

PEHEL पहल

YOU BECOME

यत भावो-तत भवति।



WHAT YOU BELIEVE

Indian
Philosophy
&
Contemporary
Concerns

7th Edition

'21-22

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Principal's Note



**“The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence”
-Rabindranath Tagore**

Education does not restrict us to the domain of our perceptions and viewpoints rather it liberates us to understand the outer world and the inner potential to grow and flourish. The objective of education is to turn the challenges of the highly growing and competitive society into an array of opportunities to learn and imbibe good practices. The department of Philosophy enthusiastically provides platforms to the students to come up with their creative outlook and 'PEHEL' is one such effort. It gives me immense pleasure to write few words for the 6th edition of PEHEL- the Philosophy department annual newsletter which presents the innovative and fresh ideas of the students as young budding philosophers. The sincere effort to combine creativity with education enhances the impact of the deeper learning process. Articles, Poems, Quiz and the other components of this edition are surely going to compel the readers to contemplate on the multifarious issues and ideas presented.

The joint effort of students and teachers is much appreciated.

My best wishes for the students and faculty and I congratulate the department for all the success with the hope that such efforts would be continued in the future contributing to the interest of department and college.

Best Wishes,

PROF. (DR.) HARPREET KAUR
Principal

Editor's Note



Welcome to the fresh edition of Pehel – the initiative by the students' fraternity of Philosophy Department in the College to pen down their thought process. Right from the first edition to this seventh edition, Pehel has metamorphosed into a mature platform where our young students try to apply their academic learning on contemporary socio-political issues from a philosophical prism. We must commend them for their maturity and diversity of thought process, reflected through a range of topics covered in this edition. For examples, we have write ups touching upon Nachiketa, Gargi, traditional thinking, lives of ordinary people as well as pandemic situation. Additionally, we have poetic presentations, philosophical puzzles, and coverage to major events within the Department during the period.

It is time for the Departmental magazine to extend out and reach out to new horizons. There is scope, for example, to analyze and study contemporary burning issues. That will make our young writers more visible. There is also scope for the editorial team to reach out to Philosophy students in other colleges and even University on an experimental basis to attract more diverse thought process. There is also scope for the magazine to reach out to new readership through usage of social media. That way, Pehel would bring name and fame for the Department and the College. I sincerely hope that futuristic editions of Pehel would endeavour to reach out to new horizons.

All the best Team Pehel!

DR.GARIMA MANI TRIPATHI
Editor-in-Chief



Teacher-In-Charge



Yet another year of grit and determination has passed, and we are proud to announce the release of 7th edition of Pehel, our annual undergraduate philosophy newsletter. This edition is dedicated to relevance Indian philosophy in contemporary times. We are immensely grateful to all the aspiring philosophers, students, professors and philosophy enthusiasts who chose our platform to express their philosophical concerns and questions and showcased them from various perspectives. Pehel continues to offer the perfect platform for proudly highlighting the activities and accomplishments of the academic session and express the department's pride in all our members. Excited and relieved to get back to the (new) normal, the department left no stone unturned to support the students in their personal and professional development. The academic journey as always has been incredible. I am thankful to our Principal ma'am Prof. (Dr.) Harpreet Kaur for always supporting and encouraging our efforts. My thanks extend to our Editor, Dr. Garima Mani Tripathi, Co-editor, Dr. Jolly Singh and the student editorial team for their relentless efforts towards the creation of this edition. We sincerely hope that for readers this is enriching and informative. I wish you a delightful and enlightening reading experience.

DR. HEMLATA KRISHNANI
Teacher-In-Charge



EDITORIAL TEAM



Dr. Jolly Singh
Co-Editor



Adhya Joshi
Sub-Editor



Shreya Unnikrishan
Illustrator

Co-Editor's Note

*"If you want to change the world, pick up your pen and write."
Martin Luther*

With every new day, new ideas and thoughts cross our minds enhancing the capacity to connect not only to the world in which we are living but also to ourselves. The real power resides in perceiving the ideas, understanding and communicating them to others. It always feels a pleasure to be a part of any creative domain especially when it involves young flourishing minds taking us to new and fresh perspectives. The departmental newsletter 'PEHEL' being such a platform gives students a chance to make their inner poets, thinkers or philosophers emerge and interact. This seventh edition is a wonderful expression of these young minds emphasising the contemporary issues from various philosophical perspectives. Their write ups, no doubt, provide food for the mind especially the ones reflecting their learning and experiences. I hope and wish that their effort would be appreciated and encouraged to enable them to ponder more on ideas and issues which need our attention.

I would also request our readers to give their feedback to improve our further editions.

Dr. Jolly Singh
Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy
Co-Editor

Student Union

From disruptive culture to out-of-this-world inventions, this issue celebrates the innovators and their relentless need to question the way things work.

Unity sustains in diversity.

The Student Union of the Department of Philosophy was formed with the fundamentals of this very ideal. We, at ASTITVA, believe in it whole heartedly and encourage the students to take initiative and emerge as better versions of themselves.

With its six members, all of them diversified in their talents and interests, the Department aims to uphold its core values of enthusiasm and emancipation.

We aim to encourage students, not only to think out of the box, but also to look past biases and prejudices. Such a view of the society is only possible when young minds are sensitized towards cultural groups and ethnicities, opinions and perspectives, other than their own. It is this drive to bring to the table, food for thought and sensitivity towards others that we envision for a brighter future.



**Adhya Joshi
President**



**Premlata Singh
Vice-President**



**Ananya Chauhan
Secretary**



**Chahat Chadha
Joint Secretary**



**Avni
Joint Secretary**



**Yukti Rawat
Joint Secretary**



ASTITVA AT A GLANCE

RESEARCH MENTORING

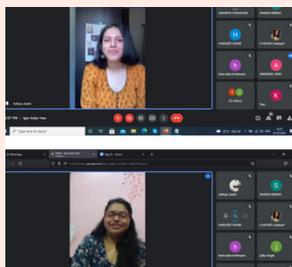
The students of the Department, along with those of the Department of Psychology worked on a research paper under the supervision of Dr. Hemlata Krishnani and Dr. Pooja Wadhawan. The paper was titled "Rethinking the Balance : Role of Education in assimilating Gender Constructs".



PEER MENTORING

The students of the second and third year of the department mentored the first and second years respectively on their various papers. Classes were taken regularly for any doubts and queries on the topics and attendance records were maintained.

TALKS & DEBATES



DEPARTMENT ELECTIONS

The Department held its Union Elections on 31st July, 2021, wherein, the students democratically elected the various representatives.

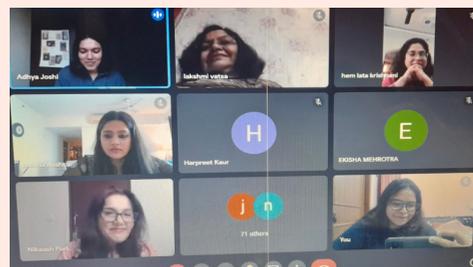
INDIAN PHILOSOPHERS' DAY

The Department organized a talk, sponsored by Indian Council of Philosophical Research on "The Enigma of Creation" on 26th July, 2021.



