



ACROPOLIS

Volume 5, Issue 3

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About New Acropolis



New Acropolis is an international non-profit volunteer-run organization with a philosophical, cultural and social approach. It was founded in 1957 as a school of Practical Philosophy in the Classical Style, to promote the ideal of timeless values towards human development.

In over 60 countries where New Acropolis is present, this vision is implemented through an eclectic range of teachings, practices and activities, inspired by Classics of both Western and Eastern global cultures and ancient civilizations. Our programs, based on philosophy that is practical and active, combine theoretical and practical education with expressions in the fields of Philosophy, Culture and Volunteering. With over 20,000 volunteers of all ages, cultural backgrounds, and social levels, New Acropolis emphasizes principles of Coexistence, Fraternity and mutual collaboration beyond cultural, sexual, or religious differences.

We at New Acropolis all over the World are greatly inspired also by the timeless principles of the Ancient Classical Indian Culture, Arts and Philosophies. New Acropolis in India, same as in all our centers worldwide, seeks to take inspiration, knowledge and best practices from the rich artistic, spiritual and cultural human heritage in order to enhance both individual and collective human development.

Connect with us:

Visit our website www.acropolis.org.in

To know more about our international activities: <https://www.acropolis.org/en/>

Join our silent Telegram/WhatsApp group for updates on our events

Indiranagar: Message on 96638 04871

Jayanagar: Message on 99861 45294

Celebrating World Philosophy Day 2022

The Language of Symbols: Keys to meaning



Panel Discussion

Prem Chandavarkar Managing Partner, CnT Architects | **Padmini Ravi** Performer | **Shaurya Singh** Founder, Unalome Project
Anand Baskaran Director, New Acropolis Jayanagar | **Surekha Deepak** Educator

“Once you understand symbolic things, you will see symbols everywhere.” Joseph Campbell

Symbols connect us to the deeper meaning and to the wisdom they convey. They enable us to understand the human being, human history and allows us to look into its core, to see beyond external appearances.

Nature, the universe and the sacred are more accessible through symbols.

As we celebrate World Philosophy Day, we combine perspectives from philosophy, art and architecture as our panel share how they work with the Language of Symbols. It will help us develop a lens to look at dimensions that we perhaps didn't consider before.

Join us for a performance, panel discussion and an interactive session with the audience.

[Register Here](#)

<https://youtu.be/9US5D1Pfdx4>

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Editor's Note

"I am not "sophos" (wise), but "philo-sophos" (lover of wisdom) and my followers shall be called Philosophers."

– Pythagoras

Dear Reader,

November is a special month for us Philosophers as we celebrate World Philosophy Day. It is a day to remind us about the value of philosophy for the development of human thought.

This magazine is a way of sharing insights into a seemingly heavy word like *Philosophy* to be able to understand how the age-old wisdom of philosophy can be simplified through understanding, contemplation, and inspiration.

In this edition, we have curated some special articles on symbols that illuminate the theme for this year's World Philosophy Day. We hope you are inspired by the thoughts and ideas shared here.

We also invite you to experience our foundation course "Living Philosophy" and our other events if you are inspired to take your contemplations deeper.

Happy reading!

Jyothika Lobo

Editor - Acropolis

Symbols & New Acropolis

Excerpt from an Interview with Carlos Adelantado, International President, New Acropolis



New Acropolis is an international organisation that promotes an ideal of timeless values. Its aim is to contribute to the development of individuals and societies through its work in the fields of philosophy, culture and volunteering. New Acropolis is present in over 50 countries across the five continents and has more than 400 centres worldwide. Its action in the world is based on three founding ideals:

- The ideal of universal fraternity, promoting respect for human dignity, beyond any differences of gender, culture, religion or social background.
- The ideal of knowledge, encouraging the love of wisdom through the comparative study of philosophies, religions, sciences and arts.
- The ideal of development, enabling each human being to realize their best qualities and values, as a solid basis for a better world.

On this occasion of World Philosophy Day, here's an excerpt from an interview with the president of New Acropolis, Carlos Adelantado, explaining the significance of symbols.

Why is the symbolic aspect of life so important?

