

Vision

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Ethics and the Virtues *by Marilyn Marshall*

Recent fraudulent behaviour, both on a global and individual scale, has served to focus attention on the subject of ethics.

Unethical conduct gives rise to concern because many of us still value integrity. We regard honesty and fair play as important, but feel that the opposite is rapidly becoming the norm.

What do we understand ethics to be?

It has been defined as the science of morals; that branch of philosophy which is concerned with human character and conduct. The word "ethical" means that which is conformed to or directed towards the right; virtuous; capable of knowing right and wrong.

The "right", referred to above is something that is straight or direct; that is true. It is a standard or rule of action; that which is equitably or morally just. In the etymology of the word you will also find reference to law.

Ethics are closely related to the virtues. This aspect was highlighted in the course of a lecture on Ethics delivered in August 1978 by Dr James Armstrong, a senior member of the London School and a civil engineer by profession. He said that when asking the question "What ought a man to do?" (in any given situation) it is useful to consider the virtues as defined by Plato: wisdom, justice, temperance, courage, health, strength, beauty and wealth.

He also listed five levels of discrimination from the Vedanta which could be referred to when making a decision: what is good for me, what is good for my family, what is good for my society, what is good for mankind as a whole, and what is good for creation.

Our understanding of these levels governs the quality of what we do and say, the code of ethics to which we conform. In Dr Armstrong's words, we need to look at the quality of our decisions and actions: do they enhance a man's dignity or do they diminish it?

Plato pointed out that the only people who will associate with those who insist on acting unethically are other unethical people.

On the other hand, to quote a modern speaker, "when we say, for instance, that our business associate has real integrity, that is the highest compliment we can pay. It means that we trust him because he acts ethically in all circumstances and at all times." (Peter Dean, Indiana State University teacher and researcher, addressing a seminar on Business Ethics in 1998).

A rule of thumb in business used to be "a man's word is his bond". It's the same in life. Do we keep our word? When we say we will do something, do we carry it through or frequently find an excuse not to?

*"As you simplify your life,
the laws of the universe
will be simpler."*

(Henry David Thoreau)

Of interest in this context is our “character”. It is a “distinctive mark...the sum of mental and moral qualities”. It also means to “furrow, scratch or engrave”. It is probably fair to say that most of us would wish our “distinctive mark” to be an honest one!

In an article published in the “New Zealand Herald” some time ago entitled *It’s goodbye to ‘virtues’ and hello to ‘values’*, Bruce Logan, described as the Director of the New Zealand Education Development Foundation, wrote that the word “virtue” was once in common usage. It not only covered Plato’s list of virtues, but characteristics such as diligence, self-control, patience, hope, even love. He pointed out that these virtues, as we once understood them, came from the Bible and added:

“Today, however, ‘virtue’ has disappeared from our vocabulary to be replaced by ‘values’. Everybody from politicians to teachers are into the values patter.... As a guide to human behaviour ‘virtue’ has an overwhelming advantage over ‘values’. Virtues are rooted in actual behaviour. They can readily be seen in action. You know when they are there and you know when they are not. As long as morality was cast in the language of virtue it had a strong resolute character. Virtue carries with it a strong sense of gravity and authority.

“Values, as we understand the word, do not have to be virtues: they can be beliefs, opinions, attitudes, feelings, habits...prejudices, even idiosyncrasies – whatever any person, group or society happens to value, at any time, for any reason.”

Mr Logan made the point that the effect of values talk is that we get psychobabble and sociospeak but no ethics. “There is no hard-edged language of moral choice and consequences, of moral principle, of moral character; of integrity and responsibility. No heaven to gain or hell to shun.”

This description of the morass of uncertainty on moral and ethical issues in which society finds itself today could hardly be bettered.