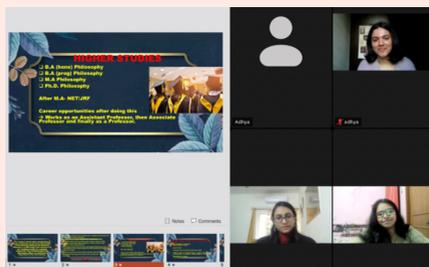
WORLD PHILOSOPHY DAY

The Department organized a talk on "Philosophy and Practice : Contemporary Indian Philosophy", on 20th November, 2021, in collaboration with BA Program.



ORIENTATION

An Orientation for the students of the First Year was organized on 22nd, 2021 to welcome and introduce them to the department as well as faculty members.



ALUMNI MEET AND COUNSELLING SESSION

The Department organized an Alumni Meet and Counselling Session on 29th January, 2022. The event was aimed at guiding the students through the lessons and experiences the Alumni of the Department.

A Talk was organized on 22nd February, 2022, in collaboration with the Department of History and the Library Progression Committee on the topic, "Temples of India".

An Inter-College Debate Competition was organized on 31st August, 2021, on the topic "Is Criticism of any significance in Philosophy?"

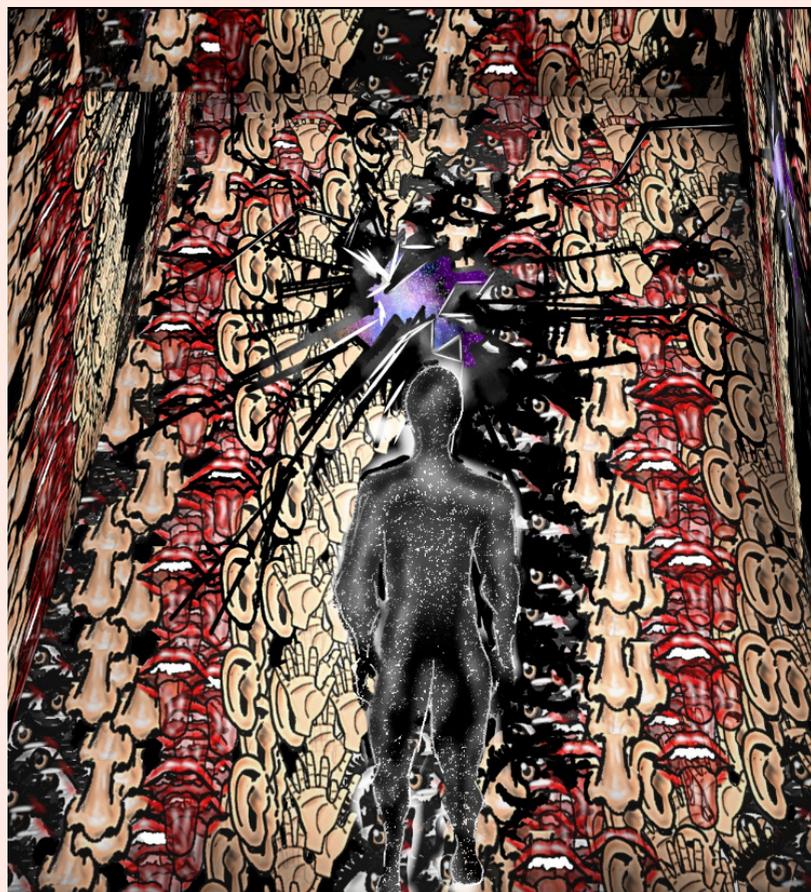
Matter of Choice

Written by Aahana Sharma
Illustrated by Shreya Unnikrishnan

How the story of Nachiketa still resonates in the modern world.

It's a lazy afternoon, and you have just hopped on the bed after a heavy lunch. Scrolling through your social media, your eyelids are getting heavy but then, you come across an article that piques your interest. 'Better choices that lead to better lives', it says. You open it to see if it has anything new to say. While reading the article, you realise that there is a lot to choose, from dietary changes to lifestyle changes and at that moment, you decide you aren't ready to shoulder such a demanding responsibility, shut of your mobile phone and doze off. By choosing not to choose, you've made a choice. Ah! The paradox of this all.

Choices are an inextricable part of our existence. By waking up and getting ready for the day we are making a choice. These choices mould our lives as we live it-shaping happiness and sorrow in tandem. No choice can bring complete contentment or absolute misery.



A melange of what is wanted and what is tolerable, choices are simply our willingness to what we are wishing to undertake.

The subject of choice had also absorbed western philosophical circles, which ascribed it to the concept of free will. From early Greeks and Stoics to modern western philosophers; choice to them was a characteristic of a rational human being. In his Nichomachean Ethics, Aristotle went on to say that we have the power to do or to not to do, and much of what we do is voluntary. While the determinists called choice a mere illusion; something that is predetermined by antecedents, the indeterminist view differed by saying that human beings do exercise their say in the matter and that not everything can be determined by what happened in the past.

A melange of what is wanted and what is tolerable, choices are simply our willingness to what we are wishing to undertake.

Indian philosophical tradition has highlighted the importance of choice through stories, folklore, verses and debates. Since its nature has been rooted in questioning, there has been much discussion and deliberation over several cardinal subjects, one of which is choice. In the timeless epic Ramayana which is the eternal personification of morals and ethics, we have Lord Ram who chose to go in exile and honour his father's wishes, we have Sita and Lakshman who decided to go with him complying with their respective dharma. Raja Harishchandra chose truth telling throughout his life, no matter what the cost. Prahalad, son of Hiranyakashipu chose the path of dharma over his father's demonic ways. The Mahabharata, the longest poem ever written is strewn with characters making choices. The nature of these choices has birthed some of the most passionate discussions and commentaries, where a parallel is often drawn for the contemporary world. Observing these narratives, we realise that they were not entrapped in their circumstances. They were there, willingly or unwillingly because of the decisions they took.

An interesting dialogue occurs in the Kath Upanishad- that is the story of Nachiketa and Yamaraj.

Nachiketa was the son of Vajashravas, a priest. His father wanted a gift from the gods, and began an auspicious yajña, where he had to donate his possessions. Nachiketa noticed that his father however, was donating cows that were old, barren, or of no use to him. Since he wanted his father's yajña to be fruitful, he began to ask him earnestly "when will you donate me, I'm yours and I am dear to you."

Harping over his father by constant questioning, his father Vajashravas in a fit of anger said "I offer you to Yamaraj!" Not wanting his father's words to be dishonoured, at night Nachiketa set out for Yama's abode. After much travelling, he finally reached Yamaraja's dwelling. The guards outside asked him to go back, deeming him a wayward youth who accidentally roamed into the territory of the God of death. But after observing his persistence and determination, they told him that Yama was not present. He decided to wait patiently, and three days later Yama came back to his abode. Learning about Nachiketa, Yama decided to entertain his guest, since guests were considered equal to God. Hearing his story, he granted him three boons in return for his three days of patience. For his first boon, Nachiketa asked for peace between him and his father when he returned, and for his second, he asked to be taught the knowledge of the fire sacrifice. Both of these boons were granted. But his third wish surprised Yama. Nachiketa wanted to know what happens to the soul after death. Yama persuaded him to ask for something else, like wealth or other material gain but Nachiketa persisted saying that all the materials of the world were impermanent and ephemeral and he wanted the knowledge that is the sole truth. It could not be replaced by any other boon. Yama, impressed with Nachiketa's tenacity and wisdom, therefore had to teach him about the atman (soul) and brahman (supreme spirit).



source: Google Images

Running parallel to this story, there is a verse occurring in the Kaṭh Upaniṣad that goes as follows :

śreyaśca preyaśca manuṣyametaṣtau samparītya
vivinakti dhīraḥ | śreyo hi dhīro'bhi preyaśo vṛṇīte
preyo mando yogakṣemādvṛṇīte ||

Translation :

“The good and the pleasant come to a man and the thoughtful mind turns around them and distinguishes. The wise choose out the good from the pleasant, but the dull soul chooses the pleasant rather than the getting of his good and it having.”

