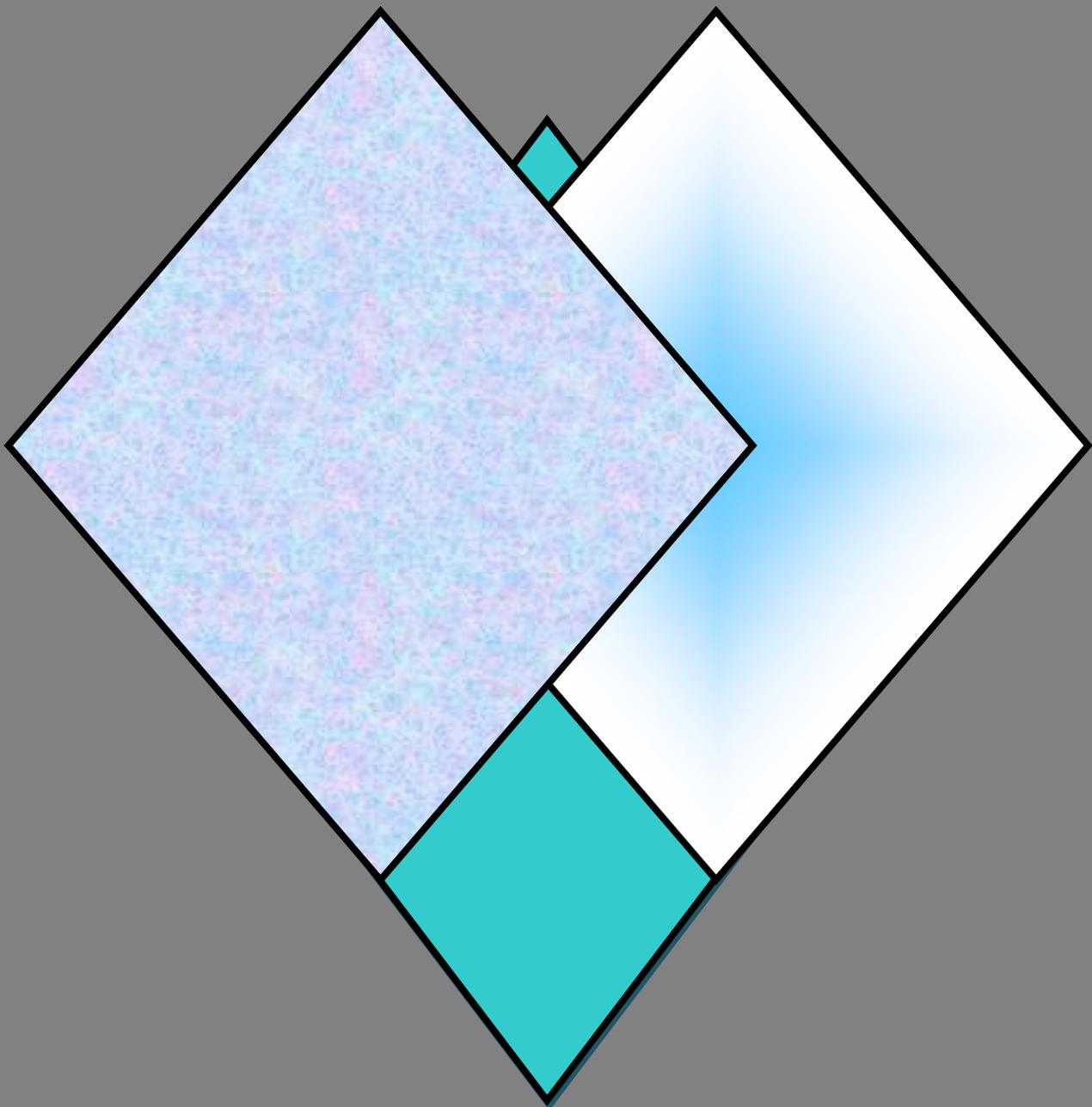


# REFLECTION

Newsletter  
2016-17

Department of Philosophy  
Kamala Nehru College



## **From Editor's Desk**

Greetings!

*Reflection* – the annual newsletter of Department of Philosophy – is an endeavour to celebrate introspective thought in philosophy, and provides a forum to the students to express and share their deliberations on the concerns they feel strongly about. The current issue of *Reflection* presents a collection of short essays, short discourses from Buddhist scriptures, and poems, covering a range of philosophical concepts and matters of public debate.

We highly appreciate all the contributions and sincerely thank all the teachers for their constant guidance and support.

Happy Reading!

**Sukkhavagga, *Dhammapada***

There's no fire like passion,  
no loss like anger,  
no pain like the aggregates,  
no ease other than peace.

Hunger: the foremost illness.  
Fabrications: the foremost pain.  
For one knowing this truth as it actually is,  
Unbinding is the foremost ease.

Freedom from illness: the foremost good fortune.  
Contentment: the foremost wealth.  
Trust: the foremost kinship.  
Unbinding: the foremost ease.



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\*The Pāli Canon or the *Tipiṭaka* is the standard collection of scriptures that form doctrinal foundation of the Theravāda Buddhism. It consists of three major divisions: Vinaya Piṭaka, Sutta Piṭaka, and Abhidhamma Piṭaka. The passages/discourses cited in this issue have been translated from Pāli to English by Thānissaro Bhikkhu.

