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Vol 1 Issue 11 | Jan - Mar 2018



THE CLARION CALL

AWAKEN THE PHILOSOPHER WITHIN

Revival of the Renaissance



The Symbolism of the Scarab

The Force of a Candle



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

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Editor-in-Chief

Ran Kremer

Editor

Anand Baskaran

Design

Shashwati Balasubramanian

Production

Bhanu Pratap Slathia



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New Acropolis Cultural Association (South India)

Ran Kremer, National Director
261, 6th Cross, Indiranagar
1st Stage, Bangalore - 560038
Tel: +91 9663804871
Email: info@newacropolis.in
Web: www.acropolis.org.in

Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

Continuing with the theme of change from the last edition of the Clarion Call (themed *Yearning for Change*), we take a closer look at the idea of profound changes in the world arising from changes within. As we ring in the new year, it is perhaps an apt moment to go deeper with the essence of a new beginning - the opportunities it offers us, and how we can bring about such a renewal in our own lives, in a deep and profound manner.

With the passing of the Winter Solstice in the latter part of December, there is a gradual but inexorable movement in nature towards the new life and warmth that comes with Spring. Ancient wisdom points to similar movement and cycles that human society goes through - the Spring of civilisation is the Renaissance, which brings new light and life after the frigid winter of the Dark ages. But the Renaissance is not automatic - it requires agents of change, those who will bring the Renaissance in society. And the starting point of that, again, is the ability to bring change to one's own life. It is the Inner Renaissance that heralds new beginnings in the world around us.

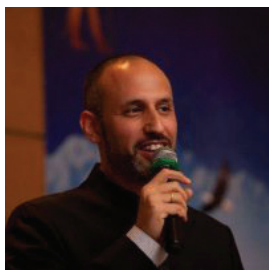
Here's to New Beginnings - the Inner Renaissance!

Happy Reading!

Anand Baskaran
Editor - The Clarion Call



Revival of the Renaissance



BY YARON BARZILAY

Philosophy is an approach to life, a search for a way to try to live a little bit better, a little bit truer, everyday. But by what moral standards should we judge our actions?

There is a difference between being immoral, and being amoral. Amoral means that there is no recognition of right and wrong and therefore you cannot act according to what is right. Immoral presumes that you do recognize right from wrong, yet choose not to live in accordance with this.

In my opinion, today we live in an immoral world, because we have an abundance of information that we refuse to act on. We know the effect we have on nature, we know the destruction that weapons can cause, and we know that what we do today will affect the lives of our children tomorrow; yet there is a great gap between knowledge and action.

What is required to fill this gap?

A change is needed. For centuries this change has been material and

RENAISSANCE MEN ADOPTED THE IDEA OF A COMPARATIVE METHOD OF STUDY, NOT LIMITING THEMSELVES TO ANY ONE TRADITION OR FACULTY, IN ORDER TO INVESTIGATE AND DISCERN BETWEEN WHAT IS ESSENTIAL AND WHAT IS NONESSENTIAL.

technological. What is needed, however, is a far more fundamental change, a metamorphosis from within. If we must “be the change we want to see in the world” then we must effect an inner transformation, an inner revival.

According to Aristotle, the goal of all human activity is happiness. Buddha postulated much the same thing from a different perspective when he said that suffering pushes us forward in our search for happiness. They both asserted that this crucial objective could only be attended to through an inner investigation, and that neglecting internal development would be tantamount to neglecting everything that was essential.

However, life pulls us outward in many directions all the time. The chase after the material is so ingrained, that it happens subconsciously, almost without our participation, with the result that, even if we do want to change intrinsically, we must want it strongly enough to suppress all the forces that exist in our external life.

Can philosophy bring about such a change?

The best example I can give you is of the Renaissance. The Renaissance was a philosophical movement that blossomed in Europe from the 14th to the 16th century and irrefutably changed the world. In a relatively short span of approximately 200 years, Europe leaped out of the Dark Ages, a time of

dogma, suppression and fear, into light. It was as if a magical wand had awakened the world. Science, Art, Music, Politics, Astronomy, and Philosophy, all saw tremendous blossoming. Most importantly, the force of imagination was set free, and endless possibilities lay open for Man, in recognition of man's limitless potential.