Perhaps it is part of the connection with that intelligible and higher world which Plato referred to. We have to bear in mind that logic and its mechanisms have their limitations, which are natural for a linear world. But in a non-linear reality, the characteristics of time and space change and, consequently, the consciousness is affected in a different way: there is an increase and expansion of the consciousness which results in a deeper and more subtle understanding of reality.

I'm not talking about the subconscious or the unconscious, but (if you will allow me the expression) about the supraconscious. A higher dimension of consciousness, where knowledge can be perceived without the intervention of the senses and where the experiences we have on that plane are under the complete control of the individual. Symbols help us to use analogies that connect them with higher ideas.

Why do you think people use symbols?

They are present in the business world, in society, in the transcendent dimension and even in everyday life. To start with, I can say that there seems to be a need to belong to something, and that leads to the use of anagrams, symbols and emblems as a means of recognition. They are used by employees of large and small companies, clothing and footwear brands, sports and cultural associations, financial corporations, etc. The use of symbols is something that has been and continues to be present at all times and in all places.

Perhaps we all know, in a natural and innate way, that we need to achieve ever higher, intuitive states of consciousness, which will enable us to go beyond the limits of the conceptual plane. Another reason may be that the symbolic world constitutes the great evolutionary difference that distinguishes human beings from other kingdoms: the symbolic imaginarium is present when we get married, or when we graduate. When someone is born and comes into the world, we give them a name, and we say goodbye to them at the end of their life, all in a symbolic way. People wear rings, necklaces, clothes and colours... Even tattoos, which are so much in fashion at the moment, are an approach to the world of symbols. And something as human as laughter and tears cannot be understood without acknowledging their symbolic background.

We can also see that there are symbols that have an identical meaning in all civilisations throughout history: the open or closed hand, the wheel as a symbol of construction or of the cyclic nature of life, fire in relation to wisdom, the eagle as a messenger, the sun as the king of heaven... One thing that has struck me in this respect is how much interest there has been recently in series and films featuring this kind of symbolic language.

In New Acropolis as well, we use symbols related to the activity we are doing: sports, volunteering, artistic workshops, martial arts, and philosophy itself. In our school of philosophy we spend a lot of time studying symbols of the sacred in the different civilisations. And in our philosophical celebrations of the seasons of the year, we also use symbols related to spring, summer, autumn and winter.

This is an excerpt from a longer video interview, click on the link below to listen to the full interview:

<https://library.acropolis.org/interview-with-the-international-president/>

The Power of Symbols

Alex Warren



Symbols hold a powerful attraction for people. Even today, in an age in which materialistic perspectives rule human thought, many ancient symbols such as the ankh, the yin/yang, American Indian designs, pyramids, and many other symbols are quite popular in jewelry and in the home. Why do symbols of the ancient civilizations continue to be an integral part of our society, even to the point that corporations use them in commercials, movies, logos, in television documentaries, etc.?

This article focuses on sacred symbols, symbols which contain and represent something metaphysical, and mentions some of the reasons that symbols hold so much fascination. Symbology, the study of symbols, sounds like a very complicated subject, but interestingly enough, you already have some knowledge about it, and maybe a little intuition, because, as alluded to above, you are surrounded by, use and wear symbols every day.

The word symbol means something which contains something else. A symbol transmits something, a symbol reflects something, and it has been said that the best type of symbol is the symbol which transmits most purely that which it is reflecting and keeps almost nothing for itself. There is a very interesting idea that is fundamental to understanding symbolism, symbology or symbols themselves, and that is that everything that you see in the material world has a counterpart in the invisible world. This is not a new theory. This concept was present in all the ancient civilizations.

The Western philosopher who most explicitly described this and laid this out was the great philosopher Plato. Plato lived in Ancient Greece in the 4th and 5th centuries B.C.E. One of the landmark moments in Western Civilization is the infamous and unfortunate death of Socrates in 399 B.C.E. Socrates was Plato's master, and after Socrates' execution Plato promised to dedicate himself to expanding the philosophy that Socrates taught. Plato spoke of something called "Archetypes". The concept of the archetypes is also sometimes called "forms", which is a poor translation of the Greek, or "Ideas", a much better translation. And this concept says that the "archetypes" or "ideas" are beyond the material world that we see, touch, smell, taste and hear. Anything around you on this earth is the reflection of the "idea" of that thing.