## PUBLIC INTEREST, PRIVATE LIVES

Personal information can be defined as a set of details of an individual which one does not wish to share publicly. Matthew Kieran in his work, *Media Ethics: A Philosophical Approach*, describes private as 'the condition of not having undocumented personal knowledge about one possessed by others'. Having said that, it becomes essential for the writer to mention the relativity of privacy, that is, what may be exclusive to one might be a matter of public knowledge for the other.

What if one experiences an intrusion into their private life? Is it ethical to breach the private sphere of a person's life? A prominent individual on a holiday with other identifiable people spending leisure time, is recorded by a photographer for publishing the information on a widely read internet website without the consent of people



being taped. What is the plausible explanation to claim this revelation to be morally wrong? David Archard in his widely read article, *Privacy, Public Interest and a Prurient Public* explicates some potential reasons. Archard asserts that advertising private information without the subject's consent might be considered morally inappropriate. Trespassing on a person's confidential property demands a justification on the part of the intruder. So, broadcasting the whereabouts of a public figure and others accompanying them without the permission of any might be marked unacceptable on the moral front.

The act of revealing private information is morally wrong and so is the process of acquiring it. Procuring a piece of undisclosed information by harassing the subject is deemed morally unacceptable, for example, the exhibiting of information by a media channel of a high-ranking official's sexual orientation acquired through a series of harassing techniques raises questions on the credibility of the broadcasting channel. Also, if the language accompanying a piece of information revealing the secret of a known face is humiliating or ridiculing the person, then that is a matter of moral concern in Archard's view.

What plausible justifications can the press give to support its actions of breaching privacy? Don't we hear explanations asserting that when someone chooses a public life, they lose their sense of privacy? Just because an individual has achieved public status, does that imply that they are liable to their audiences to showcase the life they live behind the spotlight? The journalists also argue about the public interest in having knowledge of what these personalities do when they are not in the news. Broadcasting explicit information about a well-known individual which was not attested by the person himself is rationalized on the grounds of demands made by the viewers. The revelation of the ordinary things about the leading personality sheds off the mystique that encompasses them, as observed by Archard. The reception of such revelations if not welcomed by the victim has the strength to generate debate about the morality of the broadcasting medium.

One cannot entirely deny the purposes such revelations serve. Making disclosures about the private lives of public figures on the grounds of demand from the public cannot be considered morally valueless in its entirety. It is important to note that it is not relevant to justify the revelations on the basis of public interest, but it does serve a purpose of engaging a thought of "collective reflection" among people about the standards we claim to live by. A sense of togetherness is achieved by such disclosures among the ordinary citizens, knowing that their admired personalities do enjoy an ordinary life. The definition of such standards and the confidence in the community then makes the press less likely to hype about the extra-ordinariness of the lives of prominent individuals. However, even if we see this as serving a certain public

interest, Archard gives us serious reasons to reconsider the alleged justifications of invading a public person's privacy, unless necessary.

**Shubhangani Jain**



**#reflections**

## **SWITCH OFF!**

“We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change, and the last generation that can do something about it.”

–Barack Obama (44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America)

Thoughts expressed by Peter Singer, well-known contemporary moral philosopher, in his *Famine, Affluence and Morality* have inspired me to draw an uncontroversial relation between moral philosophy and my concern for our ailing planet. His ideas on individual's moral responsibility with respect to poverty may be applied in the area of ethical concerns regarding environment, too. He says, "If it is in our power to prevent something bad from happening, without sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we ought morally, do it." For example, if an affluent person can sacrifice one of his luxuries to help the child of a poor person, then he must do so to prevent suffering of the latter. Similarly, if one can make small adjustment in their lifestyle to preserve the environment, one is morally obligated to do so. For the truth is, the deplorable state of the ecosystem signals clearly that we ought to begin before all the clocks of the world break and we are doomed.

Until two decades back, the world looked at the economic status alone as a measure of human development. This idea led to a rapid exploitation of resources across the world. This lopsided growth has led to catastrophic results – increasing carbon dioxide levels, rising sea levels and global warming.

World Wide Fund (WWF), a global conservation organization, works tirelessly across various levels to conserve biodiversity, reduce humanity's footprint and combat dangers that afflict the planet. Earth Hour is WWF's global campaign that asks people to switch off lights in their homes/offices for one hour

as a small contribution towards the same objective. It was famously started as a 'lights off' event in Sydney (Australia) in 2007 and since then it has grown to engage more than 172 countries and territories worldwide. In India, the movement was started in 2009 and has, since then, seen widespread support from all states. The campaign's '60+' logo highlights the need for going beyond the sixty minutes of switch off and working towards protecting our environment throughout the year.

This campaign aptly puts into action the very essence of Singer's thought as he proposes that neither our distance from a preventable evil nor the lesser number of people taking a stand, lessens our obligation to mitigate that evil. We should come forward not merely because we dread the repercussions but for the very reason that we appreciate the intrinsic worth of environment.

Earth Hour, 2016 – the movement's 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary in India – was observed on March 19th from 8:30-9:30pm, and it urged the nation to go beyond the hour by adopting rooftop solar systems to power their houses, offices, and other spaces. You can contribute your bit and be a part of the world's largest grassroots movement by pledging your support for the planet. Switch-off all non-essential lights in the next Earth Hour and celebrate the movement with your friends and family in years to come. Log onto [www.earthhour.in](http://www.earthhour.in) for further details and make this world a better place to live.