History attributes many external factors to this magnificent revival, including political and financial patronage of the arts, the fall of Constantinople, the crusades, the discovery of the New World etc. However, in my opinion that would be devaluing the ability of the visionary men who spear-headed this revolution. I suggest they did it by digging into the inner well of Consciousness, deep within themselves. The impetus came from consciousness, not external factors and they knew they were making history.

The Italian Renaissance Poet Petrarch wrote, “As for you, should you survive me for a long time, which I sincerely hope and wish with all my soul, better times are perhaps ahead of you. Our present forgetfulness and this slumber will not last forever. The clouds will be dispelled and our successors will be able to return to the blossom of the pure light of ancient times.”

This was the central idea of the Renaissance. It was essential to awaken what was forgotten, echoing the ancient Greek tradition that spoke of the need to be awakened to who we really are. The idea was not new, it was a revival of an idea that had existed in

antiquity, but was given a new form. Much like the idea of reincarnation that believes that when the soul reincarnates, it takes a new shape but its essence remains the same.

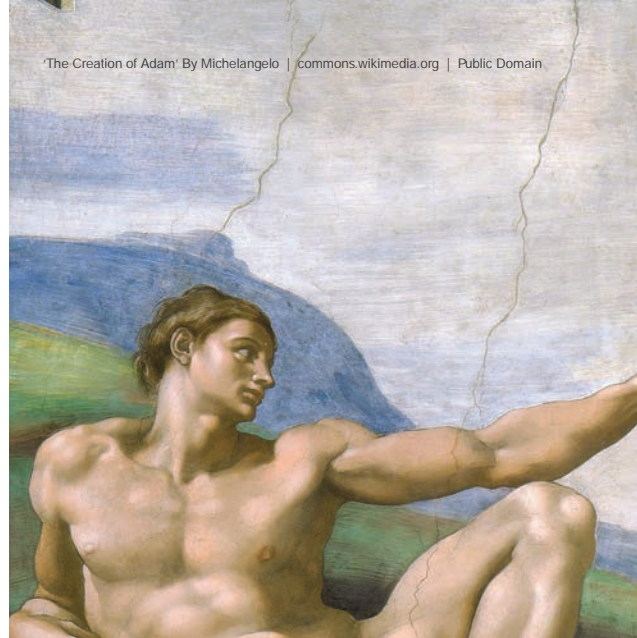
Perhaps today, we too need to be awakened from our sleep, to rediscover what is essential, searching not outside but within ourselves, in our past, and in our roots. Perhaps reviving some measure of the philosophy of the Renaissance is the key to rediscovering ourselves.

The spirit of the Renaissance was a complex interrelated combination of many timeless concepts:

Universal Wisdom

Renaissance Men adopted the idea of a comparative method of study, not limiting themselves to any one tradition or faculty, in order to investigate and discern between what is essential and what is nonessential. The example of Leonardo Da Vinci demonstrates this investigation. A Painter, Sculptor, Scientist, Inventor, and Philosopher, he was the quintessential Renaissance Man, whose many brilliant talents could not be defined by any one faculty alone, but by a philosophical approach to life: an aspiration to engage with the flowering of the human spirit.

Moreover, Renaissance Men believed that if you see your tradition as the only truth or the ultimate truth, you would never be open to something



else. Therefore, it was encouraged to engage with philosophy, art, culture, science, and religion. They revered Hermes Trismegistus of Egypt, Zoroaster of Persia, Plato of Greece, the Jewish Kabbalists and many others; wisdom was not limited by time and place and so they embraced the ability to learn from all. This gave rise to the revival of the notion of a Universal Man (spiritually immortal) living in accordance with the principles of Universal Wisdom. This was in stark contrast to the Middle Age system of thought, which was characterized by materialism, separation and plurality.

“WITH THE ADVENT OF THE RENAISSANCE, MAN WAS REGARDED AS OBLIGATED TO EFFECT CHANGE, AS A PARTNER IN CREATION, AS AN AMBASSADOR OF THE GODS. MAN’S PRIMARY OBJECTIVE WAS TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS ROLE IN NATURE”



Philosophy in Action

During the Middle Ages man's role was considered to be that of a passive spectator, obedient and unquestioning, in a fixed and unchanging world. With the advent of the Renaissance, man was regarded as obligated to effect change, as a partner in creation, as an ambassador of the Gods. Man's primary objective was to take responsibility for his role in nature, and all study and investigation was meant to serve this goal; not to accumulate knowledge, but to implement it. We must respect wisdom with practice, not only with words.

