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Reviving a Culture
of Human Values

FEATURE

**The Politicization
of Spirituality**

Battle of Identity

FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

Dear Reader,

Amidst the spectacular diversity of the natural world around us, a silent seeker might grasp the underlying harmony that cohesively unites every component into a magnificent whole. Each element plays a vital and unique role to preserve the integrity of this whole, and together they form the interdependent system that we call Life.

What then, does it really mean to be a human being in this system? The ancient sages have insisted that the answer to this question has silently echoed through the ages, waiting to be heard. It is, however, drowned out by the noise of our daily challenges – our worries, our fears, and our insecurities. But what if we could use these everyday battles to reveal instead our resilience, our courage, and our hope?

Reviving these human values, hand-in-hand, without getting lost in the illusory games of politics and social divides, perhaps is the real opportunity of our times. In various ways, this is what we are exploring in this issue of The Acopolitan Magazine. Dear companions...dear fellow seekers...History beckons. Shall we dare to respond? Discover. Awaken. Transform.

Harianto H Mehta

Editor



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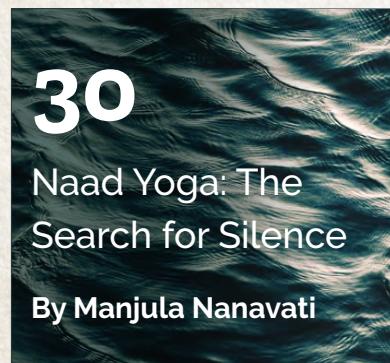
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TO FREEDOM: MASTERING OUR TOOLS

By Yaron Barzilay

National Director
New Acropolis Cultural Organisation (India)



In recent years we seem to see an increasing number of people across the world calling to sharpen the fine boundary between technology employed to serve humanity, and that which takes over our freedom. We have smart phones and watches that make our lives easier, or sometimes more complicated.. leaving users sometimes lesser and lesser capable, while devices become ever more sophisticated. It is enough to note the degradation in our use of language, and the total negligence of the traditional practice of writing on paper, to realise the price we may be paying. Social networks, as they are ironically called, have been strongly condemned in recent years, sometimes by the very people who are at the heart of the industry. These networks are often un-social, and easily reduce the quality of our relationships and values that we share. That they may serve commercial agendas, while feeding polarisation and extremism, is not a hidden secret.

There is no doubt that we need to become aware of our use of technology, to strike a dynamic balance. This may seem easy in principal, but is not always so in practice; to discern between means and goals, disallowing the tool to ever become the charioteer of our most valuable purpose.

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To determine if it is good or bad, any tool, be it a knife, a vehicle, a piece of software, a drug, etc., primarily depends on the manner of its use. This should never be disregarded as we form our ethical judgment.





If we pay attention to the teachings of our ancestors across cultures and civilizations, we may realize how little we know about ourselves. They seem to suggest that this incredible 'device', our body, is much more capable than we think. But, it is after all, as they suggest, a machine - nothing more.

manner of its use. This should never be disregarded as we form our ethical judgment. It is also quite clear that technology in the service of humanity is not a negative factor per se. On the contrary it is an undeniable expression of our ability to advance and enrich our lives. We know, however, that it can also destroy us, if used incorrectly or for the wrong purpose.

It is with clarity about our fundamental goals, our life's purpose, that we can evaluate and judge the tools we employ in our life. For what purpose do we utilise them? What consequences might they have? Are they really serving us? Despite the feeling that we are missing out, with regards to something that the 'whole world' is using, it is crucial we keep asking ourselves if it really serves us in the pursuit of our life's purpose, or if it facilitates a diversion from our path.

This fundamental need to distinguish between means and goals isn't really a new challenge we face today. As many traditions have already observed for thousands of years, a human being is a complex of identities, and is dual in nature. On the one hand there is an aspect that is temporary and material, while on the other, there is the Spiritual. The latter is an inner and higher identity, the Soul or the Higher Self, while the former is but a vessel, a mask we wear (the *Persona*, or personality), to which we are born and die. This biological vessel might be more complex in nature than the term 'bio' refers to today; it holds together various factors, including our physical body,

which is an amazing complex by itself, but also comprises the subtle forms of energy (*Prana*), and the planes of emotions and thoughts, beyond the biological interface they are related to. If we pay attention to the teachings of our ancestors across cultures and civilizations, we may realize how little we know about ourselves. They seem to suggest that this incredible 'device', our body, is much more capable than we think. But, it is after all, as they suggest, a machine - nothing more.

I am a soul - and I have a body, I have feelings, I have thoughts. These are tools, means of interaction that need to be guided in a particular manner, and be mastered.

An anecdote about the Pythagorean school shares that a candidate to advance studies, was challenged with the question: "Do you have a soul?" For all those that answered affirmatively, the door remained closed. The correct answer was: "No, I have a body!" This is not really an intellectual question, but a matter of Identity. "Who am I?" is a fundamental philosophical question that must determine our way of life and our relationship with practically everything... starting with ourselves, our own personalities. I am a soul - and I have a body, I have feelings, I have thoughts. These are tools, means of interaction that need to be guided in a particular manner, and be mastered. Else the tools become our masters, and may be used by others, like the masters of the cave that Plato refers to in his famous allegory.

Therein lies our authentic freedom, the freedom to be. But it starts and continues primarily with ourself. It is an inner battle, before anything else, which is echoed in so many myths and allegories. It is a battle that requires the constant discernment between the means and goals, the inner and outer, the higher and lower, which facilitates our development in life, individually and collectively, flowing from within towards the outer. It is the constant pursuit to reveal the hidden inner truth. We are human beings. Living beings. Not machines, nor programs, or tools. 





By Gilad Sommer



The topic of freedom of speech has been much in the news in recent years. On one hand, there are those who view the freedom of speech as an inalienable sacred right (especially when it comes to their own speech...) that should not be infringed upon by other people, institutions, governments or corporations, regardless of the consequences or content of what one says. On the other end of the spectrum are those who want to "cancel" any form of speech that does not comply with prescribed rules or opinions, going to the extreme of claiming that an opinion in itself can be an act of aggression, whether it was meant as such or not. As usual, we human beings tend to go to the extremes, dividing ourselves into parties, instead of looking for a middle way. Unfortunately, both these extremes in the long term may lead to the loss of the freedom so aspired to.

As usual, it is interesting to note that the topics we find so contemporary, were also issues preoccupying our predecessors here and on other lands; in fact, we find the topic of speech discussed and explored in various philosophical traditions. For example, right speech is one of the steps in the Buddhist eightfold noble path, defined in the *Maggavibhanga Sutta* as "Abstaining from lying, from divisive speech, from abusive speech, and from idle chatter". In the Hindu legal text, *Manusmriti*, it says "Speak the truth, and speak favorably. Do not tell the truth if it is not favorable. Also, do not tell an untruth (although) it is favorable. This is the eternal *dharma*."

This perhaps is a source of a very useful anecdote usually (and doubtfully) attributed

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to Socrates, in which Socrates recommends using three filters before one speaks: Is it true? Is it good? And is it useful? (Social media will probably collapse if we relied on these filters...) Socrates himself in Plato's *Apology* says that before speaking he would listen to an inner voice, his *daimon* (perhaps his conscience?) which will tell him whether he is about to act wrongfully. On another part of the world, the Ancient Egyptians found speech a very powerful force, one that could make realities spoken about, manifest. And in The Old Testament's *Book of Proverbs* (17:28), we find: "Even a fool, when he holds his peace, is counted wise: and he that shuts his lips is esteemed a man of understanding." There are many other sources we can cite, but what is clear is that these varied, universal, sources all point out that it is important to reflect about what right speech is.

The solution to this dilemma is not so much about policing and criticizing "wrong" speech,



The solution to this dilemma is not so much about policing and criticizing "wrong" speech, nor is it about speaking mindlessly, without thinking of the consequences of what we say, but rather teaching and educating about the responsibility of speech and what does right speech entail.

nor is it about speaking mindlessly, without thinking of the consequences of what we say, but rather teaching and educating about the responsibility of speech and what does right speech entail.

The freedom of speech (like any other freedom) also entails responsibility. Without the responsibility of speech, the freedom of speech will lead to its own demise. The freedom of speech integrated with education to the right speech is the bridge that will allow us to preserve the freedom of speech for posterity. ☺☺

REVIVING A CULTURE OF HUMAN VALUES

By Zarina Screwvala

The New Acropolis Culture Circle explores the diverse expressions of culture through a series of intimate and interactive presentations, in an attempt to revive the spiritual essence that forms the basis of all classical art and culture. Far from being definitive, this article is an attempt to share a synthesis of my learning from some of the gracious speakers who have shared their inspiration and wisdom with us in the course of the last few years. We are deeply grateful to them. For the scope of this article, I've mainly focussed on the classical Indian arts as a means to illustrate the value of culture.