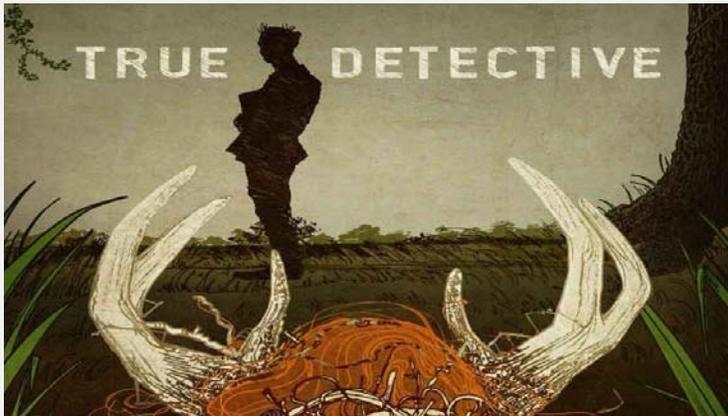
I urge you to refrain from observing Earth Hour, if you offer it as a "favour" to Mother Nature. Please abstain from becoming a part of this movement, if working for your own planet feels like a "forced duty" or "a charity". If the minds are impressed with fear and appalled by the calculated repercussions, how would one celebrate the richness and diversity of the selfless nature?

I encourage all to replace hopelessness regarding the ailing planet with optimism supported with action.

**Kamakshi Bohra**

## ***TRUE DETECTIVE AND THE CEASELESS LOOP OF LIFE***

In the midst of the extensive number of television series on air, we find *True Detective* standing apart from the common lot as a Crime Mystery series with a philosophical facet. HBO has all the ingredients for the perfect recipe of successful series – the eerie killing point, a psychologically disturbed killer, the partnership between two detectives with a serial killer trying to make an artistic masterpiece.



What separates the narrative of the show from other crime shows is that it features a dark philosophy which suggests that human evolution is a misstep and we should stop reproducing. The following is a viewpoint

by Rust Cohle, the protagonist of the show, and he says:

I think human consciousness is a tragic misstep in evolution. We became too self-aware, nature created an aspect of nature separate from itself, we are creatures that should not exist by natural law. We are things that labor under the illusion of having a self; an accretion of sensory, experience and feeling, programmed with total assurance that we are each somebody, when in fact everybody is nobody. Maybe the honorable thing for our species to do is deny our programming, stop reproducing, walk hand in hand into extinction, one last midnight – brothers and sisters opting out of a raw deal.

Nic Pizzolatto, the writer and executive producer said in an interview, “Before I came out to Hollywood, (...) I knew that in my next work I would have a detective who was (or thought he was) a nihilist”, thus giving birth to Rustin Cohle. Pizzolatto explains that the philosophy Cohle espouses is a kind of antenatal nihilism. Apart from the reference of Friedrich Nietzsche, Cohle does not call himself a ‘nihilist’. During one of the conversations with his partner, Cohle asserts that he is – in philosophical terms – what is called a ‘pessimist’. And like a true pessimist, he says, "Death created time to grow the things that it would kill”.

The philosophy of the show is greatly influenced by the works of Thomas Ligotti and his work *The Conspiracy Against the Human Race* (Hippocampus Press, 2010). And, despite the fact that Cohle explicitly states that he is a ‘pessimist’, it does not negate the truth that some of his sayings are consistent with the musings of nihilists such as Friedrich Nietzsche. In episode 3, Cohle points towards what Evan Thompson identifies as the illusion of self by saying:

To realize that all your life – you know, all your love, all your hate, all your memory, all your pain – it was all the same thing. It was all the same dream. A dream that you had inside a locked room. A dream about being a person. And like a lot of dreams there's a monster at the end of it.

Different ideas exhibited in the show and the show’s philosophical reflections make *True Detective* revolutionary. Wall Street Journal writer Michael Calia says, “Millions of viewers are hearing Cohle’s worldview weekly, and many might just find that it makes some kind of troubling sense”.

**Siddhi Shailendra**

## **PETER SINGER'S CASE FOR ANIMALS**

Debates over moral status of non-human animals have been going on for a long time and it has become a very interesting topic not only for philosophers but also for people outside of philosophy. The debates mostly have their ground in the question, “What is distinctive about humanity that we do not grant the same treatment to non-human animals as we do for humans?” There is a range of views available on moral considerability of animals – in approval as well as disapproval. Of these, one of the most interesting and compelling is Peter Singer’s position. In this article, I present a brief exposition of his ideas on moral treatment of non-human animals.

Peter Singer named and initiated the twentieth century “animal liberation movement”. He does not advocate non-human rights in the philosophical sense but presents a case for their moral status based on the theory of utilitarianism. In his most influential work, *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals* (1975), Singer argues that interests of animals should be taken into consideration on the basis of their ability to suffer. He does not think that the idea of “rights” in this consideration was necessary. He advocates that principle of equality should apply not only to the members of our own species but also to the members of non-human animal species. Singer uses the term ‘speciesism’ for unequal treatment of or discrimination against members of species other than one’s own.

Singer explains that the argument for extending the principle of equality beyond our own species is simple. It amounts to no more than a clear understanding of the principle of equal consideration of interests. This principle implies the fact that these beings that are not members of our species doesn’t allow us to exploit them on this ground. He refers to Jeremy Bentham’s words which he incorporated in his utilitarian system of ethics that “Each to count for

one and none for more than one". With this principle, he points at the interests of every being affected by an action and holds that this interest should be given equal weightage as the interests of any other being. Singer traces the roots of his view towards non-human animals to Bentham's principle that a society should aim at greatest happiness for the greatest number of individuals.

