

Explore the contrast and synergies between Modern Western Thought and Indian Philosophy in the next session of AVID Online

For Immediate Release

Philosophy, far from being an inert theoretical discipline, must also be acknowledged as a fundamental influence and agent for growth and problem-solving.

India has a rich and ancient philosophical tradition dating back to the Vedic Age (circa 1500 – 500 BCE) and the composition of the Upanishads, a clutch of Sanskrit religious texts that form the basis for the many philosophical, spiritual and mystical traditions of the subcontinent. Incorporating wisdoms from Buddhist, Jain and Hindu thought, Indian philosophy is rooted in pragmatism and the pursuit of truth and reasoning as compared to the intellectual inquiry of modern western philosophy. Be it through universally known concepts like *Ayurveda*, *yoga*, *vastu shastra*, *ahimsa*, *karma* and *moksh*, the living and practical science of Indian Philosophy is wilfully applied in several spheres of contemporary human life and continues to shape our collective experience.

Bangalore Literature Festival and **Avid Learning** present ***Darshana: Indian Philosophy, Ancient Texts and Western Perspectives***, a discussion around Indian Philosophy and books like *The Bhagavad Gita* and the threads of these in Western philosophy and culture. This session is presented in conjunction with the recently launched book *Finding Meaning in Life with the Bhagavad Gita* co-authored by *Vedanta Teacher, Scholar and Author* **Neema Majmudar**. The book is a contemporary and simple take on the Gita and the lucidity of the writing beautifully highlights the depth of its profound philosophy.

Please read on for more details:

Neema will deliver opening remarks about her book and then be in conversation with *Director of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies* **Shaunaka Rishi Das** and *Writer and Photographer* **Rameshwar Das** to discuss Indian Philosophical principles, ancient texts and a Western perspective on Indic philosophy, religion and thought.

This session, spring boarding from the notions to be presented, will attempt to cast a wide spotlight on contemporary global applications and probe the role and uses of Indian philosophical thought in spheres of human life.

The Sanskrit word for philosophy is *darsana* or direct vision. The words symbolize the difference between modern Western philosophy, which mainly relies on an intellectual pursuit and Indian philosophy that relies on a direct vision of truth and pure reasoning. Where western thought was mostly concerned with the pursuit of theoretical concepts and the understanding of mathematics, history and the like, Indian philosophy pursued instructive logic that was not far removed from psychology to promote an understanding of the human condition. Ancient and modern Indian thinkers tried to visualize the ultimate truth by different means and developed philosophical systems as a consequence of such endeavours.

In the ancient texts and in more modern musings, Indian philosophers contemplate fundamentals like nature, life, the mind, and the human body as well as notions of ethics, social philosophy. The nature and types of knowledge, the nature and origin of truth, the relation of realism to idealism and the concept of moksha, or spiritual liberation are also meditated upon. Indian philosophical thought uniquely combines traditional belief systems and expansion in thinking.

Read more about the book below:


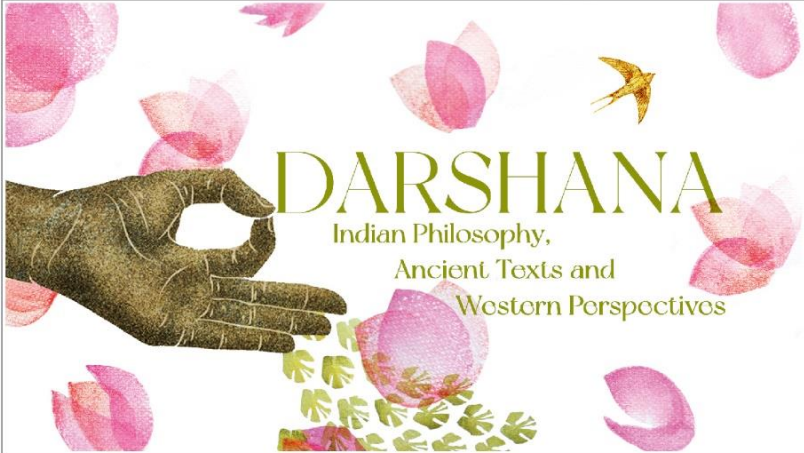
'Finding Meaning in Life with the Bhagavad Gita' captures the essence of the Gita's teachings. The book addresses an educated person who wants to stay away from the clichéd new age guru world and yet get a simple conceptual understanding of a philosophy that enables introspection and a peaceful life. 45 important verses (of the 700 contained in the Gita), have been re-ordered and grouped by topic, and

explained in concise prose using relatable everyday examples. The fundamentals of the teachings are articulated clearly without compromising their profound message. The bite-sized book, focused on the self where a sense of helplessness and victimhood can be overcome with intelligent thought and mindful intervention, encourages active participation and engagement with life. It helps us 'move from a sense of isolation to connectedness, from dissatisfaction to gratitude and, most importantly, from being consumers to contributors.' (quote from page 41). Like a wave discovers its reality is water, we are encouraged to uncover our true nature with the Gita's teachings. We see our 'perception of the world has repercussions for how we approach our lives. The Gita shows us that the world we live in is neither random nor unfair, but is intelligently ordered.' (quote from page 128). These lessons empower us. Join us for a panel that probes the way Indian philosophies advance adventures in thinking for practical applications of ancient thought in today's world.

