

THE CLARION CALL

AWAKEN THE PHILOSOPHER WITHIN



**Practical Philosophy for
the Right Action**

Roots in the Sacred

**Giving Meaning to
our Steps**



New Acropolis is an international non-profit organization with a presence in over 60 countries. At its core it is a school for practical philosophy in the Classical style, run by volunteers. Worldwide we have close to 40,000 volunteers, all of who are dedicated to bringing philosophy closer to the society for all people regardless any differences of social, religious, gender or political background.

We came into being 60 years ago, with the aim of bringing universal philosophy and wisdom to life in the hearts of the cities worldwide. Our focus is on philosophy - not just in the sense of the quest for knowledge and ideas, but on how we can use it so it will turn into Experience and Wisdom, thus widening our perspective over life and helping us evolve individually and collectively. We focus on philosophy as a way of life – as practical philosophy.

For more please visit our website www.acropolis.org.in

The Clarion Call

Vol 1 Issue 9 | Jul - Sept 2017

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Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

The ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius said "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand."

In its original essence, Philosophy was not meant to be heard, read or studied, but to be lived. And it is meant to be lived in day-to-day life through Action - more specifically, through the right action at each moment.

We have all at some point in our lives faced the dilemma of choosing the right course of action in a particular circumstance - and sometimes we choose, while at other times we defer the choice and remain in inaction. Our world today is one where there is no dearth of options, yet indecision takes hold of many, sometimes with serious consequences. In such times, we can turn to wisdom of the ancient cultures to learn and apply keys to identifying and actualising the right action, thus taking control of our lives.

It is exactly this idea of Philosophy in Action that we explore in this issue of The Clarion Call.

Happy reading!

Anand Baskaran

Editor - The Clarion Call

Giving Meaning to our Steps



BY DELIA STEINBERG GUZMÁN
INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT OF NEW ACROPOLIS
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

Among many other psychological diseases, our time is witness to frequent crises of indecisiveness and confusion in people. Many are those who let their lives slip by in a constant state of dissatisfaction, produced by not knowing what to do or how to do it in order to achieve effective results.

To escape this emptiness, there are those who throw themselves into particular activities, hoping that these will give a purpose to their lives. Thus, they make their studies or their job their salvation, little realizing that the situation has its roots, without a doubt, deep within the individuals themselves. All practical activities are valueless if the person who performs them is unaware of the reasons behind his or her actions.

We always have to ask ourselves why we are doing things and what is the direction in which we are going. Why we are doing things: because we should know the real usefulness of the things we do. Everything that is aimed purely at filling a void or covering up some anxiety will not produce the desired results. Once the period that has been artificially filled, merely

for the purpose of running away from ourselves, is over, the restlessness and confusion will return.

Let us take the case of someone who believes they have chosen the wrong vocation or activity and looks for another to remedy the mistake, only to find themselves in the same psychological state again soon afterwards. The blame will be put on those who teach us, on society for not making room for the many types of work we could do, but – without failing to recognize that this may sometimes be true – most

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of the time the fault lies in not knowing why we do things, and doing them without knowing what we want to achieve.

Why we are doing things: do I want to know more, to improve myself internally, to grow psychologically, to master a subject in order to apply it to some specific work, to help others? Or, in the simplest of cases, do I want to make more money, to buy the things I need, to be able to travel...? Why?: this question cannot be absent, but the answer must also be provided, as long as it is not "to fill the time." The purpose of our actions should always be practical, applicable, and have a meaning which can fill gaps and needs in the world and within ourselves.

Where are we going? Whenever we move, we should have a marked, clear and well defined direction in front of us. The "why" gives us an aim, and the "where to" shows us the steps to be taken and the direction of the path to be followed, so that they will lead us towards the proposed goal. Without direction, our actions run the risk of becoming lost in some hole in space and

time, increasing our anxiety when we realize that we are unable to achieve concrete goals.