The good is Shreyas and the pleasant is Preyas. Though, initially both give the impression of happiness, but upon closer reflection one can see the differences clearly. Preyas is pleasant as it gives happiness to the body by presenting us with worldly pleasures. It satisfies our senses, and fuels our desire to get more. There is no thought and no control, just the gratification of senses by momentary happiness. Shreyas is that which is good, it may not always satisfy our senses and provide us with comfort, but it is what helps us to grow spiritually. It uplifts our soul, and encourages us to do good and be good, and helps us to realise the true meaning of our existence.

It invigorates our sense of duty and distinction between what is right and good and ultimately leads us to salvation.

By repudiating the gains of worldly pleasures and comforts, Nachiketa with his wisdom distinguishes between what is right and what is pleasant. He embodies an individual who is on the quest for truth, and he acquires that only when he chooses to renounce all worldly desires, that leads him to true knowledge and enlightenment. We are, at every moment besieged by closely resembling alternatives. They may overwhelm us, exhaust us or confound us or maybe all three at once. But maintaining a cool calm disposition in the face of a raging sea of options and possibilities is what we need to do. It is naturally effortless to get hooked on what seems to be the easy way out, and it is here where we need to guard and resist ourselves from these temptations. Doing what is peaceful and bound by dharma is intrinsically good, and sooner or later leads us to the path of bliss and prosperity. But this demands a stern control and careful discrimination, where the line may sometimes be too fine to read. May we all choose good, may we all be like Nachiketa.

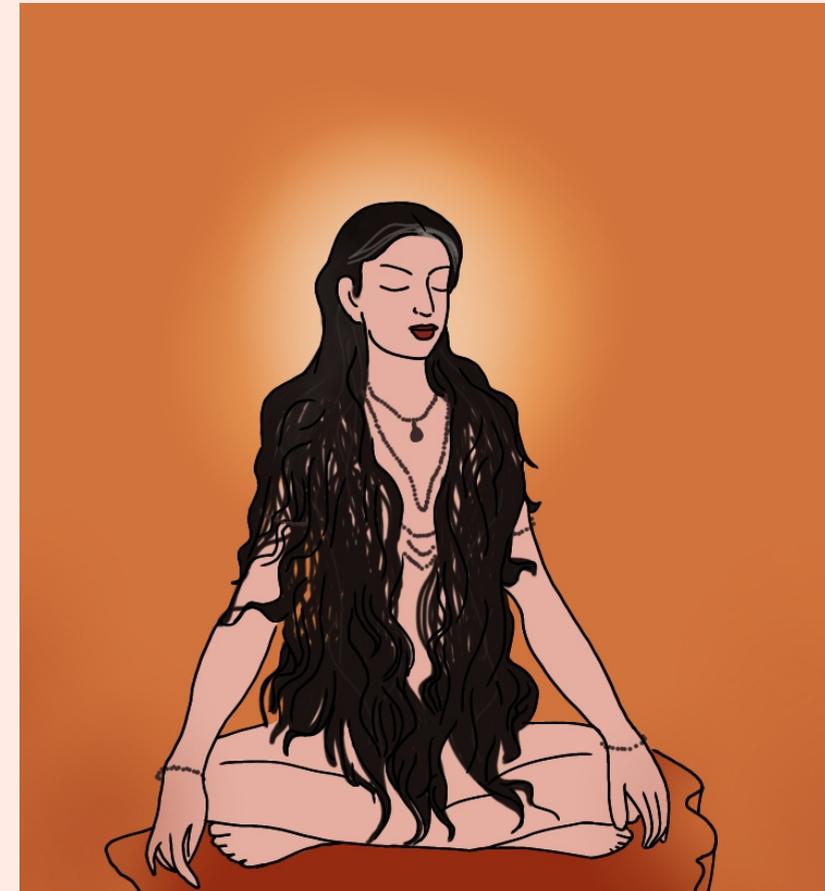
Nachiketa with his wisdom, distinguishes between what is right and what is pleasant.

Gargi Vachaknavi: An Eloquent Philosopher

Written by Aastha Mishra
Illustrated by Adhya Joshi

Meriting Recognition to Gargi: A Female Philosopher of the Indian Classical Antiquity

When one is swiftly asked to name a few ancient female thinkers/ philosophers in the history of feminism, isn't it distinctly possible that the names that would surface in our minds would be that of female thinkers belonging to the Western domain? In this milieu, names and voices of esteemed female thinkers from the West such as Aspasia of Miletus, Hypatia of Alexandria, Clea, Susanne Langer, Iris Murdoch, etc. have perceptibly clinched academic identification and space. Throughout the history of feminism and women studies, the whispers and assertions of Western feminist thinkers have been applauded and treasured. Most scholarly works also attribute the advancement of feminism in India to Western supremacy and impression.



Besides, Indian Philosophy, conveniently, summons an imagery of the scholarly male philosophers: Yājñavalkya, Uddālaka Āruṇi, Nammalvar, Acharya Hemachandra, Adi Shankara, Kapila, Ramanuja and many others. But what about female Indian philosophers and the echo of their voices in the philosophical province?

On boot, there are several women philosophers in India who have appreciably sculpted and enriched the philosophical canon. Amongst them, Gargi (Gārgī Vāchaknavī) is one of the glorious female seers and philosophers of the Vedic period who confronted and complemented her male counterparts; both intellectually and spiritually.

Let us now take an illuminating digital tour of the stature and estimation of this ancient women philosopher of India who categorically appertained to the Vedic period and whose contributions are evident through the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

Gargi Vachaknavi was the oldest delegate of Indian feminism. In a philosophical compilation called the Brahadaranyaka Upanishad, she has been acknowledged to have drawn some gaping metaphysical questions of Vedanta, the nature of the individual soul (Ātman) and the supreme soul (Brahman), and the origins of the universe. Her thoughtfulness threatened to weaken religious teachings on the source and mysteries of human existence and transcendental realities. Gargi had an inquisitiveness to identify and unknit the conundrums orbiting metaphysical, existential and spiritual facets of life.

What is beguiling about Gargi, as a philosopher, is that she employs an eccentric and quaint style of philosophising; a style that is powerful, compelling and effective. Notably, a debate between the Vedic Sage Yajnavalkya (the most respected, wise and learned thinker of that epoch) and Gargi has been considered to be that most acclaimed accomplishment of Gargi. The debate was called Brahmajayna and centrally whirled on themes concerning the status and nature of the soul (Ātman). Consequentially, Gargi, the only female scholar, adroitly managed to trounce and overthrow Yajnavalkya with her knowledge, enthusiasm and grit.

The famed debate between Gargi and Yajnavalkya has been recited in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (3.6):

“On air, Gargi.

On What, then, is air woven back and forth?