For example, when you see a sphere, that is the manifestation of the idea of the sphere. Have you ever seen a perfect equilateral triangle? or a perfect square? or a perfect circle? No, you haven't, because they can't be created in the manifested world. No matter what perfect circle or perfect equilateral triangle or perfect square or perfect line or perfect rectangle you show me, we can find an imperfection. No matter how perfect you make it, there will always be some imperfection. Perfect geometrical figures do not exist in this world. The ideas of these geometrical figures exist, but not the physical objects. The mathematical description of the equilateral triangle is real. The mathematical description of the perfect circle exists. The idea exists, but the incarnation of that idea is imperfect in this world.

This concept of an idea incarnated is the basis for the understanding of what a symbol is. A symbol is "metaphysical." It goes beyond the physical realm. If you observe the Universe, you will realize that the whole Universe is a symbol. There is incredible Beauty in the Universe, and when you start to examine it, and try to understand it, then you will realize that it is a symbol of Something beyond.

One of the first things that you have to do if you want to understand symbols, is you have to get out of this world even if only a little. You have to ascend a little, just like if you want to see what surrounds you, you climb a tree or a pyramid or a mountain so you can see further. If you are stuck in your own cultural perspective, in other words, if the only perspective you are able to perceive is your own, which was shaped by the society, the culture, the religion or politics in which you were raised, then everything is always going to look foreign. You are not going to be able to see symbols or understand symbols, you are just going to see foreign looking things. So one of the first things we have to do is to try to understand sincerely and that requires us to go a little higher, and take a little bit higher perspective, a little more subtle understanding, a little more in-depth understanding.

In order to get a little better glimpse of this lost science known as symbology, lets take as an example a symbol which is quite popular these days: the Ankh. By any chance, are you wearing one right now? It looks like a circle or an oval sitting on top of a capital "T". Why is the Ankh a perennial favorite in jewelry, etc.? It is interesting is that the Ankh, which hasnt had a living religion associated with it for a couple of thousand years, is so popular today.

The ankh is from Ancient Egypt. In the temples of the Ancient Egyptians, it is found in the hands of the Gods. It signifies Eternal Life. It is called the Key of Life, and is the key to the Mysteries of Nature. It is used to open doors between the visible and the invisible worlds. As it regards the individual human being, this refers to the difference between physical existence and spiritual existence.

The ancients believed that everything has a soul. Plants, animals, even stars have souls, very great souls. The soul of a chicken is obviously not the same as the soul of a human (although the behavior of some humans these days does make you wonder sometimes).

According to the Ancient Egyptians, the purpose of life is Spiritual Evolution. Incarnation is a learning process, a big classroom. The ankh represents the opening of the door between physical life and spiritual life. However, entering that world requires purification and education: purification to get rid of false attitudes and misunderstandings that prevent us from realizing our full potential, and education to bring out the virtues and gifts that are latent. Thus you are a symbol, you are a symbol of your own Spirit.

Finally, we can analyze the composition of the ankh, although we will probably miss something important, just like a chemical analysis of the human body wouldnt tell us much about the person which inhabits it. The ankh is a combination of two symbols, a circle, and a the T or Tau cross. The circle represents perfection, the spiritual world or Eternity.

The cross represents Spirit incarnated or the Manifested World. Its the combination of the vertical line and the horizontal line. The horizontal line is yin. Yin is the place where life can take place. The vertical line is Yang, like a Solar Ray coming down. In order to have life you have to have those two things, you have to have a womb, Mother Earth, where life can take place and you have to have an impulse of life. The horizontal line is like the surface of the sea and the vertical line is like a lightening bolt. These two combine to form the cross, or in the case of the ankh, the Tau, on which the circle sits. Technically the fact that the ankh is the combination of two sacred symbols that makes it an emblem.



To study the language of the symbols is to learn about Nature, to learn about the laws which rule the Universe. The ankh is one of many, many symbols which were meant to instruct and to assist the spiritual evolution of the human being, or to record some historical lesson for educational purposes.

In addition to these, there are unique symbols and emblems which represent schools of thought or religions. The hieroglyphs and ideograms of all ancient civilizations are also symbols.