Adding a hundred-fold to this confusion is the modern phenomenon called “spin”. Here is an apt

definition of “spin” and its effects:

“Spin is so radical a misuse of language that it eludes proper definition. When we spin a fact, we put the best possible light on it, a light that shows it in the way most advantageous to ourselves. The very word spin is vivid, lively, jaunty; it suggests a sort of game is being played, and, ideally, it is being played expertly. Thus the word itself invites us to lay aside questions of ethics: in a game, one is supposed to play hard and cunningly, not to be concerned with issues of morality. The point of spin is to hide unpleasant realities...”

(‘Language, Self & Business Ethics’ by Raymond N. MacKenzie)

*“Unethical conduct
is always a sign of weakness.
It takes strength to be ethical.”*

(Peter Dean)

But to return to the virtues, which spring from man’s true nature, and which are an essential part of ethics, Plato considered them to be an excellence of the soul. He held that insofar as the soul has several components, there will be many components of its excellence. The excellence of reason is wisdom, of the passions, attributes such as courage, and of the spirit, temperance. Finally, says Plato, justice is that excellence which consists in a harmonious relation of the three parts.

The laws, usages and customs of society need to be upheld if ethics are to be seen in action, and society is to remain healthy and function for the benefit of all. This it will naturally do within the basic structure of the individual, the family, the nation, mankind, and creation as a whole if the virtues are remembered and ethical standards maintained.

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Teacher's Day (Gurupurnima)

"May God be revealed; speech merge in mind; mind merge in speech.

May they bring me the Vedas.

May I ponder over that knowledge day and night, may I never forget it.

Truth shall be on my lips, and truth in my thoughts.

May truth protect me; protect my teacher; protect us both.

May peace and peace and peace be everywhere."

(Invocation to the Aitareya Upanishad)

On 9 June of this year, Teacher's Day, which is an annual event in India, was celebrated for the first time by the School in Auckland.

There is no set date for this event but it is usually celebrated in June or July. Its spirit is one of praise for the Absolute and the Holy Tradition of Teachers. According to the established custom in India, disciples visit their teacher on this day with loving and respectful offerings for the grace received, made entirely of their own volition. Students give a gift with open heart.

The Schools of Philosophy all over the world have been blessed with the connection with this Tradition for over 40 years, through the Shankaracharya of the North. This post, held for most of this time by Shri Shantananda Saraswati, was transferred in 1997 to Shri Vasudevananda Saraswati, the present Shankaracharya.

Teacher's Day was observed here on 9 June as this date best fitted in with a very full Term 2 programme. The morning event was attended by members of the Senior School, who were presented with a rich and varied programme. It commenced with a fluent and beautiful rendition in Sanskrit of verses from the Taittiriya Upanishad by Wolfgang Marshall, head of the School's Sanskrit faculty. These verses contained instruction for the student of Advaita, and the English translation was similarly beautifully read by Isabel Cooke.

Next there was an informative and at times entertaining address by Barrie Preston on the life of the original Shankara. He had done a magnificent job of research through the minefield of conflicting historical accounts of this great

Teacher, and drawn it all together into a concise and interesting lecture.

After morning tea, there was an address by Mark Broadwith, Headmaster of the Ficino School, in which he linked the principles of what is taught at Ficino with the Advaita Tradition, again in an erudite and at times amusing way.

The Leader of the School in Auckland, Mr John Russell, then spoke briefly of the Jyotirnidhi Nyasa Trust, a registered charity established at Allahabad in India several years ago, and referred to the continuing opportunity we all have to make donations to the Trust through the School's Treasurer.

Finally, Mr Russell spoke of all the Teachers who had influenced and guided us, directly and indirectly, since the 1950s when the School in London formally went public.

As a fitting end to the morning celebrations, Delwyn Wilson presented some delicate pink roses from the garden as a symbol of the gift to the Teacher. The gathering then dispersed enriched, and with a sense of gratitude for being able to partake of such an event.