Culture is not just a collection of customs, a particularity of attire, or a unique culinary style. These are but the diverse expressions of a system of values. Culture could be seen as a way of life, governed by ideals and transcendental values such as the pursuit of aesthetics, goodness, wisdom or justice. You could perhaps say that culture is the civilising force that allows for the development of the human potential, and it is imprinted in the way we eat, dress, and speak; it directs

Cultural tradition continues vibrantly as a living thread, allowing us to receive and express the timeless wisdom and values of our ancestors, in the context of our times. It is, in a way, the search for what it means to be a human being.

our arts and crafts, and is glimpsed in our ceremonies. • • •

This philosophical orientation of culture can be transmitted through time, such that each generation can adapt the forms, even though the essential ideals, purpose and principles remain unchanged. Thus a cultural tradition continues vibrantly as a living thread, allowing us to receive and express the timeless wisdom and values of our ancestors, in the context of our times. It is, in a way, the search for what it means to be a human being. However when the values are lost, or twisted, and just the outer shells continue, the same traditions can be forces that blind us, rather than enlighten us.

Sacred Purpose

Mandakini Trivedi, author and exponent of the classical dance form *Mohiniyattam*, explains that all meaningful form is essentially philosophical because it facilitates the exploration of the most basic questions of life: Who am I? Why am I here? What part am I to play in life? Are these not the very same questions of identity, asked by philosophers of all ages?

This was resonated by trained singer Dipti Sanzgiri, who is also a senior member and teacher at New Acropolis, when she explained that the word *swara*, which is usually translated as a musical note, is composed of two words: *swa*, meaning the self, and *ra* meaning to shine. This implies that the practise of even a single note can allow the self to shine through.

Trivedi further explains that the classical arts are by their essence characterized by a





meaningful search for wholeness and unity. There are two forms of art. The empirical form, or *Laukika*, literally 'of the world', which imitates life and seeks to understand and express what can be seen and measured. Examples can be found in various forms of folk music and dance. On the other hand, *Alaukika* art, or transcendental art, seeks to understand and express what cannot be seen or measured; it seeks to give a glimpse into what lies beyond, into the realms of the sacred, whose goal is unity, or *Yoga*. The classical temple dances of India are examples of *Alaukika* art.

Trivedi's disciple, Miti Desai explains that the *Vastu Sutra Upanishad* expounds *Arupad Rupam Tasya Phalam*, meaning "from the

It is therefore the purpose of form, which is always limited and transient, to facilitate the return to the perfection of the formless, or the sacred.

formless arises the form". She elaborates that it is therefore the purpose of form, which is always limited and transient, to facilitate the return to the perfection of the formless, or the sacred. Perhaps this explains why for Chintan Upadhyay, a leading exponent of the ancient Hindustani classical musical tradition of *Dhrupad*, singing is an encounter with the sacred: "Wherever I sing, it is a temple for me."

Strict Framework of Rules

In music, there are only seven notes within which every artist must compose. This is true of western and Indian classical music. This strict framework provides clear boundaries, within which an almost infinite variety and development is possible. Therefore Chintan observes that no two performances of Indian Classical music will ever be the same. It is within the boundaries of a strict framework, that the artist is free to create his or her own art. Having learnt to obey the rules, the artist can imbue his own special stamp on it, thus allowing for the tradition to evolve, while keeping its essence intact.

This is evident in even the most cursory observation of nature as well, where nothing is arbitrary or chaotic, every component adheres to an underlying intelligent order determined by laws, which results in unity, harmony, and the blossoming of beauty. The mysterious Fibonacci sequence for example, is expressed in myriad aspects of Nature; from the whirling spirals of a sunflower's florets, to ocean waves, to spiral galaxies. Furthermore, the resulting proportion between two consecutive Fibonacci numbers (from 3:5 onwards), called the golden ratio, has been

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used by artists since ancient times, in their pursuit to capture principles of harmony and beauty. The architectural proportions of the Parthenon in Athens, is an example.

Immense value of discipline

Tara Kini, classical Hindustani singer and educator explains that the more the rules, the more classical a form becomes; that it is the framework of rules that builds the discipline and concentration needed to apply oneself in art.

A disciple is characterised by his discipline. Chintan Upadhyay shares the experience of his daily practise of *Swar Sadhana*, usually at around 4 am every morning. He explains that the artist practices a single note for around fifty minutes. And the overall session can continue to two and a half hours. This daily practise of a single musical note allows the practitioner to reach a state of intense

concentration, which helps to purify the mind, making it calm and clear. He described how, through regular practise, the artist may achieve a rare state which allows the note and the artist to become one.

The Guru-Shishya Parampara

The teacher-disciple tradition is a time-honoured tradition in India, where the disciple lives with the teacher, and studies under his or her guidance while at the same time performing all the tasks asked of him from cooking to sweeping. It is clear that beyond the teaching of a skill, singing for example, the teacher transmits an approach to life, a way of living. In this light, Chintan said that even fixing a light bulb in his guru's home took on a new meaning. Chintan is a disciple of Pandit Uday Bhawalkar who was a student of the legendary Ustad Zia Fariduddin Dagar and Ustad Zia Mohiuddin Dagar, who come from 19 generations of an unbroken *guru-shishya* legacy.

Tuned to Nature

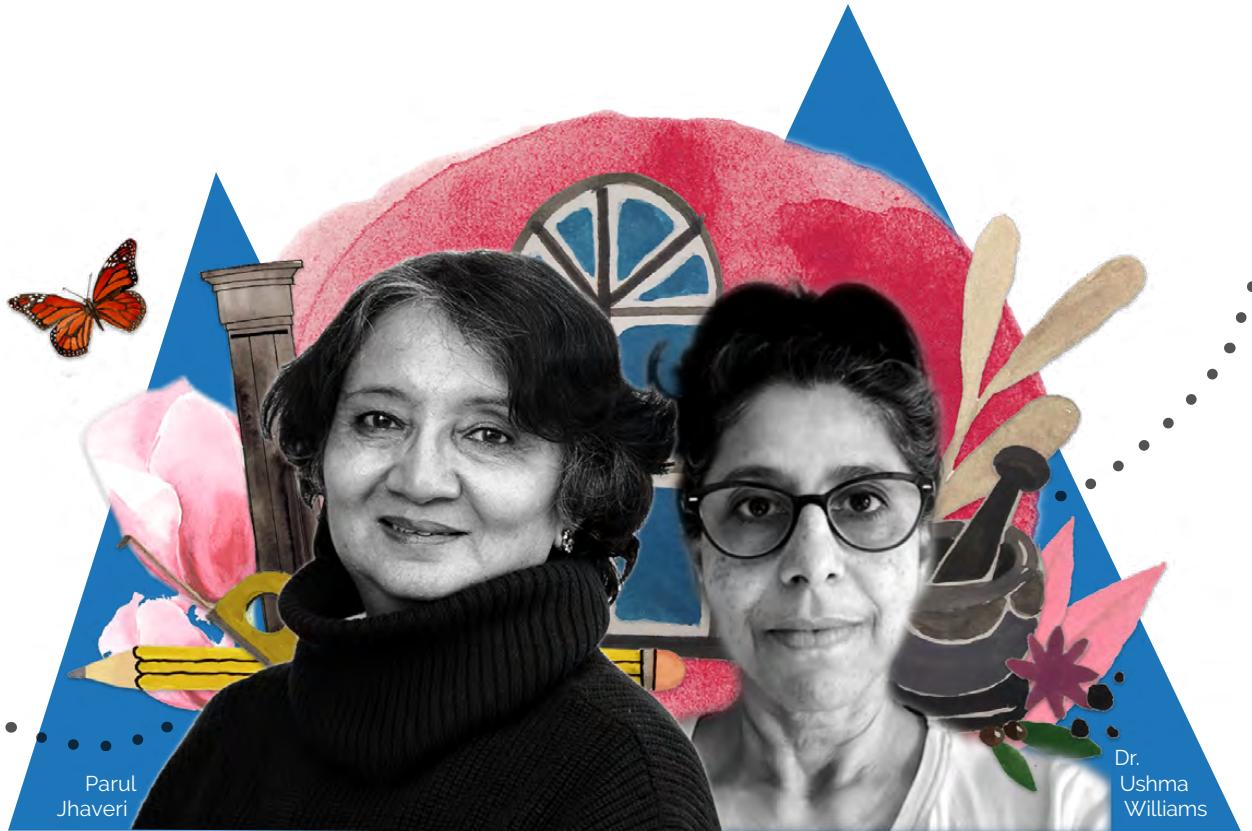
The concept of *raga* in classical Indian music, for example, distils the aspiration to tune into the natural order of the surrounding world, with music arrangements that are associated to certain times of day, or a certain season. But we find this pursuit expressed in various other expressions of culture as well. These allow us to work in rhythm with the seasons and time of day, with rules for how to eat, sleep, harvest and celebrate life with the turning of the seasons. For example, we can see a tangible harmonization with nature in the work of heritage architect Parul Jhaveri,



Chintan Upadhyay

Through regular practise, the artist may achieve a rare state which allows the note and the artist to become one.

who explained that ancient Indian architecture was filled with scientific principles meant to serve both nature and man. Traditional building methods address issues like water conservation, natural cooling and waste disposal. In a similar vein, Sanskrit scholar, Dr. Ushma Williams, explains that Ayurveda is the science or wisdom of life. She speaks of the



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importance of time and space in Ayurveda, for example the importance of the seasonal, local food taken at the right time, in the right order.