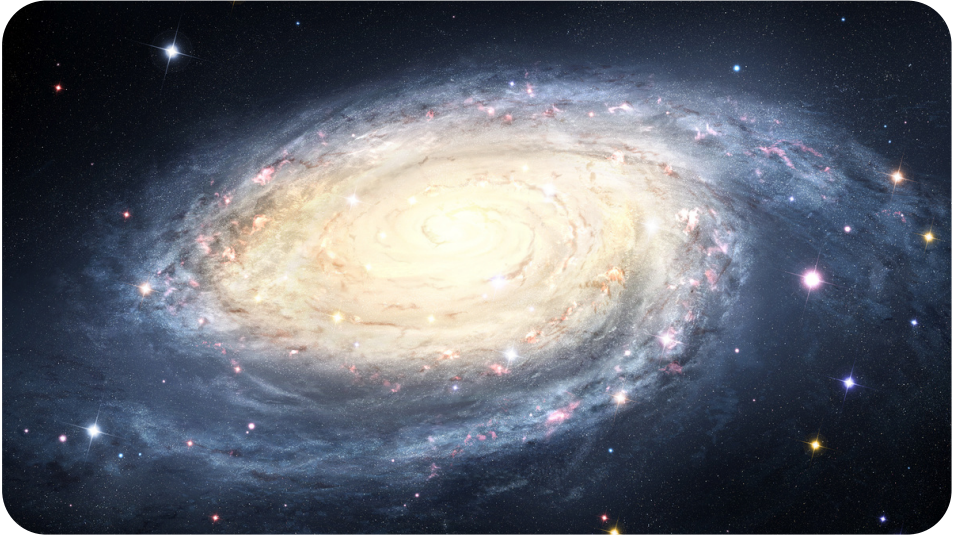
Nature is also full of symbols. A flower, the geometric patterns in the veins of a leaf, the markings on an animal or insect, the constellations in the nighttime sky; all these are symbols. How about your dreams, your aspirations and the work you do throughout a lifetime, might not these also be symbols? They are. We live in a world of symbols.

Can sacred symbols help us? Yes, they can remind us of our invisible part. They can remind us that we have an immortal soul. And in many cases, if they are rendered beautifully, they can inspire us. But wisdom is far more powerful than any symbol or amulet. Wisdom is the real ankh, the key to the invisible dimensions, the key that unlocks so many doors.

The best way to learn the secrets of the symbols is to follow that ancient Greek recommendation, "Know Thyself" which is equivalent to learning the secret behind one of the greatest symbols of all: the Human Being, Symbol of the Immortal Soul and Symbol of the Universe.

Rethinking Contemporary Art in the Anthropocene – Planetary Aesthetics

Siobhan Farrar



'Anthropocene' is the term given to our post-industrial epoch, whereby human activity has irrevocably altered the planet and its environment. The ascent of the anthropocene poses challenges across all areas of life, leading to species loss and looming existential crisis for humanity. For artists, being less tangibly involved in solutions compared to other sciences, it has arguably been difficult to confront the magnitude of our present times with clear insight and persuasion.

Art today is often critiqued or understood in terms of its ability to expound or counter various labels and classifications of human, psychological or material life – across function, use, form and value, reflecting a tendency towards materialism typical of our current times and of the anthropocene. Material knowledge of function, use and form is undoubtedly useful and important in the creation of works of art but this alone can also tend towards the narrow and linear, at worst permitting arbitrary divisions, prejudice and objectification. Certainly a sorry assessment that could be levied at the masses of visual art 'produced' in our own and historically recent times.

However we could also say that art is to do with expressing a kind of transcendent way of 'knowing' that inspires and announces developments in thought and feeling before other methods have been able to grapple with the details. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe said that "Art is a mediator of the unspeakable" and in this sense has the potential to reveal new possibilities and to open up understanding that the methods of other disciplines are simply unable to do.

Academic and author Susan Ballard has explored an approach coined 'Planetary Aesthetics' which supposes that artists look differently at the relationships between all forms of life; thinking, feeling and creating artworks from a 'planet-centred' point of view and on a 'planetary scale' (Ballard, 2017). Along similar lines, Donna Haraway, a professor in the History of Consciousness and Feminist Studies, has highlighted 'the fact that all earthlings are kin in the deepest sense' (Haraway, cited in Ballard, 2017). Planetary aesthetics is based upon the idea of multi-species relationships and looking less dogmatically at human encounters with nature and the cosmos with a view to enabling the emergence of new aesthetic and cultural possibilities (Ballard, 2017). Ballard references American artist Diana Thater's piece of work responding to a scientific study evidencing how dung beetles use the Milky Way for navigation and spatial orientation. Her artwork transcends the scientific data and invites the viewer to perceive and relate to the beetles' lived experience and essence, as opposed to exploring its form, movement or habits alone.