Jyotirnidhi Nyasa Trust

The object of this Trust is to advance education in Vedic Philosophy and the Sanskrit language in India and elsewhere, including the relief of poverty and sickness among the followers of this philosophy, and students of the Sanskrit language, as the trustees see fit.

Daytime Philosophy

The popularity of the Tuesday morning philosophy groups at Esplanade Road has continued this term, even being attended by a “seeing eye” dog under training, and a three month old baby.

The baby is a quiet, well behaved participant of each Part 3 session. The dog, however, attended only one Part 1 philosophy class. Because of a slight lapse in otherwise exemplary conduct, it was decided that this faithful servant should wait outside the Villa until the end of the morning.

The number of students attending these Philosophy 1, 2 and 3 groups now totals about 35. The groups are lively and there is a great willingness to put into practice various exercises. Many students have remarked on how this has given them a fresh outlook on life. It has been observed how attachments and ideas about life prevent people from being truly themselves.

The exercise has been useful also in the sense that students who are parents with children at Ficino School, had been waiting for daytime classes in Philosophy for some years. However, there is an interchange between the daytime and evening Philosophy 1 groups, with a small number of students attending one or other from week to week.

Morning tea facilities have been stretched to accommodate the three groups, but even so there is room for a good social mix at this time.

It is intended that daytime lectures continue to be offered to first year groups. The classes commence at 9.30 am, finishing at 11.45.



The Villa at 27 Esplanade Road

Website News

The school's website has recently been mildly revised, as while some things never change, the Internet never stays the same.

We have added a "News" page, which currently reports on the Open Day in March, and an extension to Thought of the Day - Thought of the Week.

Thought of the Day has remained popular, with over 400 current subscribers around the world receiving a daily email, while Thought of the Week received 100 subscriptions in its first week.

The website allows the School to provide a useful service to a greater community and in addition to hosting contact and term details for the other New Zealand Schools, we are increasingly receiving enquiries from more remote places such as Australia and the South Island. Interest in the Truth sprouts in the most interesting places!

Visitors to the site have come from even further afield, including Argentina, Estonia and Belgium within the last few months.

The Lawn

The question was asked:

How many miles has the ‘ride on’ motor mower done since March 1989 at the School’s property at 268 West Tamaki Road?

Based on an average speed of approximately 8 m.p.h. and it taking three hours per cut, then:

One cutting 3 hrs x approx. 8 mph
= 24 miles

Cut on average 24 times a year (24 x 24)
= 576 miles

13.5 years of cutting: 576 miles x 13.5
= 7776 miles

Like previous schools and academies before it, the School of Philosophy exists to help raise the level of consciousness in the community.

It is the purpose of this article to suggest that a study of History is extremely valuable as an adjunct to spiritual work in the preparation of 'Renaissance Man'. The term 'Renaissance Man' refers to those people today who are members of such organisations embarking upon the work of allowing Truth to manifest in their lives.

Intellectual Training

In the analysis of primary and secondary sources (primary: extant material; secondary: second-hand opinions) the student of history must learn to distinguish fact from opinion. This enables him to learn a little about detachment because it encourages an awareness of the difference between the subjective and the objective world. No historical thesis will stand today without being based on a substratum of hard evidence. Just like a good detective, the historian must try to suspend personal predilection and prejudice in favour of objectivity. He must evaluate evidence, extrapolate on the basis of that evidence, make connections between unrelated events and finally construct a reasoned argument. Certainly there are good and bad historians just as there are good and bad detectives. The process may be botched. That is not the point. The important thing is the habit of mind that has been engendered. These words from 'Career View' sum it up very nicely:

"History is an intellectual discipline which requires the rigour of a scientist, the persistence of a detective, and the imagination of a novelist."

