Commemorating 25 Years of the **Institute of Advanced Interdisciplinary Studies**, Aluva (iaiss.com) & **Omega** – Indian Journal of Science and Religion



INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

Emotions, Beliefs, and Mental Health:

Cognitive and Neurological Perspectives

February 1-3, 2025

Held at

Jnana Niketan Institute of Philosophy and Religion
Little Flower Seminary, Aluva
(February 1-2, 2025) [09.30 am to 4.30 pm]
&
Loyola College of Social Sciences
Trivandrum
(February 3, 2025) [09.30 am to 4.30 pm]

Academic Partners

- ***Brain, Belief, & Behaviour Laboratory,*** **Coventry University, England**
- **Indian Institute of Science & Religion, New Delhi**
- **XLIR, Loyola College of Social Sciences, Trivandrum**
- **JRD Tata Foundation for Business Ethics, XLRI, Jamshedpur**
- **Department of Psychology, KE College, Mannanam**
- **Department of Psychology, LISSAH College, Kozhikode**

JNANA NIKETAN

INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION
LITTLE FLOWER SEMINARY, ALUVA

www.lfsaluva.org

With a history that spans over six decades, this institution was originally established in 1960 by Very Rev Basilius Panat CST under the name "Little Flower Study House." Two years later, in 1962, it evolved into a Major Seminary dedicated to the study of Philosophy and Religion.



The Institute of Philosophy and Religion at Little Flower Seminary, previously known as the Little Flower Institute of Philosophy and Religion (LIPAR), under instruction from Vatican to distinguish between formation and academia, was officially renamed as the "Jnana Niketan Institute of Philosophy and Religion" in October 2023, establishing a formal affiliation with Jnana Deepa - Institute of Philosophy and Theology, in Pune. The Seminary serves as a welcoming residence for major Seminarians belonging to the Congregation and attracts seminarians from diverse religious congregations and dioceses.

As our Founder's Religious Vision formed itself into a community, he found out a plan and program of action to train the candidates according to his vision and way of life. The foundations of his programme of formation were his prudent adaptation of the concrete living-context of the people and of his times. His life and vision were influenced not only by his spiritual and religious convictions but also by the Freedom movement of India, Nationalist Movements, Rural Upliftment Ideologies and scientific thinking. Jnana Niketan, Institute of Philosophy and Religion is a tangible expression to the legacy and heritage of its Founder to the new generations.

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PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Saturday, February 1, 2025

09.00 am	Registration
09.30-10.00	**Opening Ceremony**
Prayer Song	Choir, Little Flower Seminary
Welcome	**Dr Joby John Edamuriyil** President, Jnana Niketan Institute of Philosophy & Religion
Presidential Address	**Dr KS Radhakrishnan** (Former Chairman, Kerala Public Service Commission)
Inaugural Address	**Dr Gerald Grudzen** (President, Global Ministries University, California)
	Lighting the Lamp
Felicitation	**Dr Sabu P Thomas** Principal, Loyola College of Social Sciences, Trivandrum
	Dr Miguel Farias (Oxford University)

	Rev Francis Chittinappilly (Rector, Little Flower Seminary, Aluva)
09.30 - 10.30	***Keynote Address***
	Dr Job Kozhamthadam (President, Indian Institute of Science and Religion, New Delhi)
11.00 - 11.15	Tea Break
11.15 - 12.15pm	***From the Heart: Testing the Efficacy of Heart-centred Contemplation*** Dr Miguel Farias (Oxford University) Mary Liya PE (KE College Mannanam) Sreeparvathy (KE College, Mannanam)
12.15 – 01.15	***The Heart: A Philosophical Model of the Moral and Religious Emotions*** Dr David Leech (Bristol University, UK)
01.15 - 02.00	Lunch
02.00 - 03.00	***Connecting the Scientific Study of Religious Believing and Mental Health. Does Theology Play any Role?*** Dr Lluis Oviedo (Pontifical University Antonianum, Rome)
03.00 - 40.00	***Brazilian Indigenous Beliefs: A Cosmology of Bidirectional Intentionality*** Marta Helena de Freitas (Catholic University of Brasilia, Brazil)
04.00 – 04.30	***The Affective and the Existential: An Indigenous Norm*** Dr. Saji Varghese (North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong)
04.30 – 04.45	Coffee Break
04.45 - 06.00	***Parallel Sessions***
08.00	Dinner