The movement of the dung beetle explored by Thater perhaps distantly touches upon an ancient Egyptian understanding, where the scarab beetle symbolised human efforts to transform themselves into a state of harmony with the celestial heavens, symbolising the effort required to gain wisdom and live wisely. Whilst an interconnected understanding of humanity and nature has always existed in humanity's spiritual and wisdom traditions, we need to continuously arrive at the same profound insights again and again, in order for the experience of the wisdom to remain alive. As opposed to being reduced to another label, description or classification to become encased within the tomb of a textbook.

Perhaps 'planetary aesthetics' can offer a fresh channel for art to express the profound experience of 'unity' that has always been a source for both social and aesthetic cohesion, helping to forge a future culture resolute in its connection with each other, the Earth, all her forms of life and beyond...

Photo Blog: Encounter at the Museum

Pierre Poulain



Encounter at the Museum

I captured this scene at the British Museum, in London. Two women were resting for a moment during their visit of the Egyptian section, facing four statues of Sekhmet, one of the best known Egyptian goddesses.

The two women didn't move, they contemplated the statues in silence. And of course, the statues didn't move either.

It seems as if delegations of two different cultures were meeting and each was waiting for the other to make a move, in hope of engaging in an awaited but quite improbable dialogue.

Rationally speaking, the difference of essence between human beings and statues is so obvious that it should be strange to expect any exchange between these two.

But we should also take in account that the statues, as pieces of art, emanate something universal and not limited to the specific culture to which they belong. A piece of art is always a temporal manifestation – in a specific cultural environment – of archetypal BEAUTY.

Beauty belongs to humanity, not to any particular civilization. Truth, goodness, and justice are also atemporal and universal values that will not be affected by distance in time and space. Thus, through art, we can imagine a possible subtle dialogue that may occur between an ancient Egyptian goddess and two human beings from the 21st century.

It also means that if the many components of humanity share the same universal values, there will always be hope for establishing a real dialogue between people from different cultures, traditions or religions.

Paradoxically, it seems easier to build a link through centuries and space than between people sharing the same time and space. But easy was never a purpose in life, and we should aspire to do what is just and good and to approach truth. The need for this can be activated and awakened by the contemplation of beauty. That is the power of art.

Photo Album: Community of Philosophers

Member Events



Photo Album: Community of Philosophers

Member Events



Photo Album: Community of Philosophers

Living Philosophy Activities



Photo Album: Community of Philosophers

Public Events

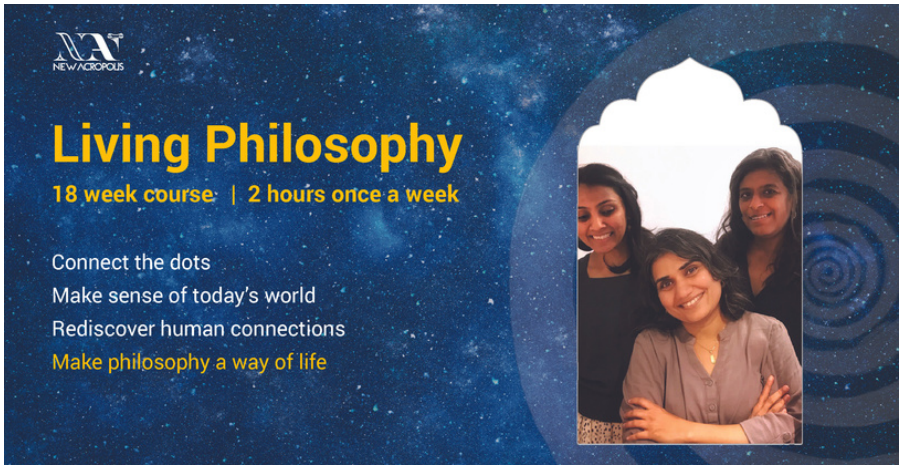


Photo Album: Community of Philosophers

Public Events



Living Philosophy @ New Acropolis Bangalore



Through 18 weeks that include experiential practices, you will be introduced to philosophical ideas from different cultures and civilizations.