(*'Career View'*, Issue No.18, May 2001)

Just like the experienced driver who no longer has to ponder what to do in response to the brake light ahead, the trained mind reacts swiftly. Any top sports team will have carefully drilled movements and game plans to follow which are just as automatic. These do not necessarily destroy initiative and spontaneity. The aim is to harmonise training and natural talent for the benefit of both. So too with the historian. Intuition and insight work hand in hand with the logical process. Thus, mental acuity is the first major benefit of historical study.

On a more utilitarian level, History graduates

are now a saleable commodity. It used to be asked what one could do with a History degree apart from teaching. No longer. People with History degrees are now in demand on the job market. Managers with the skills that History teaches are sought after. It seems that few graduates from many other disciplines are able to synthesise material and write coherent reports, or even plan long-term strategies on the basis of current trends. History graduates have these skills. Benefit number two: Renaissance Man won't be short of a day job!

Sustenance and inspiration.

History provides us with sustenance and inspiration. We need our heroes and examples from the past. Who can fail to be stirred and lifted by words like these: *"...we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender"*. (Churchill) Who can fail to be inspired by the courage of a Socrates in choosing to die for a principle rather than save his own skin by escaping.

There are countless examples of self-sacrifice and courage in the face of adversity in the pages of the past to lift the spirits. Alexander the Great fought almost every battle against overwhelming odds and never lost one. History is full of great names that remind us that the individual is powerful, not powerless.

The Lessons of History

"Study the past if you would divine the future"
(Confucius)

Without some knowledge of where we have come from in an historical sense, we are lost in a vacuum with no before or after. This strips us of identity and sense of purpose. As George Orwell so aptly illustrated in his novel "1984", the quickest way to enslave a people is to take away their knowledge of the past. Without the measuring stick of the past, we have no way of assessing the present. Dictators down through the centuries have been well aware of this. Both Hitler and Stalin attempted to erase the public memory and invent a history more congenial to their dark purposes. In ignorance of history we become mere pawns.

Not that it is always possible to avoid the pitfalls of past ages. There will always be wild cards thrown in, such as natural disasters, to confuse us.

Sunday School

by Mathew Roscoe

Can a five year old draw God and study Plato? You bet! Is a screwed-up piece of paper hidden in a matchbox a most beautiful thing? Yes, if it reveals a quote from Emerson that changes the way a young lady sees the world.

Sunday School, which is held each week at 27 Esplanade Road, provides a wonderful set of challenges. Moving from rest to rest, the children are provided with a wide variety of material and activities so that they might learn to see the movements in the mind, release them and find peace, contentment and efficiency through practising pausing in stillness and, if chosen, meditation.

The practical aspect of the work is concentrated on with an extensive P.T. period each week; plenty of in-class activities to focus the attention, and, of course, the field trips to the Kauaeranga Valley.



S1 Girls with Jeremy Barrow during PT

Children are accepted from 5 to 13 years of age and over that period frequently develop lasting friendships with their peers (and sometimes even their tutors!). A general sense of bonhomie prevails, as it has for many years. The effect of this good company is profound and encompasses the tutors as role models. We are increasingly fortunate in being able to draw on students who



Headmaster Mathew Roscoe, Suzanne Holloway with P1 class

have been pupils in Sunday Schools tutors and their ability to stand testament to the process is invaluable.

Many years ago, when my own children began attending Sunday School, I was bemused because while I never really knew "what went on in there", there was no denying the state of all the children as they streamed out at midday. It was like a Norman Rockwell painting come to life. Goodness, cleanness and simplicity were abundant.

There have been a number of recent staffing changes: Robert Woods stood down as headmaster at the end of 2001 and Teresa Hull and Sue Andreassen at the end of Term 1 this year. We thank them for their unstinting devotion and service over many years. Fortunately, this year we have been able to welcome Amber Brady, Tony Clarke and Jeremy Barrow to the Sunday School staff.

These days, playing the part of Headmaster; I have, perhaps, begun to realise that when the student and the tutor truly meet, with the discourse joining them, then "what went on in there", whatever the subject, was pure, perfect and appropriate. It is a privilege to witness the frequency with which this happens.