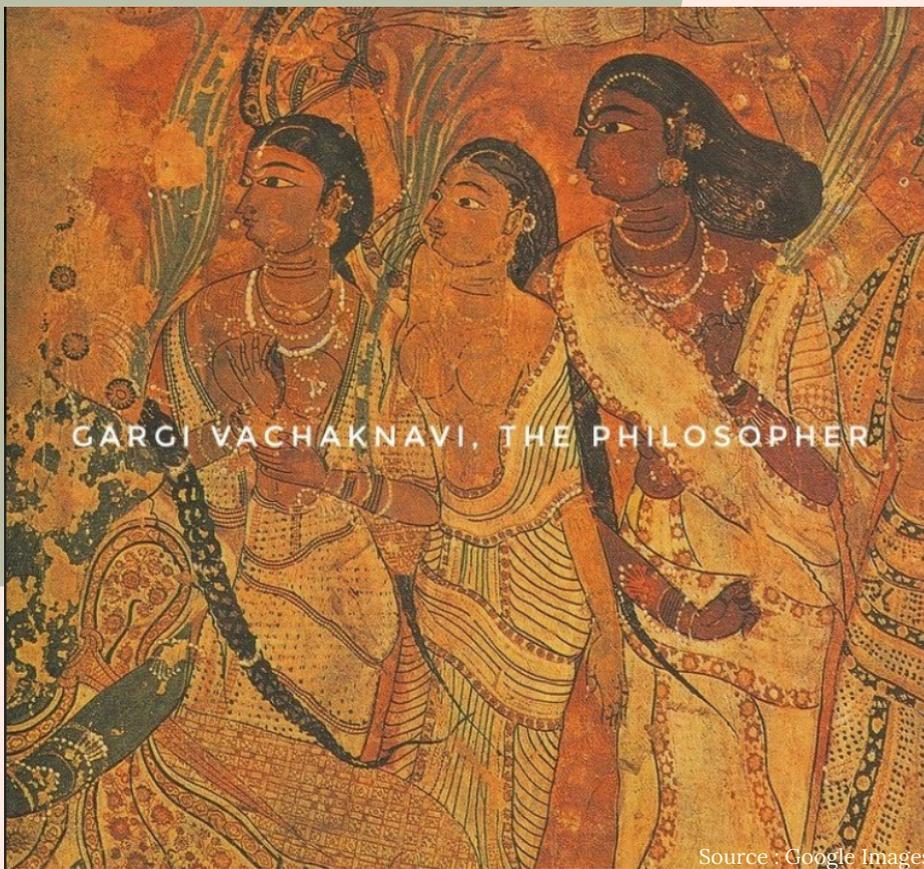
On the intermediate regions, Gargi.

On what, then, are the worlds of the intermediate regions woven back and forth.

On the worlds of the Gandharvas, Gargi.”

With the rigorous knowledge of the Vedic scriptures and her prolific intelligence on the subject-matter, Gargi was stamped as Brahmavadini, a person with knowledge of Brahman (Brahma Vidya). As a Brahmavadini, she has composed assorted hymns in the Rigveda. Moreover, Rishi(ka) Gargi was venerated and recognised as one of the Navaratnas (Nine Jewels) in the court of King Janaka, Mithila. In the Vedic lore, it is averred that she had managed to realise her Kundalini powers (ingrained spiritual/feminine energy). Bringing up rear, Gargi was a prominent woman philosopher with exalted philosophical vision and acclaimed debating skills. For what Gargi is remembered even in current times is her wisdom, will and tenacity.

It is a fact that Gargi was endowed with contemptible intellect, sharpened psychic expertise and magnificent verbal ability. What's more, it is alluring and arresting to observe that Gargi was an epitome of rebellion, affirmation and women empowerment. She set in motion the substructure of feminist discourse in India, in a myriad of ways. Firstly, by conscientiously asserting and registering her stature in a male-dominated space, like, at the philosophical congress where she was capable of ousting the male sage, Yajnavalkya. She was exquisitely able to validate a sense of salvation, equality and liberty.



Source : Google Images

Secondly, by gracefully defeating Yajnavalkya, Gargi was not merely able to evince her eloquent prowess, but was also able to contribute to the domain of Vedic education and the development of philosophical sagacity in India; both in the past and in present. She postulated that education and epistemology is key for women empowerment. Furthermore, through spiritual advancement, Gargi fetched a sense of psychical upliftment of the self, thereby, stationing the value of spiritual realisation within the brackets of women emancipation. In the book, *The Character of the Self in Ancient India*, Brian Black writes:

"Gargi was, in fact, Yajnavalkya's strongest opponent, stronger than even her male counterparts."

Recognising the wisdom of Gargi certainly inflates our view of Indian Feminism and tenders inestimable lessons for us modern revolutionaries. Lastly, if the ancient society found capacity and scope to include Gargi's voices in the social, epistemological and existential realm, why can't we do the same in contemporary times?

Philosophy & Daily Life

Written by Pooja Bahl
Artwork by Manya

How ancient philosophies are relevant in modern times

In today's fast paced world, there is much chaos. People have changed their thinking, and are rather attached to materialistic goals. They are unable to see reality, and their focus is on the external world. Therefore, it becomes rather important to study the Upanishads, and understand reality.

Let's take an example of a jewellery. Necklaces, bangles, rings- all kinds of different ornaments are made from the same metal- gold. Similarly, if we ask ourselves "Who are we?" We will get to know that we are the one who wake up, who dream, who sleep, and in all these activities the one thing that remains the same is our consciousness.

This pure consciousness appears in all. Wherever there is ego, there is ignorance. To look at pure consciousness, we must get rid of our ego. Purification of our mind is needed to know pure consciousness.



Just like in darkness, we mistake a rope for a snake, with our ignorance, we can't see pure consciousness. Upanishads help in understanding this consciousness, it makes us understand the actual unity of the consciousness that is unchanging and not affected by subject, death, decay etc. In this pursuit, Upanishads help a lot, with the shortest Upanishad providing us with great knowledge.

Gaining knowledge is easy, but learning about true reality is tough. Many people believe that the Upanishads are just about religion. But they are more than that, they break all the dogmas making a person cheerful, confident and fearless. They provide with the methods of self-training.

As a student of philosophy, one must try to understand the path of detachment and aim towards understanding reality.



One will realise that the atma (the soul) and brahman (supreme consciousness) are not different, they are one and the same.

When an aspirant strengthens his practice of meditation, here he learns to resolve all his desires thoughts and feelings. An evolved mind alone can reach pure consciousness. As body and mind need rest, so does the unconscious mind. Focus comes with deep meditation. Careful vigilance and observation can make a student study their thoughts they get from their unconscious mind. We can try, and train our will power through Sankalpa Shakti. Meditation without focus is meaningless, coordination of body and mind is necessary for knowing true reality. The knower of this knowledge gets to know universal consciousness. Such an aspirant can attain a state of enlightenment.

Man's lust for material desire, turns it into his ultimate goal, making him forget true reality.

Pondering in the Pandemic

Written by Aahana Sharma
Illustrated by Adhya Joshi

And the ideas of Indian Philosophy that still resonate with us.

In the first phase of the lockdown, amidst the hullabaloo of amateur chefs and digital creators, and the ongoing Corona frenzy the Indian government came up with an ingenious idea to engage the masses which had quite suddenly found itself confined to their homes. Their solution? Telecasting nineties classics of Doordarshan. Shows like Ramayan and Mahabharat, or Upanishad Ganga- a show which depicted stories from the Upanishads along with their philosophical perspective became a huge hit within days. They provided a much-needed reprieve from the maddening lifestyles we were used to lead and an opportunity for family bonding. However, these efforts also revealed that if given the chance and the time, the general public is always interested to engage in activities that re-establishes its relationship with its philosophical and cultural history.