The course combines ideas conceived by important philosophers spanning from the east to the west. It aims to make ancient philosophy accessible to the one who seeks to build himself and his future by cultivating a philosophical approach to life.

Each class is designed to help you reflect, introspect and bring these ideas alive in your daily life.

We invite you to attend the free introductory sessions that will give you a glimpse into some of the topics covered in the course.

Courses starting

@Indiranagar centre

Fri, 18th Nov | 7:30-9:30 PM
(Trial classes 25th Nov & 2nd Dec)



@ Jayanagar centre

Fri, 25th Nov | 7:30-9:30 PM
(Trial classes 25th Nov & 2nd Dec)

Click Here
to
Register

This course introduces the essence of ancient philosophy as a tool for the person to build himself and his future.

Philosophical life makes it possible to reveal the mysteries of man and the world, to deepen the view of reality and move in the world with more authenticity, inner confidence and happiness.

Over 19 sessions of lectures and practical exercises, you will be introduced to ideas from different cultures and civilizations. Each class is designed to help you reflect, introspect and bring these ideas alive in daily life.

PART 1: Who am I?

Meet yourself through perspectives of different cultures

How can we get to know ourselves better? How can we live in greater closeness to who we really are? What are the values we can work with? Through perspectives from the philosophies of ancient civilizations across the world, we deal with questions around purpose and meaning, happiness, ethics and freedom. This section brings Insights from Bhagavad Gita, the Stoics, Aristotle, Buddha, Confucius and ancient Egypt.

DISCOVER YOURSELF

Knowing yourself is essential for your inner development. In this session you will learn about the development of inner values through the seven principles in man and nature according to Greek and Indian philosophy.

BHAGAVAD GITA: REVEALING OUR INNER HERO

Developing inner strength to do the right action and becoming a peaceful warrior.

BUDDHA: PATH OF TRANSFORMATION

Learn about the roles of challenges and crises in our lives through the life and wisdom of Buddha.

MYSTERIES OF TIBET

Drawing inspiration from the teachings of ancient Tibet, investigate how control of the

mental is a major key for human development and spirituality

GREEK- ROMAN PHILOSOPHY: ABOUT HAPPINESS AND BEAUTY

Deeper meaning of these values through the teachings of Plotinus and Aristotle

FREEDOM TO BE: LESSONS FROM STOICS

Be inspired by the Stoics' understanding of human reality to take responsibility for your own life.

ANCIENT CHINA AND EGYPT: LIVING MEANINGFULLY

About justice and our ability to discern, inspired by the "Weighing of the Heart" from ancient Egypt and social order according to ancient China.

MEETING WITH THE TEACHER



PART 2: How can we live together?

We are here, together, this is our story. The society we live in is us! In this section we will look at the relationship between man and society and at navigating the challenges of living together without losing our personal freedom. Discover how the fabric of society is created, find your place by drawing inspiration from Plato's Republic, the wisdom of Pythagoras and more.

PLATO'S ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE: AWAKENING THE SOUL

Practising to see the reality as it is and the role we have to support each other in liberating ourselves

BUILDING A JUST SOCIETY

Principles of life together and practical tools to bring about real change.

LEARNING TO COEXIST

Teachings from Plato's 'Republic'

EDUCATION FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Active process that connects us with ourselves while giving tools to think, choose and act.

PRACTICAL SEMINAR

Know Yourself and put the learnings from these sections into practice

PART 3: Is it possible and how can we influence the future?

We are building the future all the time, the question is how and in what direction. In this section we will explore what is the role of the individual in the cycle of creation? How can we broaden our view? A glimpse into cycles of time, destiny, history and mythology.

LESSONS FROM MYTHOLOGY

Open the heart to myths and their connection to history and connect with eternal wisdom that goes beyond ever-changing history. Learn how myths are connected to our history

CYCLES IN HISTORY: AGES, YUGAS

Natural cycles and the development of humanity through ancient wisdom.