For enquiries, please phone Mathew Roscoe
(535-7252 evgs)

The Early Years

It felt slightly strange, taking my daughter into her first day at Sunday School. The last time I had been there, I had been the child.

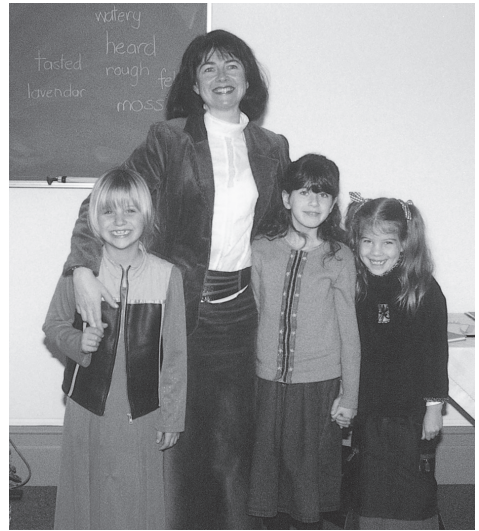
In the early 1970's the Sunday School, with Mr. David Farrelly as headmaster, was held at a house owned by the School in Grafton Road. The day ran from 8.00 a.m. until 4.00 p.m. then. My oldest sister drove me into town, and on the way we collected some other friends, bleary-eyed and yawning while most of Auckland slept on. Although I never admitted it to my friends (as it wasn't always a shared opinion!) I loved going to Sunday School.

The building itself was beautiful, clean and peaceful. The adults who greeted us were welcoming and friendly but not in an overpowering, noisy way. Mr. Farrelly began the day with an assembly, introducing us to the Teaching through pieces from the Bible, Upanishads and other scripture. His patience was considerable, for we became extremely skilful at providing "pat" answers in order to bring the meeting to a close as soon as possible! Sitting still and listening for any longer than ten minutes at age nine is excruciating, especially if you are too shy to admit you don't know what the tutor is talking about.

There was also the sport of seeing how many times you and your friends could slip a particular word into an answer or comment, for example, "daffodil" or 'dog'. Or how far you could get off the topic in question before the tutor realized we were all totally lost to the original point.

Yet somehow the perseverance of our tutors paid off because we started to look and listen. Our ears began to prick up at our day schools when Shakespeare or Pythagoras or Plato were mentioned. Suddenly God, or Govinda, was incredibly interesting above anything else.

The daily programme included physical exercise, games and a wide range of activities. I learnt to spin on a spinning wheel and to grow herbs. Mr. Carter gave us recorder lessons. Mrs.



Frances and P2 Girls

Crompton showed us how to write stories and poems. Mrs. Bennett and Mrs. Daniels shared their knowledge of drawing, painting, weaving, calligraphy and Sanskrit. Countless good souls provided delicious morning teas and lunches. These people lovingly opened up a world of possibilities for us.

The warmth and patience we received was abundant, despite the times we would hide the doorstep inside the piano to prevent a singing lesson, or climb on the garage roof to sit, undiscovered, gleefully helping ourselves to the neighbour's grapes, or conspiring between us to all eat one kind of food at lunchtime in a "how-high-can-you-stack-your-feijoa-skin" contest.

Closing my eyes, I can still hear the explosive crunch of Peter Crompton's celery, auspiciously chosen milliseconds before the end of lunch, feel the gentle warmth of Mrs. Hooton's hands as she squeezed some lavender into mine, helping me to connect with touch and scent, and find that indefinable, overflowing happiness as we skipped out of the gates of 128 Grafton Road to return home.

How very grateful I am, now, to have the opportunity to attempt to pass on in the Sunday School the extraordinary love and care that I received.

The Value of History

by Tessa Stephens

History: "The discipline that studies the chronological record of events based on a critical examination of source material and usually presenting an explanation of their causes."