Culture as a means of Transformation

We can therefore propose that classical art, as well as the diverse aspects of culture, are a form of ongoing education and transformation of the human being, with the purpose of awakening human values. And so it is unsurprising that tradition seems to have treated culture as sacred. Moments immersed in art, and other expressions of culture, can create a brief opportunity to tune ourselves with Nature, with Life, and to glimpse the best version of ourselves; with what is Beautiful, Good and True. 



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UNITY IN DIVERSITY - LESSONS FROM THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

By Dilip Jain





**Om Purnamadaha
Purnamidam Purnat Purnamudachyate
Purnasya Purnamadaya Purnamewa Vashishyate**

*This creation is whole and complete.
From the whole emerge creations,
each whole and complete.
Take the whole from the whole.
The whole yet remains, undiminished, complete.*

- Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

**Even in the
absence of anyone
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systems of forests,
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diverse flora and
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self-sustaining
and self-balancing
system.**

I come from the limited world of business governed by ever-changing rules of finance and management. Hence, I have no formal qualification to write a scientific article about the unlimited natural world of the Animal Kingdom. My philosophy study, however, has led me to investigate various aspects of ecology and sustainability and this article is a result of my observations and reflections.

No one sows the seeds, no one provides the water, no one gives nutrients, no one generates waste, no one cures diseases. But even in the absence of anyone to manage or control, the eco systems of forests, consisting of diverse flora and fauna, work as a self-sustaining and self-balancing system. This illustrates one of the most important eternal laws of Nature, described by traditions worldwide as a law of Life itself: the principle of Unity. Everything seems to be interconnected, inter-related, everything is a result of a cause and has an effect on the whole, everything is One.

Conditioned by the construct of time and space, it might be difficult for human consciousness to grasp this Unity, but we can easily see it being played out within the animal kingdom. Every animal seems to be a part of the design, as a self-balancing and self-healing component of the system.



Disease rings the warning signal, of the need to restore harmony. All the diversity is integrated intricately to form a single body, just like a human body; a single functioning unit comprising body parts including internal organs, muscles, tissues, nerves, capillaries, cells, etc. For last few years, I have been spending much of my time at Vanvadi Forest near Mumbai. I observed that there were too many spider webs all around. After some reflection, I realized that as soon as the monsoon recedes the populations of insects multiply and it is the best time for spiders to build their webs to feast. If not for the spiders, the insect populations would have had a devastating effect on the health of the forest plants, which would have also resulted in an adverse impact to animals and humans. And so spiders restore harmony!

It is noteworthy to point out the vast diversity of insects, birds, mammals, reptiles and fish, in a seemingly limitless variety of colours, shapes, and sizes, adapted to different habitats and food habits. Perhaps, if all birds were exactly the same, eating only fruit, nesting only on trees and migrating all together to just one place, they might not have been able to survive because of the drain on natural resources, such as the over-consumption of fruit. In this manner the entire habitat would be impacted – either positively or negatively, causing a long lasting multiplier effect, much beyond the animal kingdom. An excellent example of this is the re-introduction of wolves in California's Yellowstone National Park after an absence of nearly 70 years, resulting in the most remarkable "trophic cascade" altering even the course of the region's river. To know more, watch [How Wolves Change Rivers](#) on Youtube.

In an integrated system, each component has a particular role and purpose, based on which nature efficiently provides the needed resources; neither more nor less, always at just the right time. In *The Vision of Natural Farming*, Bharat Mansata shares that "There is on Earth, a constant inter-play of six paribals (key factors) of Nature, interacting with sunlight. Three are: soil, water and air. Working in tandem with these, are the three orders of life: *vanaspati sruṣṭi*, the world of plants; *jeev*

Even in the absence of anyone to manage or control, the eco systems of forests, consisting of diverse flora and fauna, work as a self-sustaining and self-balancing system.



srushti, the realm of insects and micro-organisms; and *prani* *srushti*, the animal kingdom. These six paribals maintain a dynamic balance. Together, they harmonise Nature's grand symphony... a mystic grace!" ⁽¹⁾ One small change can have severe consequences for the whole system. Nothing is random; everything has a link preceding it and succeeding it.

However, this cause and effect relationship is not clearly visible most of the time as we may not always be able to connect the dots. If an unaware person is shown a caterpillar, a pupa (chrysalis), and a butterfly, he would think that the 3 are completely different beings, without any co-relation whatsoever. A caterpillar eats leaves and crawls, a pupa remains locked for weeks, without food, undergoing internal transformation and a butterfly drinks nectar and flies. And yet, these are just three stages of development in the lifecycle of a single being.

During an eco-study trip, a guide told us about the Lotka Volterra model of predator-prey relationships. It was explained that as soon as prey increases, predators also increase. The increase of predators, however, leads to the fall in the number of prey, which in turn leads to the fall of predator populations. This is the balancing cycle observed

In an integrated system, each component has a particular role and purpose, based on which nature efficiently provides the needed resources; neither more nor less, always at just the right time.

time and again in the animal kingdom. There are many such cycles in nature that enable corrections when there is an imbalance. This is essential to maintain the Unity, the cohesion of the ecosystem, as no single species can survive alone. Interestingly, sometimes this balancing is aided in mysterious ways through camouflage and bio-mimicry, either to protect against a predator, or to become better equipped to hunt prey.

It is noteworthy that the Living Planet Index of 2018 shows an overall decline of 60% in species populations between 1970 and 2014.⁽²⁾ And when it is accompanied with habitat loss, extinction can conceivably become irreversible. In some cases, species make an attempt to revive by adapting to a new environment, which results in long-term changes in the genetic material of the population. New species emerge therefore, and examples include the peppered moth, three toed skinks, nylon eating



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bacteria, pesticide-resistant insects, Darwin's finches, and many more. Over millennia, animals have continuously co-evolved.

"Nature has linked all parts of her empire together by subtle threads of magnetic sympathy" wrote one of the adepts, and it is "too well, too mathematically adjusted," for man to interfere with her arrangements without suffering the consequences.⁽³⁾

It would be foolish then, I believe, to think that such a natural model would not apply also to humanity, since we too are a part of nature's system. How then, can we count on unlimited productivity based on an infinite notional resource (money), on a planet limited by finite real resources? Given the times, the majority of us are cogs in the wheels of an economic system of a materialistic world that is increasing its size and speed with little concern for the natural harmony and unity of Nature. This imbalance is visible on all fronts; be it social, ecological, political, or spiritual. And corrections might manifest in any number of different forms from a virus to a protest, from a war to a natural disaster.

Over the last few hundred years, it is evident that human beings have promoted the idea of control, consumerism and mass scale production. To facilitate profits arising from scalable standardized



We must realize that the Unity expressed by natural ecosystems is characterized by diversity, which provides a holistic environment for the development of the potential of each of its components. It is important to recognize here that diversity is but a reflection of Unity, which we must restore, conserve and enhance on our planet, and within ourselves.

production, and to satiate the rising demands of exponential population growth, a preference of predictable homogeneity has been instituted. Beyond superficial variety, most of us have become conditioned to an artificial uniformity; be it our lifestyle, attire, language, belief systems, food habits, education or work pursuits. It is easy to see today that communities, rich in culture and tradition, are diminishing; indigenous and tribal peoples are vanishing, as they become part of the mainstream. The homogeneity results in the non-acceptance of those who are different, and leads to fault finding and judgment, sometimes leading to even violent opposition.

But we must realize that the Unity expressed by natural ecosystems is characterized by diversity, which provides a holistic environment for the development of the potential of each of its components. It is important to recognize here that diversity is but a reflection of Unity, which we must restore, conserve and enhance on our planet, and within ourselves. A flourishing diversity is an indicator of health, the vibrancy and richness of life, of Unity. Naturally, this leads to a degree of tension between the diverse components, but that's exactly the key ingredient that maintains a dynamic harmony and propels growth and evolution. If instead, we force monocultures, promoting just one animal or plant, promoting just one thought or belief, at the expense of all others, the entire system risks collapse.