SOCRATIC CIRCLE

Process and practice major ideas learnt from the course

EVOLUTION AND DESTINY OF HUMANITY

About freedom, destiny and role of will power in building our future; inspired by the myth of Prometheus

FORGING A BETTER FUTURE THROUGH PHILOSOPHY

We discuss, share and summarise the 19 weeks together

MEETING WITH THE TEACHER

How to Sign Up?

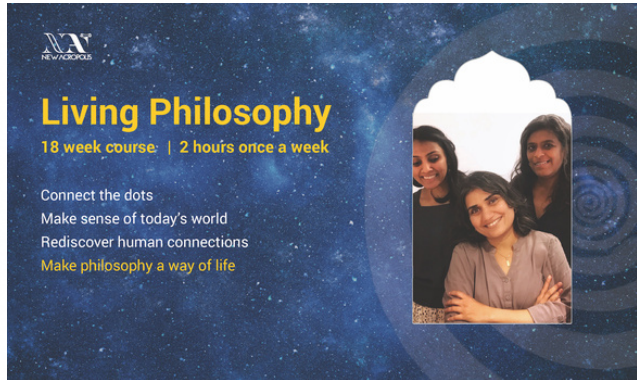
Attend one of our introductory sessions to know the details and essence of the course. To know more, call us at 9663804871 or register on our website at <https://acropolis.org.in/living-philosophy-course-bangalore/>



UPCOMING EVENTS

Scan the QR code for further details

Click Here
to
Register

A promotional poster for the 'Living Philosophy' course. The background is a dark blue space with stars and a subtle mandala pattern. In the top left corner is the 'New Acropolis' logo. The title 'Living Philosophy' is in large yellow font. Below it, in smaller white font, is '18 week course | 2 hours once a week'. The text 'Connect the dots', 'Make sense of today's world', and 'Rediscover human connections' is in white, while 'Make philosophy a way of life' is in yellow. On the right, a photo shows three women smiling, framed by a white archway.

Living Philosophy
18 week course | 2 hours once a week

Connect the dots
Make sense of today's world
Rediscover human connections
Make philosophy a way of life

Free Trial Class

Fri, 25th Nov & 2nd Dec 7:30-9:30 PM @ New Acropolis Indiranagar

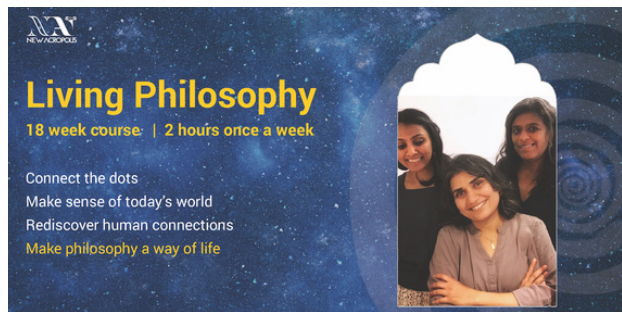
Click Here
to
Register



Daring to Lead

Sat, 3rd Dec, 6:30 PM-8:30 PM @ New Acropolis Indiranagar

Click Here
to
Register

A promotional poster for the 'Living Philosophy' course, identical to the one above. It features the 'New Acropolis' logo, the title 'Living Philosophy', course details, and a photo of three women smiling, all set against a starry blue background with a mandala pattern.

Living Philosophy
18 week course | 2 hours once a week

Connect the dots
Make sense of today's world
Rediscover human connections
Make philosophy a way of life

Free Trial Class

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On the Cover:

Spiral pattern

"Once you understand symbolic things, you will see symbols everywhere." Joseph Campbell

Often we glance over things and look at them in a superficial manner. In doing this, we miss the symbols we are surrounded by every day. Symbols existed across cultures and are a bridge between the visible and the invisible realms. Symbols connect us to the deeper meaning and to the wisdom they convey. They enable us to understand the human being, human history and allows us to look into its core, to see beyond external appearances. The book of nature, the universe and the sacred are more accessible through symbols. As humanity battles many challenges there is a greater need to reconnect to meaning to enrich our lives and understanding the language of symbols could help open doors to meaning.

Image credits: By Giulia May on Unsplash

Acropolis

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ACROPOLIS

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Living Philosophy

Connect the dots
Make sense of today's world
Rediscover human connections
Make philosophy a way of life



18 week course | 2 hours once a week



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