(Encyclopaedia Britannica)

Nonetheless, it might still be sensible to walk carrying our historical compasses, noting the pendulum swings and the processes involved in the continuum of linear time.

Historical Process

The study of History forces one to look at the nature of linear time and the waxing and waning of civilisations. Certain features emerge.

History never repeats itself in exactly the same way, but it always repeats itself in similar ways! This is because everything in creation must obey the process of birth, growth and decay. Nothing in the phenomenal world lasts forever. There will always be turning points where one world gives way to another. Sometimes these transitions are smooth and sometimes they are very violent. Whichever it happens to be, there is one thing certain: the seeds of the future lie dormant in the present.

A good illustration of some of these points is the 1920s period. This was the decade following the First World War. Many of the changes which are characteristic of the '20s' had been creeping up for some time, but were catapulted onto the 20th Century stage by the cataclysmic effects of the war. Old empires were swept away along with ancient traditions and values. The sharp decline in church attendance in post-war Europe and the USA, and the rapid growth in the divorce rate, coupled with the new freedoms for women, all illustrate the loss of many moral and social sanctions that had been the glue of societies for hundreds of years. The point to emerge here is that when a period has run its course, sudden or revolutionary events make for a more radical change of direction.

The USA then became the trend-setter in modern urban living for most of the 20th century. From nuclear power to fast food and Hollywood, American fads and fashions influenced the habits and the thinking of most of the Western World. In addition, much of the economic wealth of today, not to mention the materialistic attitudes, is built

on processes such as mass-production, and techniques, such as modern advertising, that were given considerable impetus in the business ethic of 1920s USA. "Brains", declared President Coolidge, "are wealth, and wealth is the chief end of man."

Put simply, the shock of the war caused people to lose faith in the old religious and moral certainties. Rampant materialism replaced them. What seeds are lying dormant for the next age?

Conclusion

In 1921, W.B. Yeats, living in the midst of these dislocated times, wrote these prophetic words:

"Turning and turning in the widening gyre

The falcon cannot hear the falconer;

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,

The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere

The ceremony of innocence is drowned;

The best lack all conviction, while the worst

Are full of passionate intensity."

(Michael Robartes and the Dancer, 1921)

Today, perhaps we would do well to have the best filled with a bit more passionate intensity. Good people seem to have lost the initiative, perhaps by standing back and keeping quiet.

Renaissance Man needs to prepare himself. In order to travel usefully into the future, the flexibility and spontaneity of a trained intellect with a knowledge of History can only help. Actions are more likely to be appropriate if informed with understanding and appreciation of historical processes. To understand the dangers inherent in certain situations won't necessarily mean that you can avoid them entirely, but it may mean that you can navigate a safer passage through them and guide others to safe harbour.

Tessa has a Masters degree in History and has taught it for over 30 years at secondary level.

Mothers' Group

There is a Mothers' Group in the School which generally meets once a fortnight in an open forum to consider the important issue of the raising of children.

It is a celebration and a recognition of the mother at home, as well as the exploration of the role of parents and the function of the family and its wider influence in the community.

There is no set formula when it comes to raising children, but we are blessed in having the words of His Holiness, Shri Shantananda Saraswati, as a very clear guide to a loving and disciplined approach.

Parenthood is challenging and for the most part it is the mother who takes on the bulk of the care and nurture of the young child. Mothers are naturally intuitive and sensitive to the needs of

their children, but the challenge comes in knowing how best to implement love and discipline in a balanced way.

Children are full of love and play and it is important not to structure this too soon, but to use the play constructively. As His Holiness says, a key factor in the raising of children is to become a child: open, generous and loving. How to do this and how best to serve the family comprise the bulk of discussions in the Mothers' Group.

In addition, there are always practical questions from our own experience to be considered and resolved, in the light of philosophical principles as put into practice in daily life.