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2025

07.30am	Breakfast
09.00 - 10.30	***New Psychological and Spiritual Paradigms for Small Faith Communities*** Dr. Gerald Grudzen (Global Ministries University, California) Dr. Reginald Nalugala (Tangaza University, Kenya) Dr. Thomas James (Global Ministries University, California)
	The Psychological and Cognitive Dynamics of Faith Growth in Small Communities: A Case Study of Science and Faith Dialogue Over 13 Years Dr. Robert Graf (Global Ministries University, California)
10.30 - 10.45	Tea Break
10.45 - 12.15	***Understanding Atheism: Neurocognitive Perspectives*** Dr Augustine Pamplany (Institute of Advanced Interdisciplinary Studies, Aluva) ***'Atheism Explained' Research Project*** Dr Miguel Farias (Oxford University)
	The Spectrum of Dissipated God-Concepts: Some Observations on the Social Psychology of Atheism Dr Pius V Thomas (Assam University, Silchar)
	Mindfulness as an Epistemic Tool towards Coherence in Buddhist Cognitive Practice Sreekala Nair
12.15 -01.00	***Ethical Resilience and Emotional Regulation: Fostering Integrity and Well-Being in the Face of Emotional Challenges*** Dr Kuruvilla Pandikattu (XLRI, Jamshedpur)
01.00-01.45	Lunch
01.45-03.00	***Parallel Sessions***
03.00-03.45	***Spiritual Practices and Mental Health: Insights from the Bhagavad Gita*** Dr Ramesh Pattni (Chinmaya Viswa Vidyapeeth, Kochi)
03.45-04.15	***Valedictory***
Closing Exhortation	**Dr Binoy Jacob**

Concluding Remarks	
Certificate Presentation	**Dr Jojo Joseph** (Superior General, Little Flower Congregation)
04.15	Tea, Departure

February 1, 2025

Parallel Session I: Indigenous/Contextual Beliefs
Venue: Auditorium

04.45-05.05	***Addressing Spiritual Requirements of a Person in Need of Palliative Care: The Present Context in Indian Scenarios*** Dr Jerry Joseph
05.05-0525	***Prayer, Spirituality, and Healing in Garo Tribal Beliefs: A Study of Traditional Practices and Mental Well-being*** Tengrik Marak
05.25-05.45	***Sacred Groves and Its Influence in Khasi Cultural Belief*** Skhemborlang Kurbah
05.45-06.00	***Practicality of AI Assisted Mindful Meditation in Enhancing Mental Health*** Meera Maheswari PS, Ahada Kabeer, Anila Daniel

Parallel Session II: Emotions
Venue: Conference Hall

04.45-05.00	***The Role of Emotion in Moral Decision-Making: A Comparative Analysis of Immanuel Kant and Antonio Damasio*** Dr Joby John
05.05-05.20	***The Interplay of Emotions and Cognition in Belief Formation*** Remya C
05.20-05.40	***Quantum Analogies in Emotion: Superposition and Decoherence in Plutchik's Wheel*** Puthuparambil Anju Abraham

05.40-06.00	***From Guilt to Growth: A Psychological Reinterpretation of the Seven Deadly Sins*** Nisha Jose T

Parallel Session III: Beliefs and Models
Venue: Lecture Room 1

04.45-05.05	***Boundaries of the Self: A Critical Analysis of the Extended Mind Theory*** Shameera Beevi
05.05-05.25	***Franics Collins as a Model of the Dialogue Between Science and Religious Belief*** Jos Parambi
05.25-05.45	***Cosmic Anthropic Principle and the Evolutionary Roots of Religious Belief: An Interdisciplinary Exploration*** Asoontha Mathew

Parallel Session IV: Online Session
Venue: Lecture Room 2

04.45-05.05	***Fierce Protectors of the Dharma: Exploring the Iconographies and Oral Narratives of Dorje Drolo and Palden Lhamo in Tibetan Buddhism*** Tenzin Nyima Bhutia
05.05-05.25	***Are Emotions That Bad?*** Dr Tigi Abraham
05.25-05.45	***The Silent Struggle: Religio-Phobia's Impact on Mental Health*** Dr. Joji Valli
05.45-06.00	***Mindfulness, Meditation, and Mental Health*** Dr Sr Nikhila Purayidathil (Shijimol Thomas)