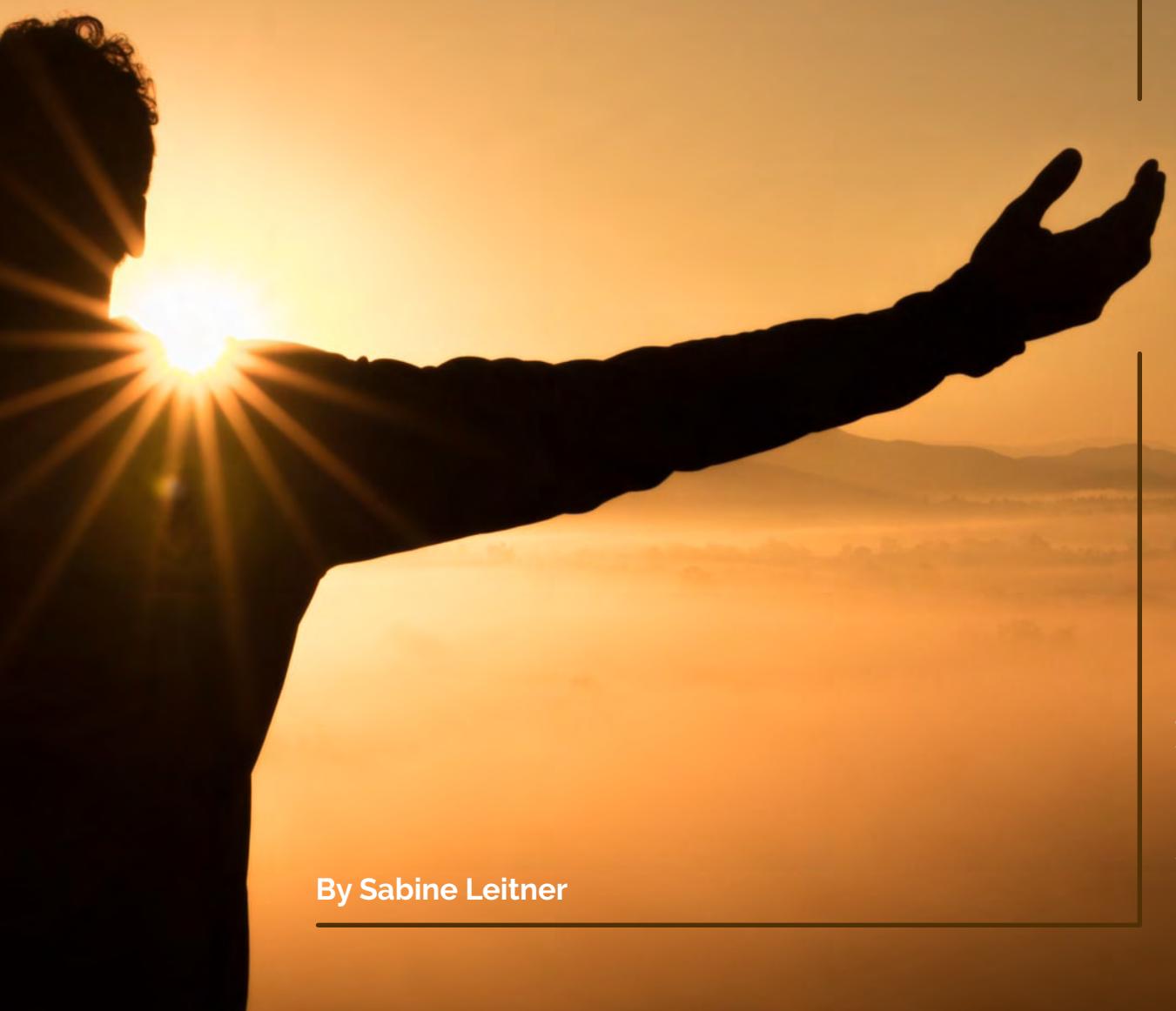
Let us not forget! We are just one part in the web of life on our planet, indeed the Universe. And *Eco* is always larger than *Ego*! Indeed it seems true that whatever is good for the beehive is always good for the bee. ☺☺☺



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THE POLITICIZATION OF SPIRITUALITY



By Sabine Leitner



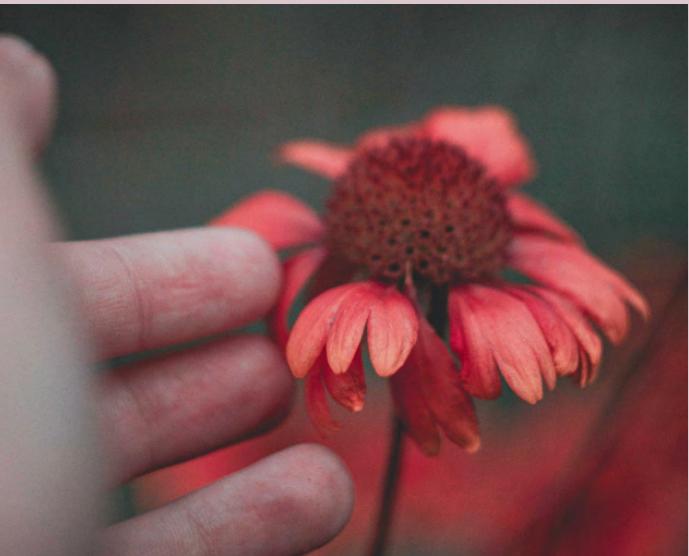
Does a circle have sides? – Not really. We can 'project' sides onto it but the fact is that there are no sides, only a circumference on which every single point has the same distance to the centre. Is spirituality left or right wing? Well, I also don't think that it makes sense to 'project' a fairly modern concept onto something that seems to be as old as humanity itself. However, there have been several articles recently about the 'Cosmic Right' and its 'dangerous rise', expounding the view that spirituality (and New Age, 'occultism', Eastern and Western religions, all sorts of 'wellness communities', Plato, Buddha, C.G. Jung, Joseph Campbell, JRR Tolkien, to name but a few that were mentioned) are right-wing.

It seems to me that this is just another example of the current tendency to polarise everything

Whenever there is the principle of organisation and different levels of responsibilities, there will be the natural principle of hierarchy.

and to draw artificial lines of demarcation where none exist, unless, of course, one wants them to exist. Let's have a closer look at this particular phenomenon.

It might be useful to know that the concept of left-wing and right-wing goes back to the French Revolution. After the storming of the Bastille in 1789, a National Assembly



Every spiritual cosmovision has promoted compassion, generosity, even self-sacrifice, and the need for education to ensure that the same human potential that exists within all of us can gradually come to be realized.

came together with the goal of writing a new constitution. One of the main issues in the debate concerned the question of how much power the king should have. Those who thought he should have the right to

an absolute veto (i.e. the more traditional ones) sat on the right of the president of the assembly and those who thought he should not (i.e. the more progressive ones) were seated on the left. However, since then, these two terms have become labels that can mean quite a range of different things at different times, in different countries and in different contexts.

The reason why spirituality seems to be given the right-wing label in the articles I mentioned is that the spiritual cosmovision tends to be 'hierarchical' and that this, apparently, leads 'naturally' to 'spiritual inequality' and 'authoritarian organisations'. I think these statements call for some reflection.

Yes, it is true that the concept of hierarchy (which literally means 'sacred rule' and originally referred to the orders of angels and heavenly beings) is an intrinsic part of a spiritual cosmovision. But a certain level of hierarchy in the ordinary sense exists in absolutely everything. A hospital, my body, my workplace – they are all organised hierarchically. Does this make them all right-wing? Whenever there is the principle of organisation and different levels of responsibilities, there will be the natural principle of hierarchy. Every political party, whether left or right, will have levels of hierarchy. All traditional doctrines, even the beliefs of shamanistic religions, are in agreement that the universe is ordered in different levels of existence. But in the case of the spiritual cosmovision, this hierarchy is based on the unity of all life that unfolds on different levels of existence, and not on partisan thinking.

What about 'spiritual inequality'? The word 'inequality' obviously carries a very negative charge. Yes, one could say that there are 'higher and lower levels of spiritual attainment'. But again, this is true of everything. In the case of any knowledge or skill, there will be an infinite range of levels of expertise. And every spiritual cosmovision has promoted compassion, generosity, even self-sacrifice, and the need for education to ensure that the same human potential that exists within all of us can gradually come to be realized.

Every archetype can have its shadow expression. Generally, it depends on how something is used, to what purpose and with what intentions.

Does a hierarchical cosmovision 'naturally' lead to authoritarian organisations? No. Although potentially it can, there is no compelling reason why it should 'naturally' lead to that result. No more than climbing up a tree would compel us to fall down. Or that driving a car would naturally lead to being involved in an accident. Every archetype can have its shadow expression. Generally, it depends on how something is used, to what purpose and with what intentions.