Inner Man

Renaissance Men fought against the illusion that 'what I see in the mirror is what I am.' Marsilio Ficino, who was the head of the re-established Platonic Academy patronized by the Medici Family, spoke of the human soul as having two wills: a will to drop downwards like stone, and the will to rise upwards like fire that gives light and rises towards the divine. This opposition of tendencies, one pulling us down and the other pushing upward, results in a constant inner battle, a battle in which we are free to exercise a choice. As Pico della Mirandola wrote in his masterpiece *Oration On The Dignity Of Man*, God said to Man, *"I have placed you in the middle of this world so that you can better understand all*

that is in it. We have made you neither celestial nor terrestrial, neither mortal nor immortal, so that as the free supreme model and sculptor of yourself, you can sculpt yourself into the shape which you have chosen."

Man as a Mirror of the World

The Temple of Apollo at Delphi is said to have had an oft-quoted inscription: "Know thyself and Thou shalt know the World and the Gods." In the Renaissance, man was once again considered a microcosm of the universe, the macrocosm. This gave man dignity, importance, and value in his ability to engage with life. The Renaissance philosophers believed that everything in nature has a valuable role. Man as the most evolved aspect of nature was uniquely capable of, and carried the responsibility, of the greatest role; specifically to maintain the harmony of the earth. Man was a powerful and creative partner in the universe and neglecting that charge could lead to the destruction of our world.

Rebirth

The Renaissance did not arise by chance. Nor did it start with a clean state, a tabula rasa . Renaissance means revival; diving deep into the past, to revive ancient traditions and archetypes, or essential principles of life. By breathing life into these ancient

traditions they knew they were creating something new that would blossom and flourish. It was akin to extracting some seeds from the past, planting them in the present and allowing them to create a future. If man is to re-create, then perhaps his most important creation is the re-creation of himself. While death is a natural process that comes before a re-birth maybe there are other ways to renew ourselves, to renew the forces within us. But in order to do so, we need to conquer ourselves. This again is a familiar concept from many ancient cultures; an inner journey that pushes you to encounter yourself, leading to a deeper experience of mystery.

“Man is a being of wonder, worthy of respect and esteem, who assumes the nature of God as if he were himself a God.”

This was the aspiration of the Renaissance; to move closer and closer to the center, to effect change, to conquer the real self, in order to be re-born and become a better human being.

And perhaps, we too can follow their example today. Perhaps the real goal of philosophy is to touch this inner timeless wisdom; to build an inner Acropolis, an inner Hastinapur or Jerusalem – the idea of a divine city above, or the city within, that gives direction towards building an ethical and philosophical life, which inspires us to live every day with the aspiration for change and growth.

Let us not be part of the herd. Dare to live the adventure of Life; only then do you truly live, rather than merely survive. The real mystery of life is the mystery within us, and philosophy is a way to rediscover and revive that mystery within ourselves.

Compiled by Manjula Nanavati

This article is a compilation of themes based on a lecture presented by Yaron Barzilay, National Director of New Acropolis Cultural Organization (India), in commemoration of UNESCO endorsed World Philosophy Day, celebrated each year as a way to “reaffirm the power of Philosophy to change the world by enabling us to change ourselves.”

“IF MAN IS TO RE-CREATE, THEN PERHAPS HIS MOST IMPORTANT CREATION IS THE RE-CREATION OF HIMSELF. WHILE DEATH IS A NATURAL PROCESS THAT COMES BEFORE A RE-BIRTH MAYBE THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO RENEW OURSELVES, TO RENEW THE FORCES WITHIN US.”



The Symbolism of the Scarab

BY M.A. CARRILLO DE ALBORNOZ & M.A. FERNÁNDEZ

The scarab is the most venerated, the most common and the most familiar of the Egyptian symbols. Its symbolism is twofold: with its folded wings, it represents the disciple, life that has not yet come into existence, that starts its journey trying slowly to unfold its wings until it can flap them quickly. Then, this heavy mass, stuck to the ground, this animal that crawls leaving tracks as if the ground has been scratched, rises up and flies to the sun, transforming itself into Kepher, symbol of the initiate and the master in relation with Amon, the winged sun-disc.