**"All the arguments to prove man's superiority cannot shatter this hard fact: in suffering the animals are our equals."**

When we talk of animal ethics the first thought that would possibly strike our mind would be whether they bear the same suffering which we humans considerably do or feel? It is often seen that we humans do not accept that the pain is as bad when it is felt by a pig or a mice as when felt by them. Singer, in his *Practical Ethics*, explains how humans often act in speciesist ways in their treatment of non-human animals, for example – looking at 'animals as food'. Here we see that for most people in modern urbanized societies the principal form of contact with non-human animals is at meal times. Apart from killing them there are many ways in which animals are brought to our dinner tables and these include castration, separation of mother and young, the breaking up of herds, branding, transporting, slaughter house handling and finally the moment of slaughter itself – these are all ways involving suffering in some or the other way. This cruel system of producing animal products when looked from a moral perspective is completely wrong and this conclusion brings us very close to the vegan way of life.

Another issue that stands out starkly is one on experimenting on animals by claiming that the experiments lead us to discoveries about humans. This is one area where speciesism can be clearly observed. There are a number of experiments that have brought us back to the focal point of discussion, that is,



suffering. In all these cases, the benefits to humans are either non-existent or very uncertain; while the losses to members of other species are real and certain. When looked at deeply on this point we notice there is no such morally relevant characteristic which humans have and non-humans lack. There are other areas which raise similar issues and these include fur trading, hunting, circuses, rodeos and the pet business.

The instances of speciesism are many. Coming back to the point of pain or suffering of animals, we may ask, “How do we know that animals can feel this pain which we have been discussing till now?” To this Peter Singer says that his belief that animals feel the pain is similar to the belief that children can feel the pain. Animals react in the same manner as we humans do and this justification is enough to understand their pain. The intensity might just vary here but the suffering cannot be questioned. Nevertheless, despite the difference in ability to feel pain it cannot be justified that they be given different amount of consideration in terms of their needs and interests. With this stand, Singer also dismisses the argument that rationality of a being should determine the protection of one’s interests.

Singer holds that it is not merely the act of killing that shows the practice of unjust treatment of non-human animals, but also the inflicting of pain on them while they are alive. He strongly condemns any form of speciesism, and calls for a revision of our view towards animals. It is here important to ask, in Singer’s words, “Should morality towards these non-human animals be left unnoticed or whether there should be certain kind of ethical conduct which will abandon this speciesism to an extent which would reduce if not eradicate their suffering?”.

**Nandita Kukreja**

## **FEMINISM: SOME THOUGHTS**

'Feminism', as a term is quite popular nowadays and happens to be a much discussed topic as well. However, as an ideology, it also remains widely misunderstood. Many of us often respond impulsively to it – whether in favour or against – without reflecting upon and educating ourselves on it. On the groundwork of the few works on Feminism I read as a part of my graduation course and many day-to-day experiences, I wish to express my (limited) reflections on the subject. I do understand that the discourse on feminism is immensely vast and that it varies across regions, classes, cultures, countries and so on, but I feel I had to share this.

Every other day we come across debates/discussions on feminism in newspapers or on social media or hear people talking about it. Of these, some are apprehensive about feminism because it has been “dragged” too much. They feel that what feminism has been demanding for ages has already been granted to the women – they have the right to vote, freedom to work, men help out them in household chores, they wear what they want to and so on. Surprisingly, yet, we fail to recognize that the practice of patriarchy is concealed in many everyday and commonplace things that we have not been able to identify for ages. These everyday and commonplace things reinforce patriarchal thought and perpetuate practices that are discriminatory. Hence, it is important that wherever patriarchy reveals itself even a little, feminism always shows up to abolish it.

Common response to addressing issues in concern is “Feminism, here too?” or “Feminism, not again” etc. To this, I say, “Yes to Feminism” because it only made us recognize the evilness and unfairness of practices like female feticide, gender inequality, domestic violence, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, sexism, honour killing, unequal treatment of women at work, rape culture and so on. All these are rooted in patriarchy. “Yes to Feminism” because we now recognize the problem of patriarchy and are fighting for the equal rights

of men and women. However, it is unfortunate or rather ignorant of us that we sometimes mistake it for a fight against a set of individuals or men when it really is a fight against an unfair system.

“Yes to Feminism” as we are yet to understand how patriarchy works – it upholds the idea that a family, community or a society is centered around and governed by men. Patriarchy is created, sustained and practised by both men and women. One extent of it is that the domination of men and subordination of



women is biologically determined [which is not the case]. This idea is defended by the science of biological determinism. As Lynda Birke points out in her *Life as we have Known It: Feminism and Biology of Gender* that biological determinism is used as an instrument to define the social inferiority in terms of gender differences that may be hormonal, developmental, evolutionary or whatever. Due to the differences in biology, one is taken as superior to another. Birke also draws our attention towards another problem that the concept of woman is elided with that of ‘female’. The biologist understanding of female is that one who produces ‘eggs’. Thus, we construct notions of ‘womanhood’, ‘motherhood’ etc. and impose them as gender roles on individuals. All beliefs have been so indoctrinated in our minds that it does not let us even think or question how both men and women have been victimized by it. But, sexism that places women in inferior position does allow men to enjoy the overall privilege of their gender.