When a person defines where they are going, they also establish the means to get there, because knowing the end point provides the ability to obtain the appropriate tools.

Excerpted from the book "What we do with our Heart and Mind"

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Life is Movement

BY PIERRE POULAIN



Image Courtesy/ Pierre Poulain

The first thing I can think about when I look at this photograph is the idea of Movement. It is not obvious, because this isn't a photograph that presents the movement, like when you shoot somebody who is running fast using a low shutter speed.

On the contrary- here the camera has fixed the movement of the person who is cleaning the floor. But her intention is clear, and with the fan at her side and above all , the shape of the staircase- you can perceive the whole composition as a "spiral" and in a way, this spiral resumes the movement of life.

The spiral is present everywhere in nature: in the development of plants as well as in fractals. I believe it is also the shape of the development of the human consciousness: a subtle movement which is always going upwards and towards the center, allowing us to experience each new cycle with a more global and subtle consciousness. For me, this is the meaning of life.

Pierre Poulain is a philosopher and a renowned international photographer. In 1986 he founded the New Acropolis School of Philosophy in Israel and later on in many other countries.

Pierre blogs at www.photos-art.org

Practical Philosophy for the Right Action



BY RAN KREMER
NATIONAL DIRECTOR, NEW ACROPOLIS SOUTH INDIA

Am I the leader of my life? Or am I more passive or reactive?

Can we just let “time do the job” for us, or will there be no merit without effort?

If I choose to become the leader of my life and be more active, then how do I know what is the Right Action?

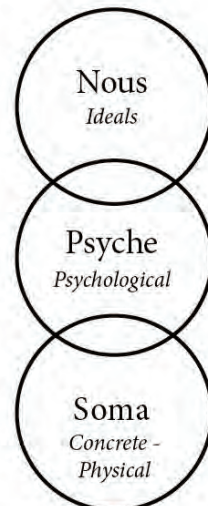
Before finding the Right Action for each of us, let us start with understanding the need for more Action in our life, to be proactive rather than being reactive or even passive most of the time.

As per the ancient teachings of the Gita, the enemy of spiritual growth is inaction and negligence, while the biggest ally of spiritual growth is the Right Action and Compassionate Seva. From the words of lord Krishna himself, we already learned that without action, there is no real spirituality or mysticism. The Right Action is what pulls us out of our inertia, liberates us from unproductive and uncreative comfort zones, and has the power to get us moving from whatever got us stuck in life.

Action is what gives us wings to transcend above the labyrinth of our psyche, just like in the well-known

ancient myth of Theseus and the Minotaur, where the hero uses the gift of Love and Intelligence to find the path into the complex maze. There, at the heart of the Labyrinth, he destroys the monster which represents his inner enemies- the Minotaur.

From ancient Greek occult teachings we learn that truly being an ethical, spiritual person means to be able to translate elevated ideas into action: From Nous (spirit) to Psyche (thoughts& emotions) to Soma (concrete physical reality).



Very similar to the Greek one, other Eastern & Western ancient Philosophies speak about the need to convert feelings and thoughts into concrete actions, while removing the obstacles to do so. What are the obstacles to doing what we aspire to? Are they true limitations of our self or external circumstances/ conditions which we convinced ourselves are limiting us? How can we overcome these self-limitations?

A good start would be to acknowledge the existence of an obstacle, and then to analyse whether it is an external or an internal one. In many cases, we might find that the external obstacles/ circumstances are an illusion (Maya) and that the true reason for the limitation is internal - be it fear from action/change, procrastination, or simple lack of planning. We must also pay attention to ensure that we have not imposed unnecessary conditions on ourselves due to others' actions, or even just due to what they might think of our actions.

As long as our actions are ethical and do not harm or offend anyone, we all deserve to have the freedom of Action!

The next step could be to learn how to be able to take an independent action when needed, regardless of whether the circumstances are favourable or not, and even if our action will not be popular.

