

Celebration of Indian Philosophers Day
ICPR Sponsored One Day National
level Seminar

On
Values of Life: Special Reference to Advaita Vedanta
Perspective



on

19.03.2019

Jointly Organized by

The Department of Philosophy

And

Philosophy Alumni Association (PAA)

Mahishadal Girls' College

Purba Medinipur

::

West Bengal

Venue: Vivekananda Assembly Hall

INVITATION

Dear Sir/Madam

We have the honour and privilege to inform you that the Department of Philosophy of our college is going to organize a ICPR sponsored State Level Seminar on "Value of Life: Special Reference to Advaita Vedanta Perspective" on 19 March, 2019 in our college.

We cordially invite you to attend and grace the seminar and confirm your participation as Resource Person/ Speaker/ Paper presenter/ Participant within 18th March, 2019 positively.

It is strongly believed that the seminar will be enriched by your presence.

Thanking You.

Yours faithfully

Bharat Malakar
Head
Department of Philosophy
Mahishadal Girls' College

Dr. Utpal Kumar Utthasani
Principal & Secretary
Mahishadal Girls' College

Theme of the Seminar:

Advaita Vedanta originally known as **Puruṣavāda**, is a [school](#) of [Hindu philosophy](#) and [religious practice](#), and one of the classic Indian paths to spiritual realization. The term *Advaita* refers to its idea that the soul (true Self, [Atman](#)) is the same as the highest metaphysical Reality ([Brahman](#)). The followers of this school are known as *Advaita Vedantins*, or just *Advaitins* and they seek [spiritual liberation](#) through acquiring [vidyā](#) (knowledge) of one's true identity as *Atman*, and the identity of *Atman* and *Brahman*.

Advaita Vedanta traces its roots in the oldest [Upanishads](#). It relies on three textual sources called the [Prasthanatrayi](#). It gives "a unifying interpretation of the whole body of Upanishads", the [Brahma Sutras](#), and the [Bhagavad Gita](#). Advaita Vedanta is the oldest extant sub-school of [Vedanta](#), which is one of the six [orthodox](#) (*āstika*) Hindu philosophies (*darśana*). Although its roots trace back to the 1st millennium BCE, the most prominent exponent of the Advaita Vedanta is considered by the tradition to be 8th century scholar [Adi Shankara](#).

Advaita Vedanta emphasizes [Jivanmukti](#), the idea that [moksha](#) (freedom, liberation) is achievable in this life in contrast to Indian philosophies that emphasize *videhamukti*, or *moksha* after death. The school uses concepts such as Brahman, Atman, [Maya](#), [Avidya](#), [meditation](#) and others that are found in major Indian religious traditions, but interprets them in its own way for its theories of moksha. Advaita Vedanta is one of the most studied and most influential schools of classical Indian thought. Many scholars describe it as a form of [monism](#), others describe the *Advaita* philosophy as [non-dualistic](#).

Advaita influenced and was influenced by various traditions and texts of Hindu philosophies such as [Samkhya](#), [Yoga](#), [Nyaya](#), other sub-schools of Vedanta, [Vaishnavism](#), [Shaivism](#), the [Puranas](#), the [Agamas](#), other sub-schools of Vedanta, as well as social movements such as the [Bhakti movement](#). Beyond Hinduism, Advaita Vedanta interacted and developed with the other traditions of India such as [Jainism](#) and [Buddhism](#). Advaita Vedanta texts espouse a spectrum of views from idealism, including illusionism, to realist or nearly realist positions expressed in the early works of Shankara. In modern times, its views appear in various [Neo-Vedanta](#) movements. It has been termed as the paradigmatic example of Hindu spirituality.

Some claim that Advaita turns its back on all theoretical and practical considerations of morality and, if not unethical, is at least 'a-ethical' in character. However, Ethics *does* have a firm place in this philosophy. Its ideology is permeated with ethics and value questions enter into every metaphysical and epistemological analysis, and it considers "an independent, separate treatment of ethics is unnecessary". According to Advaita Vedanta, states Deutsch, there cannot be "any absolute moral laws, principles or duties", instead in its axiological view Atman is "beyond good and evil", and all values result from self-knowledge of the reality of "distinctionless Oneness" of one's real self, every other being and all manifestations of Brahman.

Advaitin ethics includes lack of craving, lack of dual distinctions between one's own soul and another being's, good and just [Karma](#).