Another misconception is that feminism strives for the women's dominance or superiority over men. Rather, it is a movement that demands a healthy and fair co-existence for both men and women. It is mistakenly taken as that which demands only women empowerment, but in principle, as its larger objective, it aims at empowerment for all individuals alike. As bell hooks says – although it has no particular definition but the primary goal of feminism is to abolish any discrimination on the basis of sex. But, we are scared of feminism because it is of political nature and acts as a mirror which shows us the reality

that the identity of being a human is lost in the practice of patriarchy. We have internalized patriarchy to the extent that we fear to acknowledge the reality of human rights being waived. For the achievement of sex/gender fairness, Feminism will remain in trend for times to come and it will be “dragged” to the most “trivial” matters until we uproot patriarchy and for that, we have to bear with feminism being “too much”.

**Kamakshi Gilotra**

Image source:

<https://www.facebook.com/feministnews.us/photos/a.110226439324583.1073741827.110218365992057/397803383900219/?type=1&theater>

## THE IDEA OF DETERRENCE

This article is an overview of the deterrence theory of punishment and its problems. It begins with the idea and concept of punishment, and then goes over to a brief survey of deterrence approach towards it with reference to Bentham, Hobbes and Beccaria's views on the punishment. Intrinsically, the idea of punishment is to constitute the reaction of a society to any crime or offence. Punishment exists to ensure that any wrong, so committed that the entire society stands affected by it, does not go unnoticed and unaffected.

Punishment presupposes that –

- What is inflicted is ill and unpleasant,
- It is a reaction or an answer to some act which is disapproved by the law,
- There is some relation between the punishment and the act which has evoked it,
- It is inflicted, imposed by someone's voluntary act,
- It is inflicted upon the criminal or the offender or someone who is supposed to be answerable for him and his wrong doings.

One of the prime aspects of punishment lies in its justification. As St. Augustine said, "An unjust law is no law at all." A punishment can be justifiable only if it fulfills the objective which it aims at by imposition upon the offender and if it is in proportionality with the offence committed. The proportionality principle simply means to determine that what can be an adequate punishment for a specific crime or offence and to ensure that the determined threshold is not broken by a certain punishment.

The objective of a punishment, on the other hand, is the effect that the punishment seeks to establish in the society by its imposition as a reaction to a particular crime or offence. For example, the imposition of fine upon an individual who commits the offence of public nuisance is to attain the objective of deterrence for that individual and as well as for the rest of the society; or to sentence a murderer with a death sentence is to provide the victim's family with

retribution and so on. There are a number of objectives of punishment with each legal system following one of them or an amalgamation of them all; these can be – retribution, reformation, deterrence or prevention. All these objectives individually give rise to the theories of punishment.

### **The Deterrent Theory of Punishment**

The deterrent or deterrence theory of punishment basically chips away at the possibility that the main goal of any punishment ought to be to dishearten the reiteration of the offense the punishment is granted for. The proponents of the deterrence theory attempt to justify punishment on the ground that it acts as a tool of prevention. Imposing punishment on the transgressor makes a feeling of dread which thus keeps the miscreant from repeating the offence. Deterrence involves the threat of punishment via some form of sanction. Deterrence is a way of achieving control through fear. Deterrence, in general, is the control of behaviour that is effected because the potential offender does not consider the behaviour worth risking for fear of its consequences.

The concept of deterrence is divided into two types –

- General deterrence; whereby the punishment acts as a deterrent to others (In this case the punishment helps in reduction of crime rate); and
- Specific deterrence; whereby the punishment acts as a deterrent to the person who is being punished (In this case the punishment helps in the reduction of recidivism).

General deterrence is designed to prevent crime in the general population. Thus, the state's punishment of offenders serves as an example for others in the general population who have not yet participated in criminal events. It is meant to make them aware of the horrors of official sanctions in order to put them off committing crimes. Examples include the application of the death penalty and the use of corporal punishment. Specific deterrence, on the other hand, is designed to deter only the individual offender from committing that crime in the future. Proponents of specific deterrence also believe that punishing offenders

severely will make them unwilling to reoffend in the future. A drunk driver, for example, would be deterred from drinking and driving because of the unpleasant experience he or she suffered from being arrested, or having his or her license taken away or his or her car impounded.

The philosophy underpinning deterrence is that the risk to the law breaker must be made so great and the punishment so severe, that people believe they have more to lose than to gain from the offence. The proponents of the deterrent theory state that the punishment must be such that it makes certain that apart from the punished offender, the other members of the society would also take an example of the punishment and not commit the offence themselves. The deterrent theory seeks to create some kind of fear in the mind of others by providing adequate penalty and exemplary punishment to offenders which keeps them away from criminality.

Seen from a consequentialist approach, deterrence theory tries to justify punishment on the basis that the utility of imposing such punishment is more in favour of the society. Therefore, imposing punishment helps in achieving greater good for the greater number of people. However, what needs to be noted here is Jeremy Bentham's point that all punishment is mischief, and that all penalties are evil, unless punishment is used to avert greater evil, or to control the action of offenders. In short, he argues, the object of the law is to widen the happiness of the people by increasing the pleasure and lessening the pain of the community. Punishment, in excess of what is essential to deter people from violating the law, is unjustified.

In his *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes described man as neither good nor bad. Unlike religious philosopher Thomas Aquinas, who insisted that people naturally do good rather than evil, Hobbes assumed that men are creatures of their own volition who want certain things and who fight when their desires are in conflict. In the Hobbesian view, people generally pursue their self-interests, such as material gain, personal safety, and social reputation, and make enemies without caring if they harm others in the process. Since people are determined to achieve their self-interests, the result is often conflict and resistance.