Enquiries about the group from mothers and grandmothers in the School who are meditating may be made to Nicolette Farrelly (Ph: 834-5408).

If I had my child to raise over again

I'd build self-esteem first and the house later.

I'd finger-paint more and point the finger less.

I would do less correcting and more connecting.

I'd take my eyes off my watch and watch more with my eyes.

I would care to know less and know to care more.

I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.

I'd stop playing serious and seriously play.

I would run through more fields and gaze at more stars.

I'd do more hugging and less tugging.

I'd see oak trees in the acorns more often.

I'd talk less about the love of power and more about the power of love.

The Ficino School Ball

This year the Ficino School Ball is being held to raise funds for sports equipment and outdoor pursuits.

The school is in need of a great deal of sporting equipment and is keen to invest in outdoor education. Equipment needed includes floor mats for the new hall, gym equipment, basket ball towers, goal nets, tents and cookers.

The Ball is a great way of supporting this aspect of the school, and enjoying yourself at the same time.

There will be a new band – the Nairobi Trio. It is one of New Zealand's top entertainment groups. They play everything from easy listening to contemporary pop and jazz to rock 'n roll.

Also there will be a "top notch" speaker, an auction, prizes and good food, wine and company.

The ticket price has increased this year, to \$95 a head, but includes a three course fully served meal, with four bottles of wine supplied to each table (or orange juice for those who prefer), and is still good value.

Aromatherapy

by Frances Preston

What is aromatherapy? Ask the average person and they will tell you it has to do with “nice smells, or something like that”. It is however, simply the use of essential oils to balance body, mind and spirit, to bring the body into the right place to heal itself.

How is this done? After a detailed consultation, essential oils are selectively chosen to suit your specific constitution, harmonized and blended with a base oil and massaged into your whole body. The belief is, that if you “treat” the largest organ (the skin) then it will boost the immune system allowing one to heal faster, prevent illness and allow for a better lifestyle.

On the physical level this is how it works, allowing oneself to be touched and getting in touch is part of healing itself...

The oils work in a fuller and deeper sense on a mental level. By stilling the nervous system, they allow space for the mind to be still, for the individual to recollect ones self, and to move from this space, rejuvenated and awake.

In the spiritual realm, across all the great traditions, oils represent the blessings of God. They

are used as an impartation of grace in the ordination of Catholic and Buddhist Priests, in Baptism, confirmation, Confucian healing, Vedic funerary rites, in the consecration of churches and ritual objects in all cultures, and in the coronation of kings and queens.

In the Veda it was customary, during worship to have fragrant fires burning at the four cardinal points. It is also noted that Hinduism as a culture produced and used many of the essential oils that we use today like sandalwood, rose, jasmine, tumeric, ginger, pine, cypress, camphor and more..... These traditions teach that each person is a unique being, composed of body, mind and soul,

both loved by God and destined to rise to eternal life.

The body and the soul exist together in the spiritual life and in the physical life. Worship and prayer, like every aspect of life, is a bodily and spiritual experience.

We can therefore say

that worship involves all of the five senses.

When these senses are fortified, and the individual rested, strong and upright, he is able to move into the world with a clear and present awareness, allowing him to fully take his part in the play.

“There is a spirit which is mind and life, light and truth, and vast spaces. He contains all works and desires and all perfumes and all tastes. He enfolds the whole Universe, and in silence is loving to all.”

Chandogya Upanishad

*For on Myself this universe is strung,
Like jewels, O sun of Kunti, on a thread.
I am, of limpid water, the sweet taste;
I am the radiance of Moon and Sun,
OM in all Vedas, the essential sound
Of space, and the humanity in men;
Pure scent in earth, and brilliant light of fire,
The life of every being and the zeal
Of those who undertake austerity.*

Bhagavad-Gita, Ch. 7

from a new verse translation by Brian Hodgkinson

Why Study Sanskrit?