The Greeks and the Romans will later adopt a sentence engraved, it seems, in the hard pillars that sustained these sacred scarabs in the Egyptian temples: "I am Kepher, the disciple, when my wings open, I will resuscitate".

The Egyptian hieroglyphic "Kepher" means "to succeed to be", that is to say, to make oneself, to give oneself a given form, to rebuild oneself. That is the reason why the scarab is a symbol of resurrection, image of the self-renewing Sun. That is why the scarab is represented carrying a ball between its legs

like, on the one hand, the sun that renews itself each day and, on the other hand, the disciple that is reborn from his own decomposition. The scarab moves all his life stuck to the ground where it rolls in front of itself a heavy dung ball from which it will be reborn, because it had deposited its own seed in the ball. So, at the end of its life, it will unfold its wings and rise up to the sun, sure of its fate, for, at that precise moment, it will know that it was born to fly.

In China, we find the same symbolic interpretation:

“The scarab rolls its ball and in that ball life is

engendered ” says The Secret of the Golden Flower. Taoist commentators cite the activities of the dung-beetle as an example of the skill of what is to all appearances skill-less, and the perfection of what seems imperfect, of which Lao Tzu spoke and which are the criteria of Wisdom.

The Book of Chilam Balam of the Mayas depicts the scarab as the filth of the Earth, in both material and moral terms, destined to become divine.



“SO, AT THE END OF ITS LIFE, IT WILL UNFOLD ITS WINGS AND RISE UP TO THE SUN, SURE OF ITS FATE, FOR, AT THAT PRECISE MOMENT, IT WILL KNOW THAT IT WAS BORN TO FLY.”

The Force of a Candle

BY PIERRE POULAIN



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

While in the darkness, there is no need to look for the Sun as a Savior, to wish for it to come and disperse the dark shadows and clouds of illusion. A candle would actually be better.

The Sun is too high, too far, and does not really depend upon us. It has its own path, and the clouds which affect us so much are not a matter for the Sun. It shines above them.

While in the darkness, we need candle light. A small, humble source of light. A close one, which will shed light on our next step. A light which will not blind us, a friendly light. And maybe the most important of all - a light which is ours: we choose to light the candle, and we can shut it off when necessary. We are in control.

It is easier to think of a solution which does not depend on our own evolution, morals and consciousness. But evolution does not work this way and in the end we are always the "Captain of our Soul" as William Ernest Henley put it in "Invictus", his famous poem.

Some are waiting for the Messiah to come. I prefer to light my own Candle.

JANUARY



Lecture and Guided Discussion | Free Admission
Journeys beyond Death

Date: Jan 20, Saturday | **Time:** 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Venue: New Acropolis

Is death the end of life? Or might it be the beginning of a more meaningful one? When investigating ancient traditions, it is remarkable that such a vast majority suggest the continuing journey of the spirit after Death. Bardo Thodol - the Tibetan Book of the Dead is a fundamental text traditionally read out loud at the bedside of the deceased for 49 days. What can this sacred text reveal to us about death for a better life? Join us as we explore the mysteries of life and death, and how they might help us bring more meaning to our lives today.

FEBRUARY



Lecture and Guided Discussion | Free Admission
Life - A Delicate Balance

Date: Feb 3, Saturday | **Time:** 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Venue: New Acropolis

We find ourselves fraught with the challenge and opportunity to choose, evaluate and prioritize at every step. We face circumstances in life which demand our response. How do we balance our lives and make better choices? To seek harmony is natural for each human being. This talk, which will be followed by a guided discussion, looks at how we can bring inner harmony to balance the many contradictions of our lives.



Lecture and Guided Discussion | Free Admission
The Art of Happiness

Date: Feb 17, Saturday | **Time:** 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Venue: New Acropolis

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama says "the very purpose of life is to seek happiness and the very motion of life is towards happiness". What then is true happiness that seems to be the pursuit of all living beings? This talk and guided discussion will explore the fundamental nature of happiness, according to Tibetan Buddhism, as a state of inner being based on love, kindness and compassion - and look at practical tools that can help us connect to this in our daily lives.