Hobbes also pointed out that humans are rational enough to realize that their self-interested nature would lead to crime and inevitable conflict due to the alienation and exclusion of some members of society. To avoid this, people agree to give up their own egocentricity as long as everyone does the same thing approximately. This is what Hobbes calls the social contract. To avoid war, conflict, and crime, people enter into a social contract with the government so that it will protect them from human predicaments. The role of the state is to enforce the social contract. Hobbes indicated that if one agrees to the social contract, that individual authorizes the sovereign to use force to uphold the social contract. But crimes may still occur even if after governments perform their duties. In this case, Hobbes argued that the punishment for crime must be greater than the benefit that comes from committing the crime. Deterrence is the reason individuals are punished for violating the social contract, and it serves to maintain the agreement between the state and the people in the form of a workable social contract.

Building on the ideals of the social contract philosophers, in 1764, Cesare Bonesana Marchese Beccaria, published his treatise, *On Crimes and Punishments*, in which he challenged the rights of the state to punish crimes. He followed Hobbes and other 18th-century Enlightenment writers that laws should be judged by their propensity to afford the “greatest happiness shared by the greatest number”. If the sole purpose of punishment is to prevent crime in society, Beccaria argued, “Punishments are unjust when their severity exceeds what is necessary to achieve deterrence”. Excessive severity will not reduce crime, in other words, it will only increase crime. Baccaria was against torture and secret accusations, and demanded they be abolished. Furthermore, he rejected the use of capital punishment and suggested that it be replaced by imprisonment. However, the he also believed that jails should be more humane and the law should not distinguish between the rich and the poor.

## **Placing Deterrent Theory in Contemporary Thought**

In the present times, the concept of deterrence has undergone several changes or rather an astute metamorphosis altogether. The deterrent theory has come under several forms of criticism with the development of criminology and the criminal justice system. The modern day criminologists acknowledge the fact that the deterrent theory of punishment is one that is based on the primitive theories of crime and criminal responsibility. In earlier times, crime was attributed to the influence of an 'evil spirit' or to the 'free will' of the individual. So the society preferred severe and deterrent punishment for the offender for his voluntary act of perversity which was believed to be a challenge for God and religion.

The idea of deterrence also invariably fails in its practical application. Deterrence, as a measure of punishment, particularly fails in cases of hardened criminals because the severity of the punishment hardly has any effect on them.



It also fails to deter ordinary criminals because many crimes are committed on the spur of the moment without any prior intention or design. The futility of deterrent punishment is evident from the fact that quite a large number of hardened criminals return to prison soon after their release. They prefer to remain in prison rather than leading a free life in society.

Thus, the underlying objective of the deterrent punishment is defeated. Another empirical evidence of the failure of deterrent punishment is the ever-climbing crime rate despite the presence of deterrent punishments such as the death sentence.

Furthermore, with the development and progress of the criminal justice system, the loopholes of the deterrent theory have become more visible than ever before. The understanding of crime and criminal responsibility has developed from merely being a result of the influence of an 'evil spirit' or the 'free will'. The present day criminology understands that the offender is not the sole

committer of an offence. It acknowledges the fact that the society is not only the recipient of the crime but is also the source of it. There is an understanding that an individual becomes an offender of the law not only by himself but because of the combination of a number of societal factors surrounding him. The deterrent theory attributes an individual's transgressions as his and only his responsibility ignoring all the circumstances surrounding him and terms the society as only an object and not a subject of the crime.

The modern day criminal justice system recognizes the role of an individual's surroundings in his behaviour and thus, today, the prime objective of any punishment is reformation. The present day criminal justice system seeks to ensure that any punishment must ensure restoration of both the criminal and the victim into the society at the same societal and physical standard as they were before the commission of the crime. Although it is true that for not all crimes is reformation possible, it is universal that the society has the primary role in the creation of a criminal and thus it cannot be treated as a mere recipient of the same as propagated by the deterrent theory. The reformatory approach is far more inclusive and better equipped to reduce crime rate and recidivism with ensuring the participation of both victim and offender in the process, leading the offender towards reformation and the victim towards rehabilitation in the society, resulting in an improved society consequentially.

**Alina Khan**

## RELIGION AND MORALITY

"To behave morally is to judge right and wrong, good and bad and behave accordingly."

- Sally Planalp, *Communicating Emotion: Social, Moral and Cultural Processes*

By morality, we always mean something which is more righteous than wrong. It is not just a necessary part of our life, but also defining us and setting us apart. Similarly, religion is also an important part of our life. All religion consists of a moral code. Religion is nothing but an outcome of social necessity. Even the teachings are a reflection of the requirement of the society such as the idea of common good. The main aim of all religions if we observe is nothing but creating a structure of moral system and encouraging the promotion of cooperation among people.



The ubiquity of religion in a human society is unquestionable as W.H. Thorpe stated in his *Animal Nature and Human Nature*, "Man is essentially a religious animal". All religions have a central moral theme to their doctrines. All religions preach a message of unity, social commitment and peace. Now we might ask that if all religions share common interests then why we face problems of disparity in our thoughts and approaches. This is mainly due to the reason that religious rivalry has become so important for people that the emphasis has completely shifted from its ethical aspects. If we observe the teachings of the religions we will see that all their principles are ethical in nature. No religion spreads disparity and difference.

If we take the instance of Buddhism which originated from the teachings of Gautama Buddha, its first commandment is that of *ahimsā* or non-violence and compassion for others. The Hindu teachings speak the story of Lord Vishnu and Goddess Kali are inspirations of morality. Confucianism also asserts that all humans have a moral sense known as the sensibility of *hsin*, and *hsin* consists of four generations of human feelings, commiseration, shame and dislike, deference and compliance, right and wrong.