Now, it brings us a question that often does the rounds in philosophical debates- Is Indian philosophy still relevant in the modern era?



The world in which we live now is forever going to be demarcated as the post covid era. The tragic parenthesis brought to our lives by the pandemic; the world as we knew it ceased to exist. As it tries to crawl back to normalcy, it becomes imperative that we as individuals and as part of the community adapt to these harrowing times. Where does Indian philosophy figure in this discourse? To 'adapt' or to 'become' requires the knowledge of the self, the knowledge of our wants and needs, and to attain all of this; thinking is required. It may not seem ground breaking at first, because we tend to think all the time. But the thoughts that go through our mind everyday are mundane and uninspiring. They don't always touch the subjects beyond a materialistic outlook. A logical reason for this can be that frenetic, work driven lifestyles don't allow the time for philosophizing.

Indian philosophical tradition had long given the idea of 'Vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam' which translates to 'the world is one family.'

Tough times often bring with them an opportunity for reflection and introspection. Indian philosophy offers plethora of ideas to ponder upon, many of them that are pertinent to the ongoing pandemic.

Indian philosophical tradition had long given the idea of 'Vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam' which translates to 'the world is one family.' The idea illustrates that all of us are interconnected. Separated by seas and oceans geographically, and languages and customs culturally; this idea got buried in our consciousness and we moved on about in the world as if we're all separate and detached from the other's existence. The pandemic happened and our lives took a dramatic turn. It was then, when this age-old principle regained its prestige into common memory. Our shared sense of isolation brought our sense of togetherness. When we saw the vaccine distribution initiative of India for other countries to aid in vaccine equity, it wasn't just pride that we felt, but a sense of collective responsibility towards others. Humanity's greatest virtue can be called that of empathy, which is espoused by this idea and has been strengthened by our common hardship.

The world is a constantly evolving tapestry, where each and every life is interwoven together, even if it is not tangible. Bhagwat Gita emphasises on the idea of duty, but more importantly one's own duty. Taking an example of a normal household, say we are given a chore that we have to perform every day. But after sometime we fall short of performing, which acts as a deterrent for the smooth functioning of the household.

Similarly, Bhagwat Gita stresses on an individual to perform his or her duty- an idea it calls svadharma. Each one of us has a duty. By performing our duties, we help others. This is a subtle occurrence, something that is not visible over the surface. But if one day, it happens that everyone stops doing what they are meant to, the world will come to a halt. It was evident during the pandemic- other services and professions were forced to come to a halt but the duties performed by healthcare professionals and essential workers ensured that our lives go as smoothly as possible. The duties we performed at home, from doing the dishes to washing the clothes to cooking, not only gave us a lesson in being independent, but made us understand the value and importance of the people who provide us with these services.

At the end, the best that we can do is to try and attain the stage of samatva – or equanimity. To think that life is all happiness and no sorrow is quixotic at its best and an impractical approach. Happiness or sukhka and unhappiness or duhkha are part and parcel of life, working in tandem. Our aim should be to understand the lessons that we receive from them and move forward. The extent of the influence of Indian philosophy transcends into the realm of positive living. Reconciling our values with our ancient principles will not only ameliorate our circumstances, but will lead us to our salvation. As for its relevance, the pandemic answers that question emphatically.

Revise the Riwaz

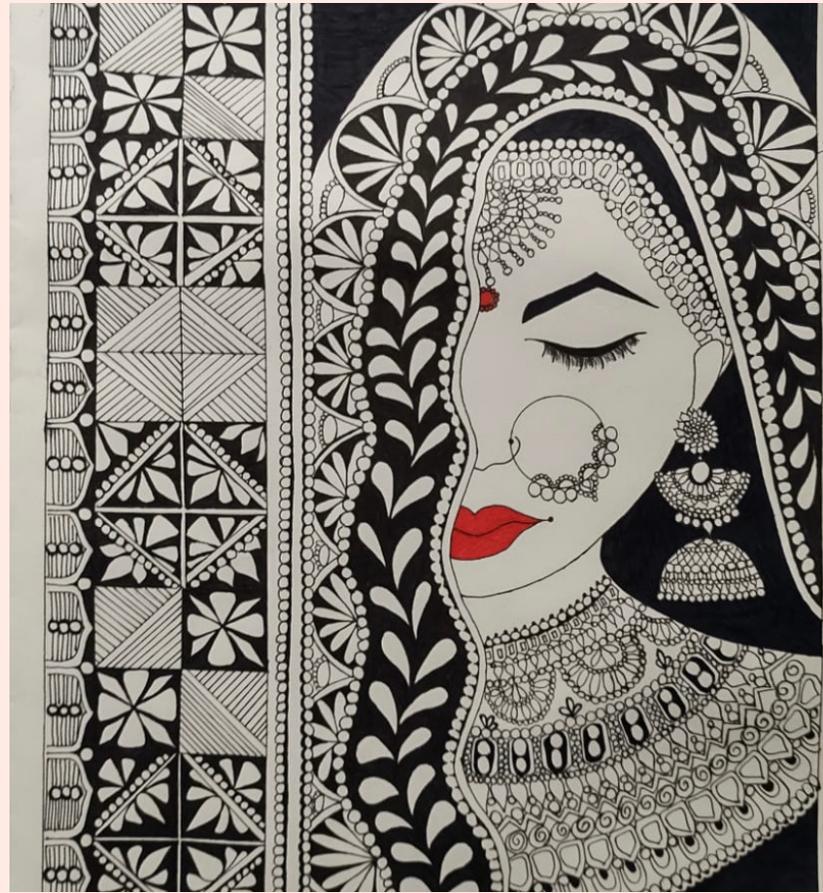
Written by Anusha Chauhan
Artwork by Shruti Kumari

Rewriting the manuscripts of Indian Marriages

My daughter is 22, she needs to get married soon. It is my utmost responsibility, as a father, to ensure that she is treated well in that house. Let me give her some money and gifts to secure stability and independence in her future.

With this thought, the prevalent Dowry System took its wings. The invasion of the British and Mughals brought the oppression of women and severe violation of their rights. In these times, this gifting culture became the only legal way to get married. Dowry in the form of cash and kind was a "compulsory fee" which was deemed mandatory.

Unfortunately, amidst the 21st century, we have still not been able to eradicate this disruptive and unethical practice out of our lives.



Mother-daughter bond is something we have heard and related to. The emotive connect they share is ineffable and made of pure tenderness. A father is often sidelined when it comes to baring out one's soul. But the love and affection they share towards their princesses is invaluable. This article is a mere representation of the father's perspective when it comes to their daughter's marriage and how the Dowry system remains a nightmare for him.

A daughter was born, the jewel to her parents, the most pretty gift of god with sparkling eyes and the most beautiful smile. With that joy came a lot of pressure. He taught her how to walk, gave her the first bite, sometimes rode like a horse after a tiring day at work just to make her happy. He spent his entire life collecting money with his sheer hard work, spending not even a dime on himself.

The person who had not shed a single tear till date cried when her daughter was leaving in an Ambassador forever. The person who never showed his love kissed her daughter on the forehead that day. He was willing to give everything he ever earned to make sure her daughter lives a bright future. A child he had raised with all the love and care will never be a wholesome part of his family again. The father's heart wept that night.