EVENT SCHEDULE

JAN - MAR 2018



14 Week Course

Living Philosophy

Free Trial class: Jan 23 & Jan 30 (Tuesdays)

7:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Batch starts: Feb 6, 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm (Tuesdays)

Venue: New Acropolis

A 14-week Foundation course in Practical Philosophy.

For details, please visit www.acropolis.org.in

MARCH



Lecture and Guided Discussion | Free Admission

The Art of Self-Mastery

Date: March 10, Saturday | **Time:** 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Venue: New Acropolis

"No man is free who is not master of himself." Epictetus, one of the greatest Stoic philosophers, emphasized the pursuit of inner freedom through self mastery. We cannot always choose our external circumstances but we can always choose how we react to them and this realization is the beginning of the road to happiness. Join us as we explore the philosophy of Epictetus, and principles of Stoicism that examines the art of living through transforming our lives by our own actions and effectively meeting everyday challenges with wisdom.



Lecture and Guided Discussion | Free Admission

Wisdom of the Garden - Life lessons from plants

Date: Mar 24, Saturday | **Time:** 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Venue: New Acropolis

Going into the garden and getting your hands muddy is a good practical way of coming closer to Nature. Learning about plants and working with them teaches us many lessons that can help us approach our own life with more meaning. Join us as we explore the wisdom that the garden has to offer us, if only we will slow down and listen.

Recent Events

at New Acropolis,
Bangalore

A glimpse into a few activities at New Acropolis, Bangalore, over the past 3 months

PHILOSOPHY



Public Event - World Philosophy Day

Panelists at the special World Philosophy day event in collaboration with the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) - Bangalore, themed "Renaissance! Art, Philosophy and Life"



Living Philosophy

Students of the Living Philosophy course involved in the Practical Psychological Exercises session of the course



CULTURE



Book Signing

Book signing at the launch of **After the Fall, History continues** by Pierre Poulain, Photographer and Areal Coordinator for Asia, Africa and Oceania - New Acropolis International Organization



Theatre

A theatre performance representing a metaphor for the journey of the disciple, during a special session for all member volunteers of New Acropolis-Bangalore



VOLUNTEERING



Volunteering Project

Students of the Living Philosophy course at New Acropolis - Bangalore involved in a project to create decorated notebooks from scratch, to be donated to an organisation working with underprivileged children



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.

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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

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.

My Journey

Members of New Acropolis share their experience...



"While I have been on a philosophical journey before, the philosophical journey at New Acropolis is highly structured, regular and you get to explore together with the fraternity of like-minded individuals.

The teachings in the Living Philosophy course offer a non-prejudiced philosophical journey, and provides philosophical vantage points from various ancient civilizations.

Philosophy provides you with various tools to help you know yourself better, your place in society, evolution & the cosmos. It also provides you with various keys to work with your consciousness, and to help you take the path towards your higher self.

The emphasis on philosophy at New Acropolis, and in the Living Philosophy course, is on taking practical action via various activities, which helps you experience true wisdom."

~ **Suresh Krishnan**

"I joined Living Philosophy as I was seeking answers that went beyond any particular religion or faith- for the Truth that brought unity rather than separation. This course seemed like the perfect way to know and understand the philosophy of the various wisdom traditions by getting to the essence.

I am happy to say that it has been a wonderful and transformative experience. I loved the way the concepts were presented and the myths were explored so that we could discover its deeper meaning and significance. My awareness has grown and I have begun to apply these lessons to my life using the tools that are taught. I am grateful for the depth of knowledge and commitment of the teachers, and the interaction with the community who live philosophy and inspire by example. It is truly a way of life."

~ **Belinda Rego**



LIVING PHILOSOPHY

To Awaken. To Transform. To Evolve.



Foundation to Practical Philosophy at 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 14-week 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.



Ethical Leadership

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: Feb 6, 2018 7:30 PM – 9:30 PM
(Tuesdays)

Free Introductory Session: Jan 23, Tuesday, 7:30 pm
Jan 30, Tuesday, 7:30 pm

Duration: 14 weeks (weekly once)

Limited seats per batch | Course Fee Applicable

**To register visit www.acropolis.org.in/living-philosophy
or call +91 96638 04871**