Recently, when asked to briefly formulate what the study of Sanskrit meant to them, the members of the Saturday morning senior Sanskrit class put pen to paper to good effect.

Several offerings included comments such as “study of Sanskrit is a wonderful practice for concentration”, “it gives one an appreciation of the structure of languages in general, and a delight in one’s own language in particular”, and “it opens the mind and expands the mental view, and in the process does away with the smallness of habitual thinking.”

One student wrote the following:

“Sanskrit straightens and brightens the mind. It gives one a heightened sense of the order and beauty of true language. It also reveals the meaning of the scriptures to a greater depth and helps one appreciate the various translations and why that translator chose that form of expression. Ultimately, it connects one with the underlying consciousness and intelligence of that Absolute Being, one’s own Self.”

Another wrote that the study created the opportunity to explore the substance of the words of scripture, rather than just their superficial impression. The precision of the Sanskrit language was also appreciated by several: “It



Saturday morning Sanskrit group

is impossible to let the mind wander if one is whole-hearted in the study”, and “...(it) seems to take you behind the scenes of the language process.”

The subtlety and poetry of the Sanskrit language was remarked upon, and how it provided scope for praise of the Truth in everything. “I enjoy studying Sanskrit because of the beauty of many of its concepts” one student wrote.

The essence of the study is probably summed up by the following:

“At one level the study of Sanskrit shows the mechanics not only of Sanskrit, but of all languages. At another level, however, it offers stillness to the mind, order and peace to the Being, and a glimpse of the Natural Order of things.”

New Books

“Globalisation For the Common Good”

by Kamran Mofid, Pub. Shephard-Walwyn. Priced at \$43.00 (p/b)

A useful book which contends that, with different values, it is possible for everyone to have a fair share of the benefits of globalisation. The author sets out an alternative economic model to those currently in vogue, with a firm theological, spiritual and ethical foundation. Kamran Mofid is a professional economist.

The Bhagavad-Gita – a new verse translation

by Brian Hodgkinson,

a member of the London School.

This translation, published by the author, will appeal to many – even those who are not normally attracted to verse. The book is well presented and the language chosen has clarity and beauty. Also included are some useful notes on the text, explaining Sanskrit and other names and terms.

Philosophy

An introductory course of twelve weekly lectures

BEGINNING IN SEPTEMBER

The course is offered for the interest and enjoyment of thoughtful men and women who seek an understanding of the nature of human existence and the world in which we live.

The lectures show how great philosophic ideas of past and present, put into practice, lead to clear thought, reduction of stress, and effective action in work, study and every aspect of daily life

The course, which includes the opportunity for discussion, is given on Tuesday and Thursday (7.45 to 10pm) and Tuesday morning (9.30 to 11.45am) and you may vary your day of attendance.

The fee for this course is \$120 for adults, \$60 for non-earning students. Enrol now by phone, or in person from 30 minutes prior to your first attendance, or visit our website www.philosophy.school.nz

Course commences

Auckland. 9 and 11 September 2003
27 Esplanade Road, Mt Eden.

For Enquiries

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Hamilton 07-856-7174

School of Philosophy (Auckland) Inc

A registered charitable organisation. Established 1960

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Auckland School Cultural Groups

Wednesday	Vedic Chants	9.00 – 10.00am	Lilian Beanland	521-5054
	Plato Group	10.00 – 11.30am	“	“
Friday	Art Group	6.30 – 10.00pm	Peter Tibbits	837 3795
Saturday	Vedic Dance	8.00 – 9.15am	Rosemary Auld	412-8782
	Art Group 2	1.00 – 3.00pm	Peter Tibbits	837 3795
	Renaissance Studies	1.00 – 2.30pm	Mary Tibbits	837 3795
Sunday	Choir	7.00 – 9.30pm	Beverley Wilson	817-6200

New members to these groups are welcome! For enquiries, please phone the group tutors listed

We welcome contributions to this newsletter.

For enquiries contact

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