Earlier, people were afraid if a girl was born. I repeat afraid, not melancholic. Girls were never taught much owing to the lack of resources and unwillingness of the households to spend their money on education instead of serving the society and the groom at the time of her marriage. The principle behind this convention has taken a different turn. The Dowry System is now practiced to ensure that their girl child is not harassed or mistreated by her husband or the family. Every day nearly 21 lives are lost to this stereotypical fashion.

This tradition needed to stop in 1961 when legal action was taken against it. It is crunch time to make sure all of our girls are safe and that they cannot be compared in monetary terms.

This normalized custom of torture or marriage settlement needs to stop. The first prime solution to this worldly problem would be to provide employment to both men and women. This will reduce the pressure and stress on the man and help to lead a life of togetherness, rapport and support. The never ending need for gender equality and unbiased laws will always remain a chief factor in upbringing women and eliminating this cheap rescue ritual of dowry. Education abides as the overriding solution to this problem as it provides knowledge, confidence and the understanding to respect and lead a respectful life.

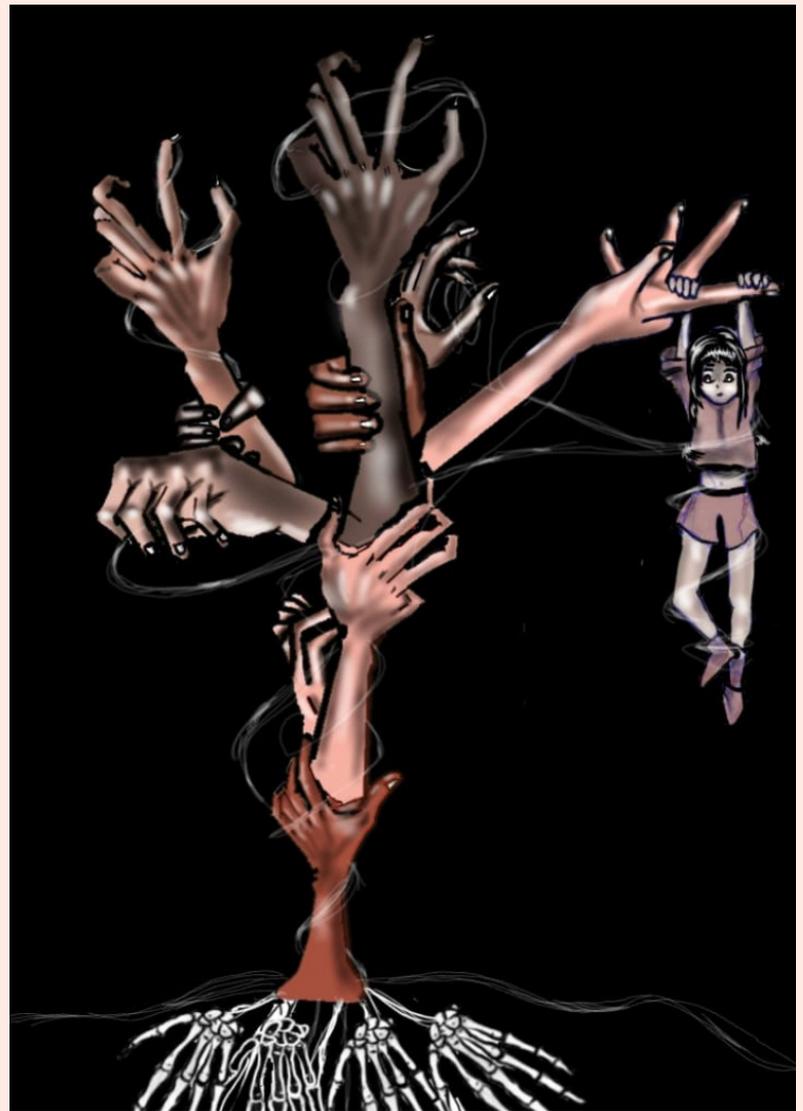


Average Indian Household

Written by Ananya Chauhan
Illustrated by Shreya Unnikrishan

A commentary and some insight on the lives of ordinary people

They say that to write is to express and to express is to emote. I come from an upper middle class background and am proud to be an Indian. From where I come, we promote conventional job profiles like every other 'normal household', the ones which do not include the performance of an artist; at least not full time. And, I do not disagree because I should not. A household where each kid is so politically driven that they know their vote must go to the party that works for the religion like they should. We are simple people. We have simple yet sophisticated values. My family has always supported my dreams and ambitions, except for them being dejected at the fact that I wanted to even think about "humanities" which was justified because like now, we didn't have so many options back then. No one in the house has ever needed to repeat or quote anything more than two lines from the HOLY BOOK OF FAMILY VALUES that we follow.



Ours is a simple household where every expense is well calculated, yet when the kids need something at the last hour or desire so, the otherwise necessary expenses are cut down and the thing provided. The kids always know the value of sharing here, because then we also understand the pain of being a mere fish, in a sea of sharks. We learn to lay our life on the line when one of our own is attacked. Our simplicity knows no bounds, like the never ending love of our mothers is just like 'Urmila from RAMAYANA', her empathy, love and care know no bounds, she takes charge of the household and the family. These ladies are the backbone of our homes, with back problems, every once in a while.

We are simple people, who realize the value of dreams, and so we break them down into goals- achievable and practical (if and only if our family conditions allow us to).

We are open to discuss politics, and favor debates until we support the same party, since otherwise things might get a little too serious. We are allowed to have opinions on matters but must learn to keep them to ourselves.

Ours is a simple household where, the eldest kid in here, witnesses the growth of parents as well; learns to be the role model for the rest. We learn to compete with the people around us, and our parents help us by providing real time checks, after comparing us with the starkids around us. And that's how we understand Society and the limited resources, the basics of economic stature too, because this is where we learn, we must put up a fight to achieve what's ours.

At the end of the day, we are the people who keep our family values in our heart, and ambition- lucid dreams in our eyes. We are the people these political figures are fond of talking about, but not so much for working, perhaps. We are the people who get affected by the tax relaxations, new toll plazas ,unemployment, farm laws ,religionous riots, inflation - be it petrol or groceries or clothing, infrastructure development- be it railways, public transport, educational institutions, or the health sector. However movements like Feminism, LGBTQ+ do not seem to affect us rather much.

We are all same yet, so very different,

We are simple people, who realize the value of dreams, and so we break them down into goals- achievable and practical.

UNDER THE SCOPE

HETERODOXY IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Written by Amal Nourin, St Stephen's College
Artwork by Manya Munjal

**"Who really knows? Who will here proclaim it?
Whence was it produced? Whence is this
creation?**

**Gods came afterwards, with the creation of
this universe.**

Who then knows whence it has arisen?

**Whether God's will created it, or whether He
was mute;**

**Perhaps it formed itself, or perhaps it did not;
Only He who is its overseer in highest heaven
knows,**

Only He knows, or perhaps He does not know."