Another example can be taken of the 'Ten Commandments' of Judaism and Christianity that can be said to be a moral code given to the people so they could adhere to it. Also, the Quran asserts that the God or *Allah* will reward and punish individuals according to the morality of their action. All the religions thus have moral teachings that are written in the holy writings which include verses and parables with moral teachings. However, people are also misguided in the name of religion. Things which otherwise a rational human would consider incorrect are carried out in the name of religion.

The basis of revolution has evolved along with the revolution in morality. With the evolution of religion in the human society, the moral code has also varied. Due to the development that our society is undertaking and the knowledge that we have gained calls for more rapid change in the religions so that they are capable of having good influence in the society. The necessity of religion is unquestionable and all societies require the support which religion provides. The more the religion is made contemporary and modern in its approach, the more influential it will be.

**Sohini Sengupta**

**Loka Sutta, *Samyutta Nikāya***

On one occasion, King Pasenadi of Kosala asked Buddha, "How many qualities of the world that, when arising, arise for harm, stress, & discomfort?"

To this, Buddha responded, "Three qualities of the world, great king, when arising, arise for harm, stress, & discomfort. Which three? Greed, great king, is a quality of the world that, when arising, arises for harm, stress, & discomfort. Aversion is a quality of the world that, when arising, arises for harm, stress, & discomfort. Delusion is a quality of the world that, when arising, arises for harm, stress, & discomfort. These are the three qualities of the world, great king, that when arising, arise for harm, stress, & discomfort."

Having said that, Buddha added:

Greed, aversion, & delusion  
— born from oneself —  
destroy the person of evil awareness,  
as its own fruit, the reed.



**Pañha Sutta, *Anguttara Nikāya***

In one of his discourses, Buddha teaches his monks the skill to master the art of answering questions, and tells them about four ways to answer questions. He says, "There are questions that should be answered categorically [straightforwardly yes, no, this, that]. There are questions that should be answered with an analytical (qualified) answer [defining or redefining the terms]. There are questions that should be answered with a counter-question. There are questions that should be put aside. These are the four ways of answering questions."

Further:

First the categorical answer,  
then the qualified,  
third, the type to be counter-questioned,  
and fourth, the one to be set aside.  
Any monk who knows which is which,  
in line with the *Dhamma*,  
is said to be skilled in the four types of questions:  
hard to overcome, hard to beat,  
profound, hard to defeat.  
He knows what's worthwhile & what's not,  
proficient in (recognizing) both,  
he rejects the worthless, grasps the worthwhile.  
He's called one who has broken through  
to what's worthwhile, prudent, wise.



## ACTIVITY REPORT

The Department of Philosophy organized *EIDOS*, annual departmental event, on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015 with **Prof. Bindu Puri** (Department of Philosophy, University of Delhi) and **Prof. Jalalul Haq** (Department of Philosophy, Aligarh Muslim University) as speakers. Prof. Puri spoke on *Gandhi, Tagore and Ambedkar: Philosophical Concerns and Overlapping Debates*, and Prof. Haq delivered his lecture on *Postmodernism: A Philosophical Overview*. On 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015, **Radhakrishnan Memorial Lecture** was held with Prof. Bindu Puri (Department of Philosophy, University of Delhi) as the speaker. She addressed the audience on *Gandhi and Indian Tradition*.



**Prof. Bindu Puri**

The Department of Philosophy held its first academic lecture of the year 2016 on 27<sup>th</sup> January with **Prof. Kesava Kumar** (Department of Philosophy, University of Delhi) who addressed the students on *Critical Philosophical Traditions in India*. On 13<sup>th</sup> February 2016, the department hosted **Prof. H.S. Prasad** (Head, Department of Philosophy – University of Delhi) for a lecture on **Phenomenology**.

**EIDOS 2016** was held on 15<sup>th</sup> March with **Prof. Bijoy Boruah** (Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Delhi) and **Prof. Bhagat Oinam** (Centre for Philosophy, Jawaharlal Nehru University) as speakers. Prof. Boruah spoke on ***Philosophy and the Reach of Reason***, and Prof. Oinam addressed the students on ***Moral Dilemmas in Mahābhārata***. Following the lecture, students had an interactive session with the speakers of the day. In addition to the two lectures, department also organized a paper reading competition for the students on the topic, “Existence Precedes Essence”.



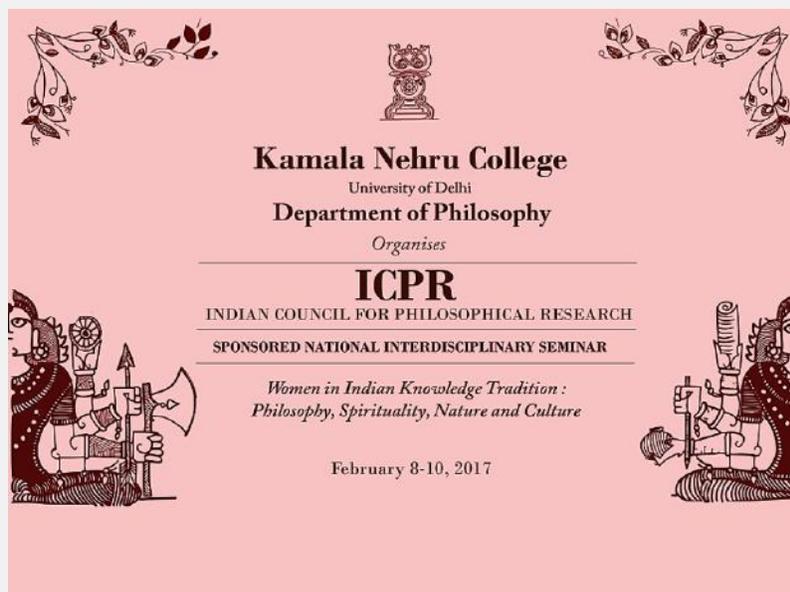
On 30<sup>th</sup> July 2016, the department was pleased to put together an **international symposium on *Pilgrimage and Ritual: Philosophical Reflections on Religion and Culture***. The event was graced by the presence of **Dr. Paul Donnelly** and **Ms. Jennifer Hunter** from Department of Comparative Cultural Studies, North Arizona University, Flagstaff (Arizona, USA) as the speakers, **Mr. Come Carpentier De Gourdon** (Editorial Board, *World Affairs Journal*) as the discussant, and **Prof. Balaganapati Devarakonda**