The Right Action

Once the need to be more active is understood, then what is the Right Action for me?

As taught in Ancient Indian Philosophy, the practical Philosophy of the Right Action is called Karma Yoga, and the foundation of understanding what is the Right Action for an individual depends on one's Swadharma. Karma Yoga is also known to have the power to purify our actions by engaging, for example, in meaningful Seva and doing selfless work for an altruistic cause.



In ancient western philosophy, Plato speaks about the need to identify one's true nature in order to know oneself, and accordingly do Justice to the individual's true needs, and hence to be able to do the Right Action from that Axis of true notion of the self.

Another key from ancient wisdom regarding the nature of action speaks about Tamas, Rajas and Satva. This key tells us to avoid being passive where we need to be active; hence the need to add Action to those areas of our life which are lacking initiative and assertiveness. On the other hand, it also tells us to reduce the flames where we recognize that we are being over reactive.

We would like also to consider the quality of our actions. From a classical philosophical angle there are 3 types of actions:

1. Those which take us backward – usually done on "auto-pilot", derived from some old habits which are obsolete and many times suffer from misconception or prejudice. Many of these are sometimes driven

only by some unwanted desires and fears which may enslave us and pull us down and backwards instead of helping us evolve and progress.

2. Those which are habitual and routine actions, almost mechanical – these are essential for our survival and enable us to stay in the place where we are, evolution-wise. Here, we must use our awareness to ensure that type 2 actions do not become type 1, which are paralyzing and harmful.

3. The Action which take us forward and upward – these are individually the right intelligent actions for us and may vary in their nature and quality from individual to individual.

Another question which arises when one truly decides to be more active about his life is how to identify the Right Action when there are many options to choose from, or when there are none?

The same question can be asked in a different way: What makes the Zen master archer's arrow pierce the target in each one of his shots?

Once the archer is able to clear his mind, after becoming single minded with his goal which is the sole purpose of all his actions, he unites himself with the means (the bow & the arrow) and the goal in life (the target); and when he is tranquilly united with the target, all doubts and imbalance are removed, and thus a clean shot is achieved (The Right Action). Victory is guaranteed even before the arrow left the bow!

The secret of the Right Action, just like the clear shot of the archer, might lie in our ability to prepare ourselves to be ready at every moment to launch the Right Action by clearing our mind, balancing our stance, calming our Psyche and sustaining sufficient stamina and energy. On top of these comes the superior factor which is to be able to clearly see the target! Like what is most important for me in life? Regardless of where I go and what happens to me,

the target should never move from my inner eyes, always present in the heart.

The ability to take the Right Action seems to be an inner faculty of the heart - it is a certain level of intuition and brightness of vision which is gained through experience. The ones who do not miss their targets in life and succeed with their actions and any endeavors they take up may be called "Lucky" ones, but we should know by now that it requires efforts and experience to become lucky in life, and without sincere effort there is no merit.

LET EACH ONE DARE,
THEREFORE, TO BREAK HIS
PAPER DOORS, WHICH HAVE
THE APPEARANCE OF SOLID
FORTRESSES BUT ARE LITTLE
MORE THAN AN ILLUSION.
LET EACH ONE DARE TO FACE
HIS BARRIER MADE OF CLOUDS
AND BEGIN TO FEEL INSIDE THE
UNSTOPPABLE FORCE OF HIS
WILL-POWER MADE REALITY.

- DELIA STEINBERG GUZMAN,
INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT,
NEW ACROPOLIS

Roots in the Sacred

BY MITI DESAI
DESIGNER, DANCER, EDUCATIONIST



“THE DANCE CAN REVEAL EVERYTHING MYSTERIOUS THAT IS HIDDEN IN MUSIC,
AND IT HAS THE ADDITIONAL MERIT OF BEING HUMAN & PALPABLE.
DANCING IS POETRY WITH ARMS AND LEGS”.