The values and ethics in Advaita Vedanta emanate from what it views as inherent in the state of liberating self-knowledge. The self is the self of all, the knower of self sees the self in all beings and all beings in the self." Such knowledge and understanding of the indivisibility of one's and other's Atman, Advaitins believe leads to "a deeper identity and affinity with all". It does not alienate or separate an Advaitin from his or her community rather awakens "the truth of life's unity and interrelatedness".

Adi Shankara, a leading proponent of Advaita, in verse 1.25 to 1.26 of his *Upadeśasāhasrī*, asserts that the Self-knowledge is understood and realized when one's mind is purified by the observation of [Yamas](#) (ethical precepts) such as [Ahimsa](#) (non-violence, abstinence from injuring others in body, mind and thoughts), [Satya](#) (truth, abstinence from falsehood), [Asteya](#) (abstinence from theft), [Aparigraha](#) (abstinence from possessiveness and craving) and a simple life of meditation and reflection. Rituals and rites can help focus and prepare the mind for the journey to Self-knowledge, however, Shankara discourages ritual worship and oblations to [Deva](#) (God), because that assumes the Self within is different than Brahman. The "doctrine of difference" is wrong, asserts Shankara, because, "he who knows the Brahman is one and he is another, does not know Brahman".

Elsewhere, in verses 1.26-1.28, the Advaita text Upadesasahasri states the ethical premise of equality of all beings. Any *Bheda* (discrimination), states Shankara, based on class or caste or parentage is a mark of inner error and lack of liberating knowledge. This text states that the fully liberated person understands and practices the ethics of non-difference.

One, who is eager to realize this highest truth spoken of in the Sruti, should rise above the fivefold form of desire: for a son, for wealth, for this world and the next, and are the outcome of a false reference to the Self of Varna (castes, colors, classes) and orders of life. These references are contradictory to right knowledge, and reasons are given by the Srutis regarding the prohibition of the acceptance of difference. For when the knowledge that the one non-dual Atman (Self) is beyond phenomenal existence is generated by the scriptures and reasoning, there cannot exist a knowledge side by side that is contradictory or contrary to it.

Aims/Objectives

The seminar is undertaken to fulfill following manifold objectives.

Advaita, like other schools, accepts Puruṣārtha - the four goals of human life as natural and proper:

- Dharma: the right way to life, the "duties and obligations of the individual toward himself and the society as well as those of the society toward the individual";
- Artha: the means to support and sustain one's life;
- Kāma: pleasure and enjoyment;
- Mokṣa: liberation, release

Classical Advaita Vedanta emphasises the path of Jnana Yoga, a progression of study and training to attain moksha. It consists of fourfold qualities, or behavioral qualifications (*Samanyasa, Sampattis, sādhana-catustaya*):

- *Nityānitya vastu viveka* — The ability (viveka) to correctly discriminate between the real and eternal (*nitya*) and the substance that is apparently real, aging, changing and transitory (*anitya Ihāmutrārtha phala bhoga virāga* — The renunciation (*virāga*) of petty desires that distract the mind (*artha phala bhoga*), willing to give up everything that is an obstacle to the pursuit of truth and self-knowledge
- *Śamādi ṣatka sampatti* — the sixfold virtues or qualities,
 - *Śama* (mental tranquility, ability to focus the mind)
 - *Dama* (self-restraint, the virtue of temperance)
 - *Uparati* (dispassion, ability to be quiet and disassociated from everything; "discontinuation of religious ceremonies")
 - *Titikṣa* (endurance, perseverance, ability to be patient during demanding circumstances).
 - *Śraddhā* (the faith in teacher and Sruti texts).
 - *Samādhāna* (attention, intentness of mind).
- *Mumukṣutva* — A positive longing for freedom and wisdom, driven to the quest of knowledge and understanding
- Correct knowledge, which destroys *avidya*, psychological and perceptual errors related to Atman and Brahman, is obtained in *jnanayoga* through three stages of practice, *sravana* (hearing), *manana* (thinking) and *nididhyasana* (meditation). This three-step methodology is rooted in the teachings of chapter 4 of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*.
- *Sravana*, listening to the teachings of the sages on the Upanishads and Advaita Vedanta, studying the Vedantic texts, such as the Brahma Sutras, and discussions with the guru (teacher, counsellor);
- *Manana*, refers to thinking on these discussions and contemplating over the various ideas based on *svadhyaya* and *sravana*. It is the stage of reflection on the teachings
- *Nididhyāsana*, the stage of meditation and introspection. This stage of practice aims at realization and consequent conviction of the truths, non-duality and a state where there is a fusion of thought and action, knowing and being

So we firmly believe that the proposed workshop may indicate a new way towards the progress and development of our society.