Duality exists on all levels in nature but it is futile to enter the game of polarisation and make one side good and the other bad. We need to transcend all factions by seeing the whole and by understanding that both poles are necessary and one wouldn't exist without the other. Working for one part only is always detrimental to the whole. If spirituality teaches us the unity of life and that we are a part of a whole, then we need more of it. ☺☺



Mumbai (Colaba Centre)

Free Intro:

Tue 6th April, 7:30PM

Course Begins:

Tue 13th April, 7:30PM

Free Intro:
Mon 31st May, 7:30PM

Course Begins:
Mon 7th Jun, 7:30PM

Mumbai (Khar Branch)

Free Intro:

Wed 26th May, 7:30PM

Course Begins:
Wed 2nd June 7:30PM

Pune Branch

Free Intro:

Wed 31st March, 7:30PM

Course Begins:

Wed 7th April, 7:30PM

Free Intro:
Mon 31st May, 7:30PM

Course Begins:
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- **The Buddha and the Path of Self-Transformation**
- **Mystery of Tibet: Listening to The Voice of the Silence**
- **Wisdom from Ancient Egypt: Living a Meaningful Life**
- **Confucius on Inner Harmony**
- **Aristotle and the Path of Happiness**
- **Freedom to Be: A Stoic Approach to Living**
- **Plotinus and the Search for Beauty**

The Individual and Society:

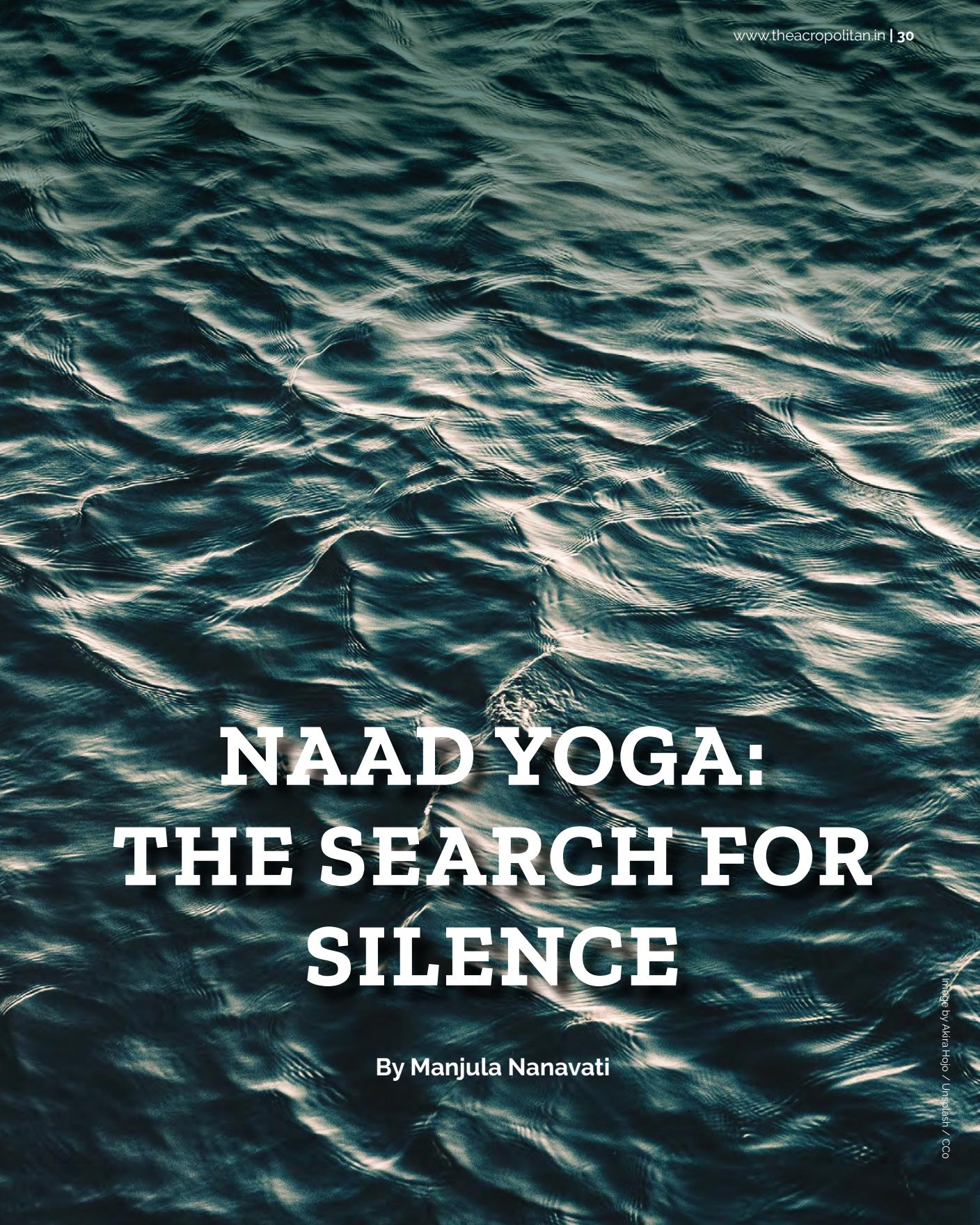
What is the role of society and how can we find our place within it? Explore how ethical leadership and education can be harnessed to awaken individuals to their true potential and create a just society.

- **To Belong: Our Challenge in Modern Society**
- **Building a Just Society: Human Values in a Material World**
- **Plato's Allegory of the Cave: Awakening of the Soul**
- **Structures of Governance: A Means to Lead Ourselves**
- **The Mysteries: Education for Human Development**

Philosophy of History:

What can we learn from cycles in history, that will enable us to recognize the opportunities of our present times? Can we forge a better future without bettering ourselves as human beings? Perhaps philosophy can offer a solution.

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- **Cycles in History: Hindu Yugas, Ages of the Zodiac**
- **The Opportunity of our Present Times**
- **The Divine Spark: Evolution and Destiny of Humanity**
- **Forging a Better Future through Practical Philosophy**



NAAD YOGA: THE SEARCH FOR SILENCE

By Manjula Nanavati

Many ancient traditions unequivocally describe the role of sound in the divine process of creation. The Bible declares, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God".⁽¹⁾ Hindu and Buddhist traditions believe that OM is the sound of creation, of the unmanifest diversifying into all the variations of energy that make up our universe. If sound characterizes creation, the realm of multiplicity, then is unity characterized by silence? Since we live in a deeply sonorous universe, perhaps the search for that sacred silence might invite us to turn inwards.

Sound, be it music, the lilt of nature, the voice of a loved one, or a comforting prayer, has the ability to touch, re-arrange, or shift something deep within us. It can evoke memories, awaken sentiments, and heighten our connection to our mysterious, enshrouded core. Sound can be a bridge to the innermost recesses of our being and because of this unique capability, the ancient metaphysical system of Naad Yoga, uses the power of sound to achieve an evolution of consciousness, and union with the metaphysical. *Naad* means 'essence of sound' or 'flow of sound', and *yoga* means 'union' or 'path'.

The *Natya Shastra*, the pivotal treatise from which it is said all classical arts of the Indian tradition emerge, refers to art as a ladder to reach the divine. Through meticulous practice, exacting discipline and unflinching devotion, the artist's aim is understood as the ability to use the mode, structure and process of art to pierce through the veil between the visible world and the realm of the invisible: to use the form, to experience formlessness, a plane of consciousness that transcends limitations of time or space.

Accordingly, Naad Yoga is described by practitioners as an intense concentration on a certain sound, following it deeply inwards, using it as a means to touch areas of consciousness that are usually inaccessible. The syllable OM is particularly suited to this meditation as it closely resonates with the continuous drone of the Tanpura, an Indian instrument, which creates a cascading harmonic range of overtones in a continuous loop. Its constancy serves as a metaphor for the eternal, the immovable and everlasting, which is a contrast



**Sound can be
a bridge to the
innermost recesses
of our being.**

to the ordinary human condition in a constant state of flux; our energies, moods, and thoughts rising and falling with changes in our internal and external environment.

Disciples of certain schools of classical Indian music, for example rise at 4am, to practice *svar sadhna*, the recitation of a single note, over and over again, sometimes for up to 45 minutes, immersing oneself so completely into the sound so as to experience a dissolving of the cloak between the self and the sound.