When : 5th August 2021 | 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM (IST)

RSVP: www.avidlearning.in




Press Email: Ayesha Dadachanji on ayeshah.avid@gmail.com



DARSHANA
Indian Philosophy,
Ancient Texts and
Western Perspectives





Ever wondered how different Philosophy is in western theory and Indian practice? Indian philosophy is rooted in pragmatism and the pursuit of truth and reasoning as compared to the intellectual inquiry of modern western philosophy. Join us for a discussion around Indian Philosophy and books like *The Bhagavad Gita* and the threads of these in Western philosophy and culture. This session is presented in conjunction with the recently launched book *Finding Meaning in Life with the Bhagavad Gita*.

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		 <small>MODERATOR</small>
Director of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies Shaunaka Rishi Das	Writer and Photographer Rameshwar Das	Vedanta Teacher, Scholar and Author Neema Majmudar

DATE: THURSDAY, 5 AUGUST '21
TIME: 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM (IST)
8:30 AM - 10:00 AM (EDT)
1:30 PM - 3:00 PM (BST)
RSVP: www.avidlearning.in



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About the Speakers

Rameshwar Das is a writer and photographer who met Ram Dass in 1967. He is the co-author of BEING RAM DASS a memoir from spiritual teacher and cultural icon, Ram Dass. Born Richard Alpert, Ram Dass was a prominent Harvard psychology professor who partnered with Timothy Leary in psychedelic research, and later traveled to India and met his guru, Neem Karoli Baba. Upon returning to the US with his new name, which means “servant of God,” Ram Dass became a pivotal influence on the culture with his groundbreaking book *Be Here Now*—a backpacker’s bible for a generation of spiritual seekers. In BEING RAM DASS, America’s best-known and beloved spiritual teacher, Ram Dass, shares his life story set against the backdrop of eight decades of cultural transformation. Ramesh was inspired to go to India and was given the name Rameshwar Das by Neem Karoli Baba. Ramesh has collaborated with Ram Dass on many projects-as coauthor of *Be Love Now* and *Polishing the Mirror*.

Shaunaka Rishi Das is the Director of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (OCHS), a position he has held since the Centre's foundation in 1997. He is a Hindu cleric, a lecturer, a broadcaster, and Hindu Chaplain to Oxford University. Education, comparative theology, communication, and leadership are his main fields of interest. As Director of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies he maintains the vision and ethos of the OCHS and encourages the Centre’s continued growth and development in all spheres. In this role he oversaw the formal recognition of the OCHS by Oxford University in 2006, and developed the Centre's publishing partnerships with Oxford University Press, *Journal of Hindu Studies*, and with the Routledge Hindu Studies Series. He has also been responsible for forging formal relationships between the OCHS and Universities in the USA, Europe, India, and China. He is the first Hindu Chaplain to Oxford University in its 800-year history.

Neema Majmudar has a Master’s Degree in International Affairs from the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA), Columbia University, New York. She has studied the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, and Sanskrit with renowned Vedanta scholar, teacher and visionary Swami Dayananda Saraswati at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Tamil Nadu, India. She has worked for almost twenty years at the United Nations in the areas of economic and social development in New York, Bangkok and the Fiji Islands, before becoming a full-time teacher of Vedanta and the Gita in India and across the world. Neema and her husband Surya Tahora conduct regular workshops and retreats on Vedanta at several locations in India, Germany, France, Belgium, and South East Asia. Along with Surya, she has co-authored the book ‘Living the Vision of Oneness’. Their book, programs, and YouTube videos are available at: <https://discovervedanta.com>. Neema has over 200 students attending her classes every week, from Mumbai and around the world on Zoom. *After 20 years of teaching the Gita to hundreds of students from diverse countries and backgrounds, through classes – online and live, residential retreats and workshops, Neema Majmudar has a unique understanding of peoples’ dilemmas and habitual mindsets. She has witnessed first-hand how the teachings of the Gita echo with people around the world and transform their approach to life. Hers is a strong connection with both the teachings and those it has benefitted. She brings this insight to a mass audience through this book, written under her guidance with her students, Nandini and Saloni.*

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