About the College: Established in 1969 our college is the first women's college in the district. Mahishadal is mainly famous for Mahishadal Raj Estate and its Rathajatra. The grandeur of Rathajatra of Mahishadal is next only to 'Mahesh' of Srirampur 9Hoogly).

Besides, many Historical, especially, it became an important part of Indian Freedom struggle.

About the Department: The Department of Philosophy was established on 08.01.1969 which is now running in its 50 years. Five faculty members, one hundred honours and six hundred general students enrich our department. We organize special coaching classes, remedial coaching, career and mental counseling for the overall development of the students. We have enriched our departmental library for help the poor and needy students. We also try to motivate the students through different innovative programmes like National, State level, College level and student seminar, workshops, periodical lecture, departmental tours, departmental wall magazine, research publication etc. Department also have organize different social activity like Swachha Bharat, Nirmal Bangla, Thalesemia detection camp etc. Though we have many hurdles and limitation on our way, we try and fulfill our goals till we succeed.

Access to the Venue: The college is situated at Rangibasan by the side of Mahishadal Geonkhali link road, near Satis Samanta Halt Railway Station one km away from Mahishadal Cinema Morh. Participants can reach Mahishadal Cinema More on Mecheda - Haldia road by any bus bound for Mecheda, Tamruk, Nandakumar from Mecheda. From Mahishadal Cinema Morh bound rickshaw or Geonkhali bus can be availed of to reach the college.

Alternatively, one can reach by Howrah-Haldia train from Howrah station to Satis Samanta Halt station, then one minute from station to college by walk.

Invite Paper & Submission of Abstract:

Interested Participants are inviting their Article & Unpublished bilingual Research paper with abstract, (not more than 350 words) by 16.03.2019 and the full paper by 19.03.2019 (both Hard Copy and Soft Copy). Seminar proceedings will be published shortly.

Registration: Faculty/ Research Fellow : Rs. 500/- ;
Student(other than college): Rs. 50/-

All Communication:

1. Netai Tudu, Assistant Professor and Convener of the seminar.
Contact Number: 9735364922/ 8617360472 Mail: netaitudu@gmail.com
2. Avijit Bachhar, Assistant Professor and Joint Convener of the seminar
M: 9051869695 ; Email: avijitbachher007@gmail.com

TENTATIVE PROGRAMM
Technical Session

Registration : from 9 a.m. -10. a.m.

Guest of Honour by flower

Lightening the Lamp

Opening Song

Inaugural Address: from 10 a.m. -10.45 a.m. by **Swami Mahatapanandaji Maharaj** ,
Ramakrishna Order, Ramakrishna Math o Mission, Tamluk, Purba Medinipur,
W.B

Welcome Address: from 10.45 a.m. – 11.00 a.m. by **Dr. Utpal Kumar Utthasani**,
Principal, Mahishadal Girls' Colleg.

Tea Break

1-st Academic Session (11.05. – 12.00 p.m.)

Chairperson: Dr. Jhadeswar Ghose, Professor, Department of Philosophy, Gourbanga University, Malda, West Bengal, India.

Speaker: Dr. Bhupendra Chandra Das, Professor, Dept. of Philosophy and the Life-world, Vidyasagar University, West Bengal, India.

Tea Break

2-nd Academic Session (12.05 p.m. – 2.05 p.m.)

Chairperson: Prof. Bhupendra Chandra Das, Professor, Dept. of Philosophy and the life world, Vidyasagar University, West Bengal, India.

Speaker : 1) Dr. Jhadeswar Ghose, Professor, Department of Philosophy, Gourbanga University, Malda, West Bengal, India.

2) Dr. Sovan Chakraborty, Assistant Professor, Dept. of English, Patna Science College, Patna, Bihar.

Lunch (2.05 p.m. -3.30 p.m.)

Chairperson: Dr. Jhadeswar Ghose, Professor, Department of Philosophy, Gourbanga University, Malda, West Bengal, India.

Paper Presentation and Group Discussion by the Faculties, Teachers and Research Scholars.

Vote of Thanks: **Sri Netai Tudu**, Convener & Assistant Professor, Dept. of Philosophy, Mahishadal Girls' College, W.B.