These lines of Nasadiya sukta(Hymn of non-Eternity), generally known as the "Hymn of Creation" is indeed a testimony to the long standing and often under-conveyed penchant for heterodoxy in Indian philosophical traditions. This 129th hymn of the 10th mandala of the Rigveda is an intellectual stimulator and an explicit deviation from the superior notions of a creator as a final answer to the existence of the cosmos. Rather, "The Hymn of Creation" develops on the cosmological mysticism by asking if its ever possible to know how the universe originated. These doubts, perceived to be radical by philosophers and analysts, have always had an underlying presence in human psyche. This leads us to the undercurrents of the Indian philosophical traditions, one that is associated with the questioning of norms, including those of vedas, religious scepticism and materialism - ideas that are generally dissociated in any religion. But as we see, the different schools of thought in hinduism is not only about spiritual flights with god being the terminus, but a coalescence of multifarious ideas of life and creation where even rejection and rebellion has duly found a revered cultural position. In popular imagination, Bharat is the hub of religiosity and spirituality and rightly so. he soil grains of this land is imbued with divine benediction and dharma is the highest ideal of its inhabitants. Religion has been enjoying a powerful position since the eternal, marked by religious literature in massive amounts in India and its association with our civilizational values. This one dimensional outlook towards religion might be a reason for the-



nderestimation of alternative dialogues in the subcontinent at present. Infact, religion in India is not merely in popular practice, its more of a cognitive exercise, evident in the importance that we have given to debates, deliberations and eclectic movements with massive participation. This is exactly why scepticism, aethism, agnosticism, materialism etc are noticeable elements in Indian thinking.

According to many, aethism is a modern day invention by western rationalist thinkers and religious criticism began with the modern day culture of argumentation. But if we hark back to our own philosophical works, this isnt the case. Sanscrit works, albeit known for religious literature is also the language of a large body of aethistic and agnostic writing. "Some assert that there is such a thing as merit in alms-giving; but their words are empty, false and nonsensical. Both the fool and the wise are annihilated and destroyed after death and dissolution of their bodies. Nothing exists after death."- these words, perhaps blasphemous and offensive in modern discourse are found in the classical text "Discourse on the Fruits of Contemplative Life," written in the Indian language of Pali, by Ajita Kesakambala(500 bc), an ancient Indian philosopher.

"If you ask me if there is another world, well, if I thought there were, I would say so. But I don't say so. And I don't think it is thus or thus. And I don't think it is otherwise. And I don't deny it. And I don't say there neither is, nor is not, another world." These are the words of Sanjaya Belatthiputta (belonging to the Ajnana tradition, another heterodox school in Ancient India) in the ancient Theravada buddhist text.

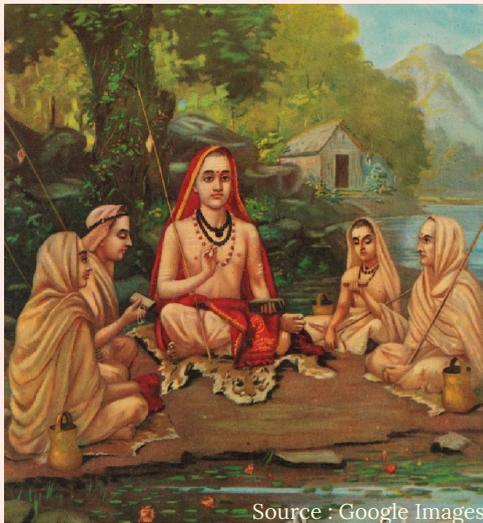
This radical agnosticism is central to many philosophical debates that ensued in this land of critique and constructivism. The charvaka school of philosophy is perhaps the most interesting counter intuitive validation of such a perception. The open defiance of god, the other worldly ideas of karma and moksha and anything that cannot be perceived by human senses occupies a central position in this heterodox school of philosophy in India. Brihaspati is traditionally considered the founder of the charvaka/Lokayata school. It professes the power of senses and direct perception, rejecting elements beyond this. This is manifested in their disregard of ether(sky) as an element of creation as it cannot be perceived by humans. "Eat, drink and make merry " became the standard objective of life. This defiance of "deities and duties " did welcome a set of criticism for charvaka, the accusations being hedonism, oppurtunism and self indulgence and the validation of all of it through the development of a school of its own. Nevertheless, Charvaka stands out from the crowd through his rejection of ritualism and dogma by casting aspersions on the then "ideal way of life".

Then comes the original teachings of Buddhism and Jainism which opposed the concept of God but still believed in the idea of re-incarnation. Similar arguments that denounces religiois dogma and established conventions can be found in Upanishads and even in the Ramayana in the episode where sage Javali lectures Lord Ram about the Vedas. This writing is not about creating an 'either' or 'or' dichotomy in the understanding of Indian religion and philosophy. This is an acknowledgement of the spectrum that is Indian philosophy and religion. In philosophical discourses throughout history, aethists and agnostics play a part.

UNDER THE SCOPE

The outlook towards religion might be a reason for the-

Even in the dialogic encounters organised by Akbar, sceptics like Charvaka philosophers were given their due representation. And it isn't strenuous to trace the role of this departure from established religious orthodoxy in aiding scientific understandings and advances in Indian history, public reasoning and democracy in India. This is best demonstrated in the life and works of Aryabhata. As Amartya Sen cogently writes in 'The Argumentative Indian', "An adequately inclusive understanding of Indian heterodoxy is particularly important for appreciating the reach and range of heterodoxy in the country's intellectual background and diverse history. This is especially critical because of the relative neglect of the rationalist parts of the Indian heritage in contemporary accounts of India's past, in favour of concentrating on India's impressive religiosity. That selective inattention has, in fact, produced a substantial bias in the interpretation of Indian thought, and through that in the understanding of the intellectual heritage of contemporary India."



Source : Google Images

BEYOND THE VESTIGES OF TIME AND FRONTIER: THE ENIGMA OF CHANAKYA

Written by Sayandeep Das, Hindu College



Source : Google Images

"A man is great by his deeds, and not by his birth."

~Chanakya

An enigmatic ideal, ingenuity imbued that manifested to illuminate a thousand lost souls-

The unhindered quest for knowledge his sole guidance, ignorant of what degenerate, decrypt shackles of sequestered time bound him to;

Beyond frontiers hence, the message of Chanakya-neeeti proclaimed obliteration of illusory tales,

Pragmatism and reality instilled the essence, the dawn of a novel humanity in reception of a new age.

What brute authority the ruler exuded, remember, emanates from the silent souls that untiringly serve:

The innocuous acceptance of rights, shall it ignore the manifold duties incumbent upon one?

What purpose there is of personal glory and selfish need, he conjectured, subservient not to communities or monarchs-but the cherished paradigm of human progress,

The illusive heavens we bask in avarical dreams, shall not alter the rational aridity of reality.

Wealth, alas, shall not be a vying figment engulfing human conscience discernable-

But to fulfill obligations for one and all, dana and dakshina to disseminate all evils of desperation and hunger there is;

There is no personal fortune, save to strengthen the base that sustains our societal being,

Else, wreaking havoc on all materialistic endeavors, the recourse of artha to destructive anartha.

The blinding urge to be truthful, shall not let distract you from the path of tact and diplomacy- Neither shall trust ensnare you, in bartering what secrecy of purpose a solitary soul may nourish; Individuality he proclaimed, must not be an impediment but the unbridled tool to secure immortal success,

As the sanity of the human mind, not irrational blind faith, should demarcate your path.

What realizations he envisaged, of accepting the crude truth instead of utopian tranquilities:

Of industrious economy and reigned politics, have helped humanity mold the very tenets of life-

The Arthashastra apart, existential avarice must not foreshadow what destinies the future may herald,

As the sublime philosophies of Chanakya shall stand tall, pervasive in incessant echoes for the world to learn.

POEMS कविताएँ

कौन बैठा है यहां

Written by Nidhi Pawar

अब यहां कौन बैठा है,
कहे कोई किनारा हो?
मिलाना जग में ढूंढने पर भी,
वह जो हमारा हो...