(Department of Philosophy, University of Delhi) as the chairperson for the symposium.



In view of the **Radhakrishnan Memorial Lecture Series**, the department hosted **Prof. Rakesh Chandra** (Department of Philosophy, University of Lucknow) who spoke on *History and Character of Analytic Philosophy* on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

The department opened the year 2017 with an ICPR sponsored national seminar on *Women in Indian Knowledge Tradition: Philosophy, Spirituality, Nature and Culture*, and hosted distinguished speakers from across disciplines.



## Bidding farewells



**Batch 2012-15**



**Batch 2013-16**

**Maggavagga, *Dhammapada***

When you see with discernment,  
'All fabrications are inconstant' —  
you grow disenchanted with stress.  
This is the path to purity.

When you see with discernment,  
'All fabrications are stressful' —  
you grow disenchanted with stress.  
This is the path to purity.

When you see with discernment,  
'All phenomena are not-self' —  
you grow disenchanted with stress.  
This is the path to purity.



**Subhasita Sutta, *Sutta Nipāta***

Speak only the speech  
that neither torments self  
nor does harm to others.  
That speech is truly well spoken.

Speak only endearing speech,  
speech that is welcomed.  
Speech when it brings  
no evil to others is pleasant.

Truth, indeed, is deathless speech:  
This is an ancient principle.  
The goal and the *Dhamma* —  
so say the calm —  
are firmly established on truth.

The speech the Awakened One speaks,  
for attaining Unbinding,  
rest, for making an end to the mass of stress:  
That is the speech unexcelled.



## रंग परिचय

अद्भुत महत्व है रंगो का,  
इंसान के जीवन में होने का।  
रंग-बिरंगे झंडे लहराता है,  
और उसी के लिए युद्ध भूमि भी रचाता है।  
कभी सफेद को शुभ और काले को अशुभ होने की मान्यता बताता है,  
किंतु अपनी ही सोच पर लगे दाग को पहचान नहीं पाता है।  
अब तो काला, श्र्वेत, साँवला कह कर भेदभाव भी करता है,  
और हर धर्म का किसी रंग पर स्वामित्व बताता है।  
अरे ओ इंसान सुन जरा खुद के रंग को परखने का प्रयत्न कर,  
कहीं हार न जाए अपने स्वभाव के रंगों की गणना कर।  
तू जोड़े रंग को ऊँच नीच से,  
मत भूल कि सब बने हैं एक ही रंग की मिट्टी से।  
यह जो प्रकृति में तू रहता है,  
वह भी तो विभिन्न रंगो का मंच है।  
सीख ले इसी से कुछ,  
रंगों की विविधता को अपन स्वरूप मानने का सलीका।  
अब बस भी कर भुला दे रंग से जुड़े हर मतभेद को,  
और सब के साथ मिल कर मना रंगो के त्योहार को।

**Kamakshi Gilotra**



Life is full of beauty. Notice it. Smell the rain, and feel the cold wind on your face and feel it from your heart. It takes you away for few minutes from your worldly sorrows and sufferings. Live your life to the fullest potential, and fight for your dreams. Rain refreshes us, wind braces us up, sunshine is delicious, snow makes us happy and gives some kind of excitement. There is really no such thing as bad weather, there are only different kinds of good weather. As we all know, without rain, there is no rainbow, so as in our lives. Even, into each life, some rain must fall.

**Riya Bansal**

It is strange how things have turned about – No one has the time to look deep into your eyes and ask how you have been doing and other important things, obviously not counting those forced formal conversations. Detachment is the new cool; people have become accustomed to not show who they are, anymore. With layers and layers of masks that they hide themselves with so carefully, so brilliantly because it is so scary to let the world know how vulnerable and broken we all are.

It takes courage to let the world know of your scars, to let people talk about your wounds openly. To know someone else is going through a similar phase helps, it lessens the pain to know that you are not alone in this. They may tell you that you are weak but deep inside they are thanking you for making them feel less lonely. It is hard to be real these days, it is harder to make people understand that we all are in the same boat in the end, struggling with just different things.

**Urvi Gauri**





Down –

1. Jean Paul Sartre's major work on existentialism – *Being and* \_\_\_\_\_
4. Immanuel Kant's thing-in-itself
5. The father of psychoanalysis, offered a three part model of the self that consisted of the conscious self, preconscious mind, and the unconscious mind
7. George Berkeley rejected the existence of \_\_\_\_\_

Answers  
Across: 2. Pragmatism 3. Pantheism 4. Nietzsche 6. Rousseau 8. Thales 9. Plato  
Down: 1. Nothingness 4. Noumena 5. Freud 7. Matter

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