

Astitva, The Department of Philosophy, Mata Sundri College for Women, University of Delhi organized a seminar on the topic "The Mystery Of Self", sponsored by Indian Council of Philosophical Research on the 16th of August 2019 in the Mata Gujri Hall (College Campus).

The day began with the melodious college prayer. Following which felicitation of guests took place in the typical Mata Sundri College for Women flair with potted plants and tokens of appreciation, presented to all the eminent speakers, by the respected teaching staff and union of the philosophy department.

Thereafter, a beautiful rendition of the Nirvana Shatakam which was presented by Dr. Kuldeep Sehgal, Professor of Sanskrit, Mata Sundri College for Women which set the tone for the event.

The event caught momentum with an introduction of the topic by the teacher-in-charge Dr. Lakshmi Vatsa, which unfolded the general understanding of 'The Mystery of Self'. She also gave a brief history of Shankaracharya and his philosophy; her concluding word '..Even now we don't have an exhaustive definition of self' provided a perfect prelude for the discourse to follow. In absentee the honorable principal, Dr. Harpreet Kaur, sent her regards and wished the event to be a success.

The first eminent speaker we had with us was Dr. R.C. Sinha.

Currently the chairman of Indian Council of Philosophical Research; Dr. Sinha provided us with a different take on Shankaracharya's conception of self by introducing Dr. K.C. Bhattacharya's theory -mystery of self and cognitive incarnation- and expanding on it. R.C. Sinha sir, emphasized the need for more creative system builders like K.C. Bhattacharya. He highlighted few key points, namely, comparison to Kant's 'reason' being not adequate for discovery of true self; constructive interpretation of vedantic thought and a need for a transcendent.

The second eminent speaker we had with us was Prof. (Dr.) Shashi Prabha Kumar.

Professor Kumar is the Dean at Shri Shankaracharya Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya. She spoke about self and the mystery surrounding it by presenting Shankaracharya's views. Her keynote address stressed on 'Aatma' being both 'Gyata' and 'Gyeya'. The conclusion she gave was that the mystery of self can be resolved through this knowledge that, that through which we gain knowledge is in fact 'aatma'.

The third eminent speaker we had with us was Dr. B.G. Devarakonda.

Professor Devarakonda is the Head of the Department of Philosophy, University of Delhi. B.G Devarakonda sir possessed three basic questions. What do we mean by Self? What do we mean by Mystery? And what is "The Mystery of Self"? And then he had three modules to address the topic. He said when one talks about self they talk about it in all aspects such as the biological, psychological, social, cultural and most importantly spiritual self. Identity of self is dependent on others, "self is heterogeneity".

Then moving onto mystery he explained it as something "known but unknown". He questioned "Does mystery belong to object or subject?"

The fourth eminent speaker we had with us was Dr. Sushim Dubey.

He is currently serving as the Programme Officer of Indian Council of Philosophical Research. He began by talking about the origin of words which led to coining of the word “self” and how and why we need to know it. He emphasized that knowing the self has to be a proactive and continuous process. This can be achieved through tapasya, which invigorates our “chetna”. He concluded by saying that our Indian traditions like vrata, meditation etc., allow us for faster development of chetna and consequently exploring ourselves.

After the discourse by the speakers, followed a question answer session. Dr. Lakshmi Vatsa, missing none and adding all, extended her vote of thanks to the speakers, the principal, the teachers, the non teaching staff, the participants and the volunteers for making the seminar a huge success. She later urged everyone to stand for National Anthem.

With the call for Lunch, the closure of the event as announced.