शक्ति पूजन होता रहा,
दुर्बलता सदैव कुचली गई ,
किसने कहा यहां हर दिशा को
यह दिनकर गवारा हो..

अकेला चल कर आया था
अकेला चल कर जाना है
कौन है वो इस धरा से

उस .. फलक तक,
वह जो सिर्फ तुम्हारा हो..

ना देख दाएं ना ही बाय,
पीछे मोड़ना भी मत

क्योंकि वहां कोई नहीं,
कोई नहीं..

जो अक्स खोजना चाहते हो..

वह सिर्फ तुम्हारा, हो तुम्हारा हो।



Source : Google Images

MUSINGS ON LIFE

Written by Ritu

Nobody knows the truth,
Nobody knows the chaos,
Nobody knows your brain,
Nobody knows the pain,
So much of energy going in vain, Life feels
miserable that's all you say!
Too much of frustration don't know where to
show,
And all the negativities surround your door,
Every ounce of hope is vanished away, All
those tears flood your gaze,
These are the symptoms of your failure
diagnosed today,
Life feels miserable that's all you say!
Regrets of the past tear you apart,
All your abilities seem to fade away, Despite
your efforts things didn't come your way,
All the expectations of your dear ones are
crushed away,
Guilt is all that is left to stay,
Life feels miserable that's all you say!
Now you are desperate to evolve,
But circumstances perplex your thoughts,
So, fear strike you are,
Every single step feels difficult to take, You sit
idle and waste your day,
Life feels miserable that's all you say!

You look upon yourself as a loser's image,
You do things that are baseless,
All your happiness has parted ways, These
are the outcomes of your mistake,
All your desires are suppressed for this
sake,
Life feels miserable that's all you say!
You are afraid to have more dreams,
Just like a beggar of motives who lost his
aim,
You blame yourself to have ruined your
state,
Now you feel like disappearing or hide
yourself,
For you are exhausted and hurt to death,
miserable that's all you say!
This is not the end is all you need to know,
For these are the bad phases meant to go,
Don't be heartless as you aren't alone, Just
be practical for your future goals, These
hardships will always show up on your
door,
You are potentially strong to fight on your
own,
For life feels beautiful that's all you should
know !

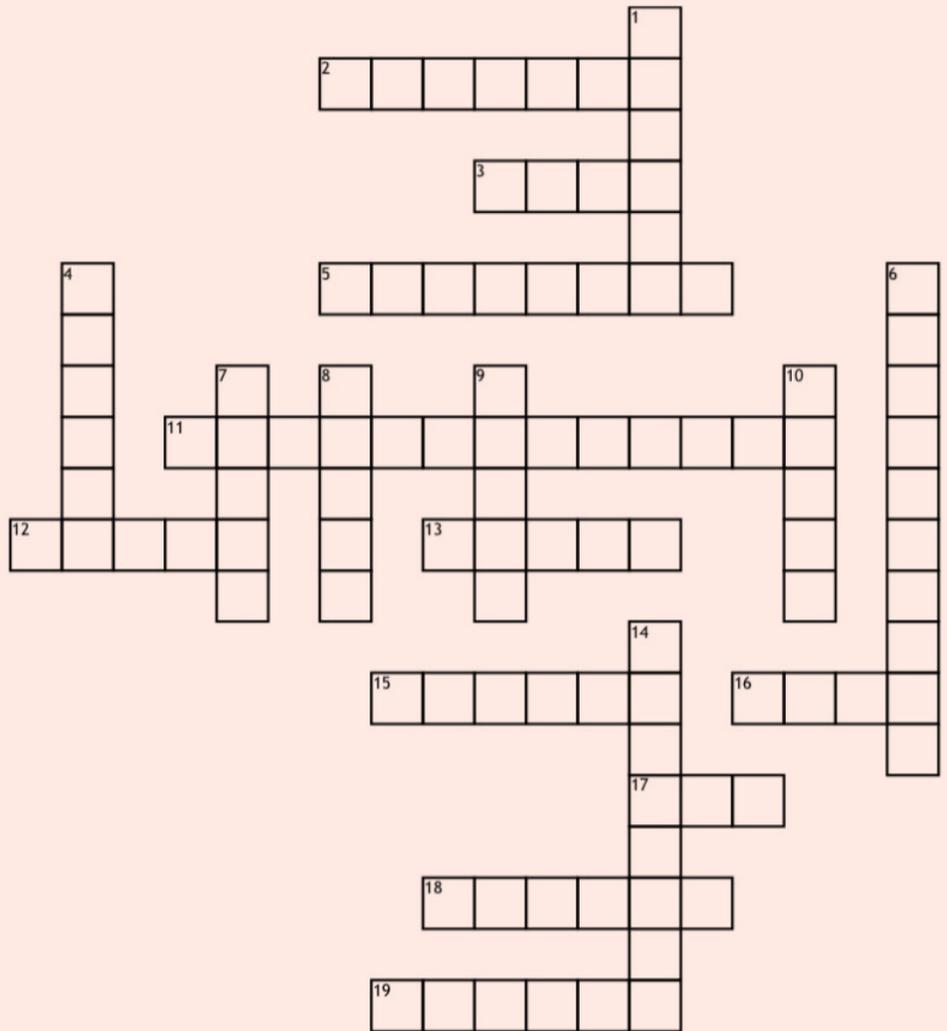
PHILOSOPHIZE

Across

- 2. In Buddhism if you overcome all desire & selfishness you can reach ___.
- 3. The older of the two religions, Hinduism is about ___ thousand years old
- 5. Key beliefs in ___ include the 4 Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path
- 11. The cycle of rebirth important in both religions/philosophies is
- 12. There are consequences for behavior , this is called ___
- 13. Ancient Indian system of dividing society based on family/heredity and job.
- 15. ___ when translated means "enlightened one"
- 16. No killing/causing of pain is a belief for ___Hinduism and Buddhism.
- 17. Less than ___ percent of Indians today consider themselves Buddhists.
- 18. More than 85% of Indians today consider themselves to be _
- 19. Hindus believe in many gods but the main one is _.

Down

- 1. Hindu houses of worship are called _
- 4. King that based his empire on Buddhist principles and spread the philosophy.
- 6. Some call Buddhism a ___ because it does not have any gods
- 7. The main sacred book of the Hindu religion is called the _
- 8. Hinduism and Buddhism were both begun in this country.
- 9. Hinduism was founded by the ___ invaders in ancient India
- 10. 950 million followers of Hinduism primarily in the country of ___
- 14. Buddhism was founded 2500 years ago by Siddhartha ___



Who are we Quoting ?

"When mind is still, then truth gets her chance to be heard in the purity of silence"

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“The power of words is immense. A well chosen word has often sufficed to stop a flying army, to change defeat into victory and to save an empire”

Emile de Girardin

Words have the power to change the world. Holding this idea, we intend to change the world with each form of expression.

With the seventh edition of Pehel, we aim to bring to light, the relevant of ancient and contemporary Indian Philosophy in modern times. In today's time of a Globalized and networked world, we seem to be walking farther from our roots. As the world gets smaller, the past gets fainter. We hope to reiterate the progressive and transcendental ideas that have existed in our culture since time immemorial, yet are fighting to survive the test of time.

This endeavor would not have been possible without the never ending support and guidance of our faculty members. We would also like to thank every member on the team who has ardently worked towards it. We also extend our gratitude to our readers and look forward to their constructive feedback.

Editorial Team