Noted vocal artist Chintan Upadhyay (M.A. Classical Indian Music), who has been teaching and performing the ancient Dhrupad form of music, both internationally and across India, was hosted by The Culture Circle at New Acropolis (Colaba, Mumbai). During the intimate and inspiring recital he explained his experience of this enigmatic and almost alchemical process: "If I sing the same note a hundred times, I may have a hundred different flavors of the same note due to the layers of the personality [moods, emotions, thoughts, etc.] So, you are revealing who you are using the instrument of *sa*. Soon something happens deep within you. Secrets inside you come to the surface if you give it time. You have to empty your vessel of everyday thoughts to be able to receive from the higher. Then if you are very lucky, you find one day, that '*sa sa nahin rahetha aur aap aap nahin*' [that *sa* ceases to remain a note, and you cease to be you]. You become the *sa*, and the sound beyond the note."

"That which has created, and which is holding, and in which is held the whole manifestation and the whole cosmos, is one power, and that is vibration".⁽²⁾

The science of Naad Yoga begins with the idea that it is not matter, but different forms of energy that are the building blocks of our universe. This idea ties in with modern faculty of String Theory which, at the risk of oversimplifying, postulates that everything in our universe is made up of microscopic strands of energy, vibrating at different frequencies. Hence, everything from the planets and stars, to atoms and the cells that constitute the human body, is constantly vibrating! And since each vibration has its own distinctive frequency, the resulting sounds around us, and within us, become the subject of meditation in Naad Yoga.⁽³⁾

Naad Yoga is described by practitioners as an intense concentration on a certain sound, following it deeply inwards, using it as a means to touch areas of consciousness that are usually inaccessible.



Naad Yogis practice listening deeply, attentively and reverently, to these inner sounds, with the purpose of descending inward, to discover the divine nature within. It is said that with arduous practice and tireless determination, an inner reversal begins to take place; the overt, active and outwardly energetic activity begins to recede, and the part which was so far dormant, awakens.

This inner transformation demands effort and perseverance. But paradoxically as any disciple on the path will vouch, the more assiduously one works, the more surplus energy is generated, and the more one can tirelessly work.

It is noteworthy that we have the ability to filter out external sounds that engulf us continually, and thankfully, we are not attuned to the many internal sounds our bodies constantly make. Otherwise, we would be completely overwhelmed with the quantum of sonic information. Naad Yoga cultivates at once, both the broadening and the focusing of sensitivity, to listen intensely and profoundly. It differentiates 4 kinds of sound, from the most obvious to more and more subtle ⁽⁴⁾:

- *VAIKHARI*, or external gross sound.
- *MADHYAMA*, or mental sound consisting of words we use to form speech. It includes our internal dialogue and the words that make up our memories.
- *PASHYANTI* is visual sound, seeing sound as physical shapes, light, or colors.
- *PARA*, which means beyond. It is beyond what the sense organs can perceive. It is beyond audible sound. Para is going beyond ourselves, by going within ourselves.

If *para* is described as sound beyond our human perception, what then is silence? Mystics of many ancient traditions have recognized silence as the origin, the backdrop against which all sound is heard. In Sufism the silence "from which all vibrations arise and into which all vibrations dissolve" is called *Zat*, Buddhists refer to *Shunyata* and Hindus call it *Naad Brahman*, the soundless sound, the universal consciousness. (3) Furthermore, it is fascinating that Naad Yoga also differentiates between different levels of silence. As one 'listens' to this silence, one might become aware of the still deeper silence



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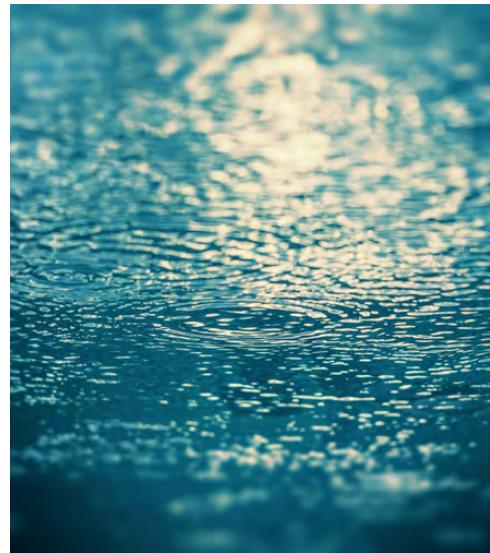
behind it, forming a backdrop that makes it 'audible'. It is in following this thread deeper and deeper within, by peeling back these layers of silence that we become perhaps, as Kahlil Gibran so poetically described, "seekers of silences".⁽⁵⁾

Can this ancient, complex and seemingly esoteric practice, which dates back to the *Naad Bindu Upanishad* of the *Rig Veda*, have significance in our daily lives today? For me, this investigation inspired a much deeper reflection on the various sounds I encounter every day. Realizing the power and potential of sound that tradition seems to suggest, perhaps we can begin to listen with more attention and sensitivity. While taking a bath, for instance, we can try to concentrate on the sound of running water, therapeutic and purifying, to cleanse ourselves within, even while we clean ourselves without. Or we might develop the concentration to effectively filter out noises, to hear more acutely the chirping of the birds. What if we exacted better control of the sounds we contribute to the vibrations of life, by choosing more discerningly our words? This, in actuality is the most crucial change we can immediately make.

Our words have immense power. They channelize a creative force that express as action and ultimately create our reality. It is critical then that we learn to bring more accuracy, objectivity and positivity to our speech, as The Buddha enjoined his followers to do in his teachings on Right Speech, or maintain Noble Silence.

Many traditions describe the human being's present condition as a 'fall from grace', a forgetting of our true nature. It seems that Naad Yoga, the yoga of Sound, was conceived as a powerful and potent tool to awaken us to a universal consciousness, to remember the silence that was, and always is, our true home. Perhaps in this way we can attune ourselves a little bit more to the music and harmony of Nature; to learn to proactively listen to, what Pythagoras might have referred to as "the music of the celestial spheres". And to remember, as Plato said, that we are God, so that we might reclaim our potential; to become who we can be... today.

"There is no other laya (absorption), which equals the naad (internal sound)." – Hatha Yoga Pradipika ○○○



Realizing the power and potential of sound that tradition seems to suggest, perhaps we can begin to listen with more attention and sensitivity.

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EMPOWERING **REAL** CHANGE

LEADERSHIP FOR A BETTER FUTURE



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5 Weekly Online sessions (3 hours each)

Organisations have always had to find ways to deal with challenges arising from rapid change. And as the need for social, ecological and spiritual change becomes increasingly evident in our world today, the importance of a holistic approach to leadership, with a strong ethical and philosophical foundation is more apparent.

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How do we build courage, resilience and flexibility to lead in the face of such uncertainty? How can we inspire ourselves and others to think differently and give new direction to our lives? How do we collaborate and coexist with others in this new way of working together, when physical proximity and bonhomie are reduced substantially?

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- Fear of change. What makes change difficult?
- Why do attempts to change fail?
- Mind: the lock and key to finding solutions

2. The Everyday Hero

- Facing challenges with the spirit of victory rather than with the attitude of a victim
- Discerning between what is in my control and what is not
- Standing up for what is right
- Transforming Obstacles into stepping stones

3. Principles of Leadership: Lessons from Life

- Movement and change as a life principle
- Concentration and mindfulness
- Finding the right Tension/Balance: The key to Harmony, Order and Rhythm
- Building stability and flexibility

4. Leadership for the Common Good

- The Individual and the Collective: Learning to Belong
- Coexistence, collaboration and the ability to see the big picture
- The strength of the collective: Bringing out the best in each other
- Effective Communication

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- Defining success and happiness
- Bringing meaning and value in the workplace
- Empowering self and others

Testimonials of past participants:



General Manager
Training & Development
Bharat Petroleum Ltd.

The workshop triggered some deep reflections which has engineered changes in my perspective towards leadership and transformation. The trainers led us through this learning journey with ease and the learning experience was rich and deep. Thank you New Acropolis for this gift.

- K MAHENDRA KUMAR



Lead - Operations,
ICICI Home Finance
Company Limited

This is a unique leadership program which draws insight from Philosophy and Nature. I recommend this session to those who are willing to understand "Self" and ready to create more "Impact" in not just professional life but also personal life.

- VIJAY NICHOLAS



Associate Director,
Administration
Khaitan & Co

This was something very different from the usual leadership courses. The philosophical approach made it intense and gave it a new light. Personally, it was an amazing journey and the footprints of which I am now embedding in my work and personal life. There is a radical difference now in looking at any task, team members, peers, management, and goals.

- MADHU VACCHANI



Director Finance &
Accounts
Khaitan & Co

All the sessions were like emotional and intellectual battles with my own self and forced me to relook at my own behaviour – which was effective, but not easy at all. End of the day, this self-challenging introspection was really rewarding for myself. Really appreciate the openness, sincerity and willingness of the entire faculty of educators. This is highly recommended.