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE, 1821 -1867

This beautiful quote resonates the intrinsic quality of dance being integral to the human spirit. If we go back in time, what unveils is that with the formation of communities emerged different forms of self-expression. Dance was one such integral form.

The journey of dance begins with the emergence of tribal dances. Tribal dances are a celebration of nature and most often ritualistic. As society developed, so did all forms and thus did dance. Folk dances came into being as a celebration of humanity and togetherness.

India has a rich heritage of folk dance forms. Every state, (India has 29 states) has at least one folk dance form, and some more than one. Folk dances are group dances where men and women come together and dance to celebrate togetherness, nature, festivals and life events. Each one has a different costume, jewellery, music and movement. The development of society and the individual conscience resulted in the emergence of subtler forms of expression. Classical Indian dance is a result of the same.

The philosophy of classical Indian dance is rooted in the philosophy of the civilization and the culture through which it emanated. The prime question that the Indian worldview focuses on is, what is the purpose of life? Individual growth, to raise the level of consciousness and to reach the highest spiritual potential is considered the purpose of life. This is a rather audacious vision. Thus, to help the individual walk on this path, ladders were created, in the form of all the arts, and classical Indian dance is one such ladder created to allow a glimpse into the possibility of a higher self. The design of the art form has the potential for individual transcendence. Hence, spirituality and philosophy form the core of Classical Indian dance.

In the ancient Indian texts the Sanskrit expression used to describe the experience of the classical arts and its essence is known as 'brahmananda sahodara,' which literally means 'born from the same

womb as the absolute.' This expression recognizes the similarity between the experience of classical art and the bliss of the Absolute. The artistic experience is therefore put at the same level as the supreme bliss of the Absolute.

The form of Classical Indian dance is a holistic design in itself, with a heightened philosophical core layered with subtle and integrated aesthetic and symbolism. The form has two aspects. One is pure dance, the exuberance of movement, where the dancer (and through her, the viewer) experiences bliss and joy. The other aspect is the mythological symbolism and storytelling. This borrows from literature and poetry, and depicts stories about Gods, Goddesses within the Hindu Tradition and the celebration of nature.

Most Indian art forms are multi-layered, but dance most of all, because it combines Poetry, Music, Theatre and Movement, each with a specific philosophical core structure and complexities. When all these arts are combined and layered one upon the other, you can imagine the sheer multiplicity and intricacy of thoughts, values and ideas that are presented. Classical Indian dance beams through its spiritual dimension and thus emerges as a heightened art form that lends itself to a possibility of transcendence.

Miti Desai is the founder and creative head at Miti Design Lab and Executive Trustee at Shaktiyogasrama Gurukulam. She is a disciple of danseuse Mandakini Trivedi.



ABOUT NEW ACROPOLIS

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

New Acropolis is an international non-profit organization – with a presence in over 60 countries. At its core it is a school for practical philosophy in the Classical style run by volunteers. Worldwide we have close to 40,000 volunteers. All our volunteers are dedicated to bringing philosophy closer to the society for all people regardless any differences of social, religious, gender or political background.

We came into being with the aim of bringing universal philosophy and wisdom to life in the hearts of the cities worldwide. Our focus is on philosophy - not just in the sense of the quest for knowledge, and ideas, but on how we can use it so it will turn into Experience and Wisdom, thus widening our perspective of life and helping us evolve individually and collectively. We focus on philosophy as a way of life – as practical philosophy.



PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy has always been a search for spiritual truth. A process of going deeper into the knowledge of Nature, the Human Being and the Universe. The search is an exercise of fighting against ignorance, confusion and prejudices. To be a philosopher is a way of life committed to the best aspirations of humanity. At New Acropolis we work with Practical Philosophy, which means we do not limit ourselves to reading, studying and theoretical knowledge, but set ourselves the goal of learning to live well.



