



CALL FOR PAPERS

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

DAYA KRISHNA ACADEMIC FOUNDATION

ORGANIZES A 2-DAY INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON

SUFFERING IN THE 21ST CENTURY: DEBATES IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

DATES: 27-28 FEBRUARY 2018.

**VENUE: DEPT. OF PHILOSOPHY, JNANESHWAR BHAVAN,
UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI-KALINA CAMPUS , SANTACRUZ(E).**

Dukkha, tāpa, vedana, saṃsāra, and others are concepts that play a central role in the soteriological ruminations of various schools of Indian Philosophy, whether orthodox or heterodox. There could be no greater testament to the central position of suffering in Indian thought than the acknowledgement of its existence being the first of the 4 famed Noble Truths held to be propounded by the Buddha. The related Problem of Evil too was a hotly debated one in the canonical literatures of Classical Indian Philosophy. In the context of Colonial India and post-independence India, Indian thinkers (like Gandhi, Ambedkar, Daya Krishna, et al.) have shown remarkable inventiveness in contextualizing the concept of suffering and re-conceiving it, consciously or otherwise, to suit it to ‘the chaos of the contemporary moment’, to borrow E.M. Forster’s phrase.

The seminar hopes to raise and address some questions that emerge prominently while discussing ‘Suffering’ in the context of Indian Philosophy in the 21st century. For instance, is Indian Philosophy essentially pessimistic and spiritualistic? Is suffering central to the metaphysical and epistemological landscapes of Indian thought or is it just an expedient leitmotif? What are the ways in which one could re-interpret some of the classical debates around suffering and glean insights from therein to address some challenges faced by the Indian society and the world at large, in contemporary times? Have advancements made in the natural sciences shed any light on the essential nature of suffering? Can debates on suffering in Indian Philosophy benefit from engaging with western perspectives on parallel issues?

We invite students, scholars and teachers to present papers at the seminar in one of the four panels, segregated thematically:

1. The Historiographical problem

To what extent is suffering (and by extension, the ideal of liberation) central to the Indian Philosophical discourse as a whole?

We situate the discussion in the context of the historiographical debates among contemporary thinkers like Daya Krishna, Matilal, Mohanty, and others as well as the larger context of postcolonial theory vis-à-vis Gayatri Spivak, Purushottama Bilimoria, and others.

2. The Physical dimension

What are the various ways in which Indian Philosophy engages with physical suffering?

The debate could be situated in the context of the so-called Medical Schools of Indian Philosophy and Classical texts of others schools. Presenters may also bring in perspectives from contemporary debates and developments in neurobiology, cognitive sciences and consciousness studies as well as phenomenological perspectives on embodiment, among others.

3. The Psychosocial and Environmental dimensions

Suffering is analyzed, in Indian thought, not only in terms of the individual, embodied soul but also in terms of the species as a whole and the community taken as a unit.

What are the dimensions of psychological suffering explored in Indian thought? What do the analyses of social and environmental evils have to offer to debates on Caste, Gender, Race, Democracy, Ecology, and Environmental Protection, among others?

4. The Metaphysical Dimension

How can the ontological debates in Indian Philosophy benefit from a closer analysis of the concept of suffering in various traditions? How do we separate the normative and the ontic aspects of 'suffering'?

Presenters are requested to submit titles and abstracts for their papers, along with details of institutional affiliation, latest by 25th of January, 2018. Each presenter will get about 15 minutes for the presentation followed by Q&A. Presenters are , therefore, requested to stick to the maximum word limit of 5000 words. Please note that presenters will not be provided travel and accommodation assistance by the organizers.

Please mail abstracts and papers or any other queries to the Co-ordinator, Mr. Harish Pedaprolu, J.R.F. , Dept. Of Philosophy, University of Mumbai, at:

events.philosophy@gmail.com

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