- DIPTENDRANATH BHATTACHARYA

BATTLE OF IDENTITY

By Ambuj Dixit



Is it not ironic that while we love the blossoming life, we try to avoid the very process that leads to the blossoming - the process of challenges.

It seems to me that the purpose of human life is to grow. When I look back at the moments or the phases through which I have grown, I see them as times that tested me to transcend what I felt were my limitations; be it starting my own business venture with a bagful of doubts about my capabilities, or be it a moment of extreme anger in which I consciously decided not to identify with the anger. These phases had a common factor that we call 'challenges'. I feel that the universe has it made it so by design!

When I think of challenges, I am reminded of

Ramdhari Singh Dinkar's poetry. In his signature style, this celebrated laureate summarises *The Mahabharata* in a poetic rendition comprising 7 chapters in a work titled *Rashmi Rathi*. In his third chapter he describes how the 12 years of exile, filled with difficult trials, strengthened the Pandavas and prepared them for the battle to come. In a humble attempt to share my inspiration, I have translated a few verses below, knowing that my English will not do justice to the poetry and subtle innuendoes of the original. Therefore I apologize in advance to the reader.

Dinkarji invokes virtues like courage, determination, and self-belief, to say that it is only because of challenges that we get the opportunity to harness and sharpen our virtues and rise to our potential.

**There is first a need
to identify the right
battles and recognise
the vulnerabilities
that become hurdles in
becoming a better self.
Then there is the need
to accept and commit
to improve.**





It is only because of challenges that we get the opportunity to harness and sharpen our virtues and rise to our potential.

**पारक में कनक-सदृश तप कर,
वीरत्व लिए कृष्ण और प्रखर**

**Well tested and purified like gold in fire,
With more valour and shine.**

Here, the years of exile are described as fierce tests leading to discovery and the strengthening of virtuous qualities, of which the Pandavas were not aware earlier. What if I say that these tests are not limited to the Pandavas alone? Don't we all go through them on an everyday basis? For some it starts with their disagreement with the alarm clock, for others in their inability to resist that pastry that they know they should avoid. Our battles take place in our moments of fear, discomfort, dislike, irritation, insecurity, including the Monday morning blues that many of us experience. And, every time we struggle and fight the fear, we are in that moment, it seems, facing the greatest battle of our lives.

At such times, there is first a need to identify the

right battles and recognise the vulnerabilities that become hurdles in becoming a better self. Then there is the need to accept and commit to improve. When failing to keep up with our New Year resolutions, for example, the challenge lies not just in failing, but also in falling into the trap of guilt.

Dinkarji goes a step further saying that the brave do not let the trials bring them down.

**शूरमा नहीं विचलित होते,
क्षण एक नहीं धीरज खोते,
विद्धों को गले लगाते हैं,
काँटों में राह बनाते हैं।**

**The brave are affected not,
Not for a moment do they lose patience,
In embracing obstacles,
They carve out a path from among thorns.**

Once these battles are recognised, there comes the time to be brave and courageous, to charge forward, and choose to fight the

battle no matter how many times one might fail, because the real victory is the steadfast ability to persevere in the fight against weakness, to assert the identity of a warrior. Hence there is a need to value the process, rather than the result. With perseverance and patience, sooner or later we will overcome our weaknesses and destroy the enemy.

जो आ पड़ता सब सहते हैं,
उद्योग-निरत नित रहते हैं,
शूलों का मूल नसाने को,
बढ़ खुद विपत्ति पर छाने को।

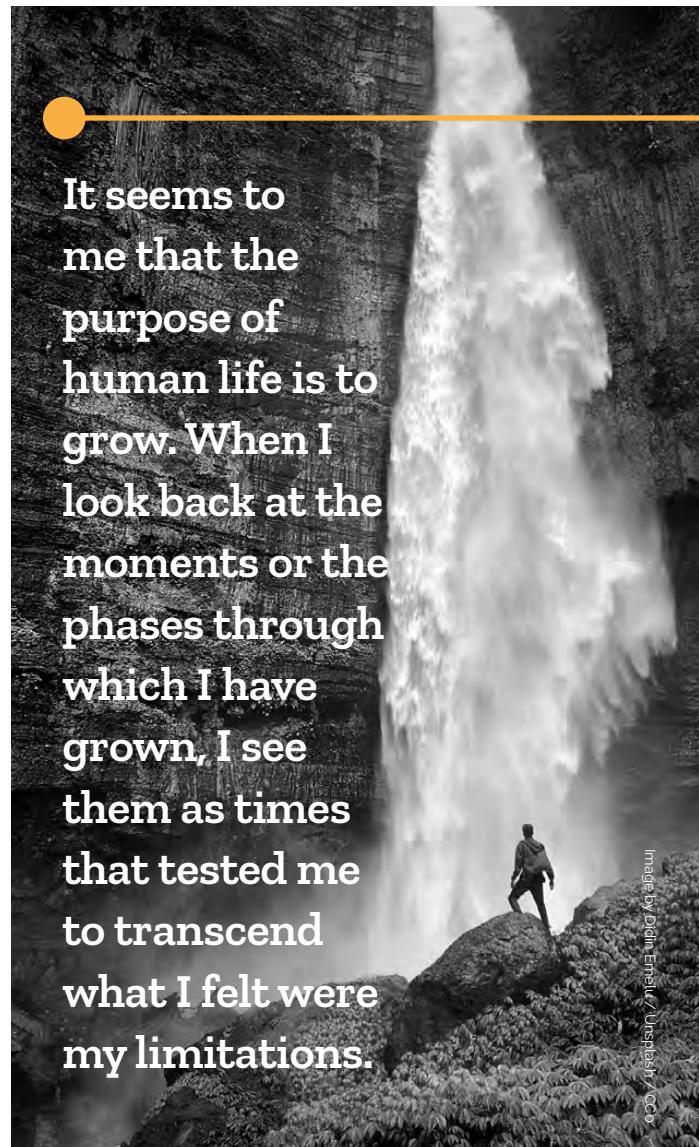
*They brave whatever comes their way,
Persistent in their endeavours,
To eradicate the cause of trouble,
To overcome the root of misery.*

But who is the enemy? Siding with weakness is the enemy. When all the inner voices are shouting for comfort, convenience, familiarity, ambition, and security, it is difficult to discern between what is really good for us, and what is just another hurdle. With observation and actualization time and again, we purify ourselves; the process through which we struggle and learn to conquer our fears, need for comfort, and our false limitations.

वाटिका और वन एक नहीं,
आराम और रण एक नहीं।
वर्षा, अंधड़, आतप अखंड,
पौरुष के हैं साधन प्रचण्ड।

*Gardens and forests are not the same
The time of Rest and War are not the same.
The Rain, a Hurricane and the scorching Sun
Are all but means to express valour.*

What exactly happens in the process? We might refer to what traditions have referred to as Alchemy. We reconfigure our identity and reveal our hidden strength and virtues that we may not have been aware of earlier and even insurmountable challenges, melt away.



मानव जब जोर लगाता है,
पत्थर पानी बन जाता है।

*When Man applies his force
Even stone melts away like water*

In moments of doubt, the blanket of ignorance hides our virtues and strengths from our awareness. We freeze and feel as if we don't have any way to face the difficulties. The challenges look larger than life, diverting our focus towards our fears instead of the inner strengths.

गुण बड़े एक से एक प्रखर,
हैं छिपे मानवों के भीतर,

*Great and sharp qualities
Lie hidden within Man*

How tragic it is that we do not really know our own strengths! So, we shy away from challenges because of the fear that we might fail. Ultimately, however, to encounter our strengths, we must be willing to illuminate the candle within. Because:

In moments of
doubt, the
blanket of
ignorance hides
our virtues and
strengths from
our awareness.

बत्ती जो नहीं जलाता है
रोशनी नहीं वह पाता है।

*One who does not light a candle,
does not get light.*

As I understand, the symbolism of the candle here relates to the importance of investigation which is essential to surpass challenges and move forward. In its absence, we miss the opportunity to get to know ourselves better.