Recent Events at New Acropolis, Bangalore

A glimpse into few activities at New Acropolis, Bangalore, over the past three months

Volunteers' Seminar



A practical seminar for volunteers of New Acropolis - Bangalore, to foster working together and dealing with challenges to volunteering

Public Talk



Attendees keenly engaged in a Guided discussion on what it means to be the Hero of our own lives, following the lecture titled "The Hero in Me"

White Lotus Day



Special philosophical celebration to mark Teacher's Day - the day of the White Lotus

Graduated Living Philosophy students



Toasting the successful completion of the recent Living Philosophy course at New Acropolis - Bangalore

Annual Members' Seminar



The two day annual retreat for members of New Acropolis, Bangalore



Creating a Mandala as a practice to understand Service and one's role in the collective



Creative group exercise to practice working together in harmony

JULY



Lecture and Guided Discussion | Free Admission **Buddha's Path to Happiness**

Date: July 8, Saturday | **Time:** 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Venue: New Acropolis

Buddha talks of Life as suffering, but is suffering the only way to develop a deeper understanding of life? Perhaps it is our attitude towards life's challenges that results in our misery. Join us as we investigate Buddha's teachings and how they can allow us to lead a happier and more meaningful life.



Lecture and Guided Discussion | Free Admission **Navigating Life - The Inner Compass**

Date: July 29, Saturday | **Time:** 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Venue: New Acropolis

It is said that learning to be lucky requires hard work. To learn how to choose and take important decisions in life can often prove to be a dilemma, particularly with the sea of ever-changing and non-objective opinions around us. Developing the art of decision making is key to navigating life towards our true destiny. Through this talk we learn about how we can become the leader of our lives, while developing Intelligence, Will and Love as our Inner Compass.



19 Week Course

Living Philosophy

Free Trial class: July 5 & July 12 (Wednesdays)

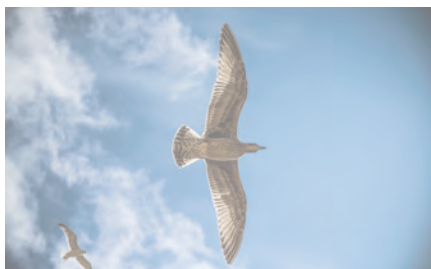
7:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Batch starts: July 19, 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm (Wednesdays)

Venue: New Acropolis

A 19-week Foundation in Practical Philosophy.
For details, please visit www.acropolis.org.in

AUGUST



Lecture and Guided Discussion | Free Admission
Living a Life of Inspiration

Date: Aug 19, Saturday | **Time:** 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Venue: New Acropolis

How can we connect to inspiration in our lives? What does it take for one to inspire others? Join us for a Lecture and Guided discussion on the powerful role that Inspiration plays in living a meaningful life, and on wisdom from ancient cultures that provides keys for us to connect to Inspiration.

SEPTEMBER

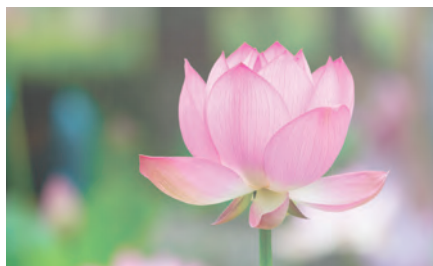


Lecture and Guided Discussion | Free Admission
Wisdom of Ancient Egypt

Date: Sept 9, Saturday | **Time:** 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Venue: New Acropolis

Timeless wisdom of the ancient Egyptians explores the Mysteries of the Sacred intertwined with the Earthly, unveiling its rich symbolism. The wisdom that guides us towards a more meaningful existence in harmony with nature and the divine. Join us as we discover the tools for modern day living from one of the most ancient civilizations of the world.



Lecture and Guided Discussion | Free Admission
Learning to Love

Date: Sept 23, Saturday | **Time:** 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Venue: New Acropolis

How can we make our relationships deeper and more meaningful? Can there be a higher love that is beyond the limited and the personal? Join us to explore these ideas.

