us to live a more meaningful life? To be presented by National Director of New Acropolis Cultural Organization, Mr. Yaron Barzilay.



OVERCOMING FEARS

Workshop @ Khar

Saturday, 14th May 2016

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

How can we learn to work with the potentially debilitating emotion of fear so that we may lead freer and fuller lives?

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MODERN DAY MAHABHARATA: FIGHTING THE WAR WITHIN

Lecture @ Colaba (Main Centre)

Saturday, 28th May 2016

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

Join us as we explore the timeless teachings of The Bhagawad Gita as we engage with the kurukshetra of our own daily lives.



VOLUNTEERING: KARMA YOGA IN URBAN TIMES

Lecture @ Khar

Saturday, 11th June 2016

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

So much selfless work is being done to address ecology, education, and social upliftment. Yet, viable holistic solutions remain elusive. What does it really mean to be a volunteer? How might we become efficient changemakers?



EMBRACING CHANGE

Lecture @ Colaba (Main Centre)

Saturday, 4th June 2016

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

Change is a natural cycle in the evolution of life, yet it is something that we struggle to face. How can we learn to deal with changes so as to unlock the opportunities they offer for growth and positive transformation?



LUCK AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Lecture @ Colaba (Main Centre)

Saturday, 25th June 2016

6:00PM (2hrs), FREE ADMISSION

Often things just seem to fall into place. At other times, even the most meticulous hard work yields no results. What if there exists a way to communicate with life by attracting luck to come our way? Presentation by National Director of New Acropolis Cultural Organization, Mr. Yaron Barzilay.

LIVING PHILOSOPHY

Discover. Awaken. Transform.

A 32-hour Introductory Philosophy Course (16 Sessions)



COLABA: Monday, 7:30pm

KHAR: Tuesday, 7:30pm

Free Into Course Starts

18th April 25th April

3rd May 10th May

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



FOR MORE INFORMATION

CALL

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EMAIL

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