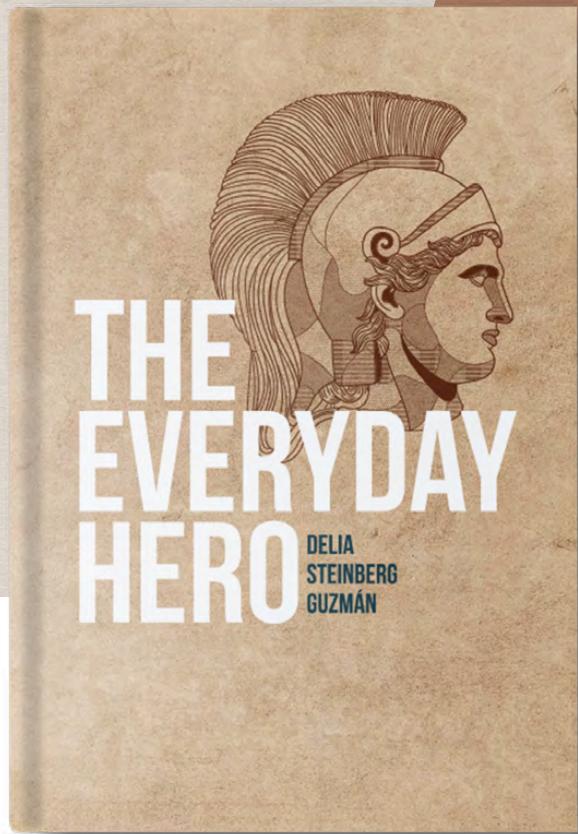
Moment to moment, day to day, as we try to shed light on the real causes behind our doubts and our fears, we strengthen the fire within, and grow in wisdom.

Spring is knocking on our door and soon summer will arrive. The days will get longer and the spirit will yearn to soar. If you wish to ride along nature, bloom as the flowers, and become part of the energy and life manifesting all around us; a result of cutting through the dangers of winter. In this way, we will always regard difficulties and challenges as opportunities.

I leave you with these lines as a call to action:

वसुधा का नेता कौन हुआ?
भूखण्ड-विजेता कौन हुआ?
अतुलित यश क्रेता कौन हुआ?
नव-धर्म प्रणेता कौन हुआ?
जिसने न कभी आराम किया,
विद्वां में रहकर नाम किया।

*Who becomes Master of the Earth?
Who conquers kingdoms?
Who basks in unfathomed glory?
Who establishes the path of Truth?
One who rests not,
Earns fame facing challenges. ○○○*



BOOK RECOMMENDATION

THE EVERYDAY HERO

By Delia Steinberg Guzmán

This investigative anthology explores a variety of subjects regarding diverse aspects of daily life. We find ourselves preoccupied with many of these subjects today, some of which even cause us worry.

From a philosophical perspective, this book also offers essential keys that might enable us to understand each other better, while encouraging us to awaken the everyday hero that lies asleep within each of us.

What is Inspiration?

This is a question that arises when we think of real masterpieces, those creations and performances of genius which some human beings have managed to produce, as if they had been directed by special powers, which seem to have come from some source above the artists themselves. What was the magic spark that guided them? What extraordinary streams of thought or vision were they able to follow?

That too is the question that torments us personally in those moments when we want to express the best of what we feel and think, but don't know how to do so. It is also what we ask ourselves when we feel empty of ideas and emotions, as if we were a lifeless bag of skin and bone.

Then we remember the great creators, those who were able to enter into contact with inspiration by briefly touching its secret. Is it possible to know for certain that there is a bridge between human beings and the world of ideas, capable of establishing the link that we call inspiration? Perhaps there is not just one bridge, a single link between us and that world; because if that were the case, those who have been able to cross the bridge would have told us how they did it and what it was like when they reached the other side. Perhaps each human being has to cast their own nets, with their own means, and therein lies the mystery of the awakening of inspiration.

From another point of view, I fear that the rational mind, which we have made the distinctive symbol of the human being, has little or nothing to do with this process.

Experience tells us that the more we try to achieve this state with our reason, the further away we get from inspiration.

The ancient sages used to say that the secret lies in becoming like a hollow reed... and allowing intuition to flow through it. It is then that the miracle occurs: we continue to be empty – hollow, more than empty – and a procession of images parades before us, obliging us to act extraordinarily quickly. What is not said, painted, written or produced in that instant will be lost. It is not a question of works that are our own exactly; something or someone gives them to us, and our task is to receive and transmit them. It is a moment of ecstasy, of contact with a world which is different to our own, more ethereal, more beautiful, more perfect in all its aspects. It is like having a highly sensitive receiving device, which we don't know how to use and operate. We can only make use of it when it is working.

We have several descriptions – some more inspired and others less so – which give us a possible key of interpretation. If there is an affinity between our personal vibrations and that world of perfect ideas that we want to reach, the contact is established just by desiring it strongly. It is up to us, then, to develop and nourish those streams of sympathy that are in accord with the good and beautiful aspects we want to understand and transmit. It is up to us to open the doors to inspiration.

And when we ask ourselves again, "what is inspiration?", it is likely that we will still not have a definite answer; but we will, on the other hand, have the strange and marvellous sensation of having been touched by a wonderful aura that

comes from beyond time and space, from the eternal source from which all of us, at some time, have dreamt of drinking.

The Everyday Hero

Among the many things that are out of fashion at the moment is the heroic sense of life. Heroes are something for books, not even for history books, but fantasy stories for children, who are entertained with paper or celluloid heroes, as long as the psychologists don't intervene to declare that such tales are bad for their minds.

In spite of such fashions, however, life in its rich variety offers us many more heroic deeds than we are often prepared to admit. I am not talking about the great historical figures, those who, in spite of the cloudy vision of envious critics, continue to shine with their own light in time; no. I am talking about the small everyday heroes, who carry out real feats, with an effort worthy of titans, even if they have the stature of human beings.

Everyone has their own level. Everyone has their own feelings and ideas, their dreams and ambitions. Everyone has some desire to change, to improve, to leave the world a little bit different from the way they found it... And it is there, in that part of each individual, with all those characteristics, that the everyday hero is to be found, laboriously striving to achieve a part, whether great or small, of all that we have mentioned.

If some talented writer were to record the adventures of these anonymous people and give them expression in words, he would transform those people and their adventures

into heroes and heroic deeds, because he would know how to bring out the value of each experience, the heroic act of each minute.

When classical philosophy imagined the heroes and made them recognized by all, I believe that their vision was not only based on warlike deeds or outstanding acts of psychological or physical skill. I think I can glimpse, in more than one philosopher, a silent and subtle invitation to emulate those heroes from the simplicity of our own lives, from the battle station in life which destiny has assigned to each one of us.

The heroic sense of life is not only to be found on the battlefield, or at one of those difficult moments when we have succeeded against all odds. The heroic sense of life and the single act of heroism are not the same. The heroic sense of life is like a general direction; it is a path which, passing through more or less difficult terrain, leads to a goal.

Heroism, then, consists in seeing each day, each act, as a test or trial in which all our strengths - from physical strength to the subtle powers of intelligence and the soul - are going to come into play. Sometimes we will fall, and many other times - as many as may be necessary - we will get up again... Maybe you don't yet feel the hero in yourself? Make space for him and you will see him grow like an inner column.

This is an invitation to the heroic: to be different, to be better, to be clear, honest and reasonable in the name of a natural philosophy, when so many people seem determined to harm themselves for the sake of pretentiousness and ignorance. ☺☺

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NEWS SPOTLIGHT

● Philosophy ● Culture ● Volunteering

● Online Panel Discussions

A Philosophers Guide to a New and Improved 2021 (Jan 2021)

Shedding light on how to develop an inner philosophical approach to take charge of our own lives, rather than wait for external circumstances to change.

Seeking Simplicity (Feb 2021)

Exploring ways to simplify and reduce the clutter in daily life to bring more clarity and fulfilment, by creating space for what is essential, and fighting the superficiality of multi-tasking.

● Audio Articles

The New Acropolis Online Library is a compilation of over 300 articles covering a vast range of topics. Now many of these articles are available in audio format for your easy listening!

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● An Authentic Life – In conversation with Padma Shri Sudha Murthy (Jan 2021)

Chairperson of Infosys Foundation, Ms. Sudha Murthy took us through her journey as a writer observing that sensitivity and keen observation

can help us extract valuable life lessons. She spoke of her philanthropic work and explained the importance of developing a compassionate mindset to work towards helping those in need. Through the course of the talk she complimented New Acropolis for its work and we were indeed grateful to have her virtual presence.



● Transcending the Grammar of Music with Ms. Tara Kini (Jan 2021)

"The power of music lies in its ability to bring people together, irrespective of age, gender, borders and religion." Singer and educator Tara Kini has worked to help demystify the framework of Hindustani classical music. In addition to a performance of Raga Yaman, participants were guided to create simple musical sequences, as a practical exploration of pitch, tempo, and rhythm.



● Clean Up Activity Shantivan Garden

(Jan 2021)

In collaboration with BMC, Volunteer Members of New Acropolis cleared up organic waste resulting from the monsoon, demonstrating Philosophy in Action - a small but significant difference in the community.



● Beautifying Garden beds around Colaba Centre

(Feb 2021)

Member Volunteers revived and replenished the garden beds surrounding the Colaba Centre. The activity served as an opportunity to engage with the soil, and working together with a harmonious and joyful spirit.



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PHILOSOPHY

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.



CULTURE



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.



VOLUNTEERING



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