19 Week Course

Living Philosophy

Free Trial class: Aug 21 & Aug 28 (Mondays)
7:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Batch starts: Sept 4, 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm (Mondays)

Venue: New Acropolis

A 19-week Foundation in Practical Philosophy.
For details, please visit www.acropolis.org.in



My Journey

Members of New Acropolis share their experience...



"I am an entrepreneur and run a corporate training company for the last eight years. I grew up in a spiritual environment and interest in philosophy came naturally. My deep interest in understanding life and the neutral approach of New Acropolis firmed my decision to explore the Living Philosophy course.

The teachings have helped me feel more grounded. Today, my overall outlook towards life and happiness has been changing. I wish to implement these learnings in my day to day life. One thing that I like most about New Acropolis is neutrality in teachings. This provides students a larger perspective and allows them to choose what is appropriate for them."

~ **Siddharthan V.**

"An engineer by profession, having worked in the Middle East for a couple of years, I am at the moment aiding the family business. It was while frequenting Alliance Française, picking up a new language, that I chanced upon the Living Philosophy poster and visited IONA. It seemed like just the right fit. Continuous course correction is something I strongly endorse, be it by religious inputs, or a feed of inspiration every once in a while from great lives, thoughts and so on.

Given my passionate stints in volunteering earlier, I was all the more delighted to see the multitude of ways in which the organization engages itself on very practical grounds, both within and outside of it; not to mention the plethora of cultural activities it partakes in."

~ **Arjun A. K.**



LIVING PHILOSOPHY

To Awaken. To Transform. To Evolve.

Foundation to Practical Philosophy at The New Acropolis International Organization (IONA) – India

Is philosophy restricted to books and concepts or is it possible to live the wisdom of the ancient masters in our everyday life?

Living Philosophy is the foundation of a journey to discover and experience the deeper esoteric concepts of self, nature and humanity. Philosophy as a way of life begins foremost with an inward journey and when practiced, it finds its true essence of transformation of the self and that of the world around us.

Highlights of some of the themes that will be covered in the 19 session course:



Know Thyself

Different levels of human consciousness with perspectives from the east and the west. What is transient and what is eternal?



The Wisdom of Ancient India

Learn the story of Arjuna, the warrior. The Bhagavad Gita describes the battles of life and tools to help us win this battle. Universal laws of Dharma, Karma and the discernment to identify and implement the Right action.



Life and Teachings of the Buddha

Explore the life of the Buddha and his teaching through the Dhammapada. This gives us practical advice on how to overcome pain and suffering and live a noble life.



The Artist, The In Love And The Philosopher

Who are you? Discover the wisdom of the ancient Romans through the Stoic philosophers. Epictetus, Seneca and Marcus Aurelius teach us simple and practical philosophy, of working with virtues as a path to progress.



Tools For Life From The Ancient World

Explore the wisdom of the ancient Egyptians, the idea of justice. From ancient China comes Confucius' expounding the importance of an ethical social order.



The Light At The End Of The Cave

What is the identity of a philosopher, the true leader and a politician. The metaphor of Plato's Allegory of the Cave, the grand illusion and how we can free ourselves from it.

For details of the upcoming batch of **Living Philosophy** refer to back cover.

LIVING PHILOSOPHY

To Awaken. To Transform. To Evolve.

Foundation to Practical Philosophy

at New Acropolis International
Organization (IONA) - INDIA

COURSE DETAILS

Course Start Date: **Sept 4, 2017 7:30 PM – 9:30 PM**
(Mondays)

Free Introductory Session: **Aug 21, Monday, 7:30 pm**
Aug 28, Monday, 7:30 pm

Duration: 19 weeks (weekly once)

Course Fee: Rs. 4500

Limited seats per batch

**To register visit www.acropolis.org.in/living-philosophy
or call +91 96638 04871 (Last date to register is Jul 19)**