February 2, 2025

Parallel Session V: Indian Psychology & Context
Venue: Auditorium

01.40-02.00	***Yogic Consciousness*** Radhakrishna Panikkar

02.00-02.20	***Can Consciousness Continue after Death*** Dr. Thomaskutty Mathew
02.20-02.40	***Vāda and Inner Balance: Argumentation in Nyāya for Mental Fortitude*** Gayatri S
02.40-03.00	***Sattva Guna Qualities in Individuals and their Correlation with Mental Wellbeing*** Anjana Devi PD & Lakshmi S Priya

Parallel Session VI: Mental Health
Venue: Conference Hall

01.40-02.00	***Desire, Renunciation and Mental Health*** Yadunath R Varma
02.00-02.20	***Unveiling the Dark Side: The Adverse Impact of Religious Guilt and Shame on Mental Health*** Rebecca R Johnson, Afsana Ninar, Thomas Biju, Dr. Pramod S
02.20-02.40	***Efficacy of using Digital Apps in fostering Spirituality and Mental Well-being in Generation Z*** Nayana Anish & Aparna Rajeev

Parallel Session VII: Mindfulness and Art
Venue: Lecture Room 1

01.40-02.00	***Integrating Mindfulness in English Language Education: Enhancing Emotional Resilience and Cognitive Performance*** Ahinasha NS, Dr. Mini M Abraham
02.00-02.20	***Will to Believe and Wellbeing: A Pragmatic Approach*** Dr Libin Joseph
02.20-02.40	***Art and the Theatre of the Soul*** Roy Thottam
02.40-.03.00	***The Psychology of Art*** Sreepadma Panicker

Parallel Session VIII: Online Session
Venue: Lecture Room 2

01.40-02.00	***Buddhist Teachings on Compassion: Cultivating an Emotion for Liberation*** Dr Arockiaraj SJ
02.00-02.20	***The Significance of the Body: Spinoza's Insights and the Psychology of Emotions*** Rajeev Joseph Palakkacherry
02.20-02.40	***Cosmic Interconnectedness in Maram Indigenous Worldview: A Scientific Appropriation*** Dr Bindu Thomas

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Emotions, Beliefs, and Mental Health: Cognitive and Neurological Perspectives

Theme Note

Recent findings from cognitive sciences have shed significant light on the complex relationship between emotions and mental health. Adaptive Emotion Regulation Strategies like cognitive reappraisal and mindfulness have been shown to enhance emotional well-being. In contrast, maladaptive strategies such as rumination and suppression are linked to increased risk of mental health disorders. Positive emotions play a crucial role in building emotional resilience. Researches have shown that exposures to the experiences of love, joy, gratitude, humility, generosity, etc., can enhance overall mental health by promoting adaptive coping mechanisms and fostering social connections. Positive emotional experiences have been found to support neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections. This can aid in recovery from mental health disorders by strengthening adaptive neural pathways. Mindfulness-based interventions have been shown to improve emotional regulation and reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress.

Further, Cognitive Study of Religion (CSR) has become a prominent field of scientific research today. Exploration of the cognitive foundations of religious belief, emotions, meditation, rituals, etc., has much to contribute to the researches into mental health. Faith-based interventions for therapeutic alliance, understanding the neurocognitive mechanisms of belief and non-belief, coping benefits of hope, purpose and meaning, etc., are some of the leading areas of research in the field. Understanding the intricate

relationship between emotions, religious beliefs, and mental health is paramount for advancing both theoretical knowledge and practical interventions in psychological and neurological sciences.

Integrating the cognitive models and neurological evidence, this conference aims to foster a deeper understanding of the dynamic interplay between emotions, religious beliefs, and mental health. This conference deliberates the cognitive and neurological underpinnings of how emotions and religious beliefs interact to influence mental health outcomes. We will explore the cognitive mechanisms by which emotions shape religious belief systems and, conversely, how deeply held religious beliefs affect emotional regulation and resilience. Participants will gain knowledge of cutting-edge research and practical applications, fostering a holistic approach to mental health that incorporates both cognitive and neurological perspectives.

Speakers and Panelists

1. Dr Miguel Farias (Oxford University)
2. Dr Job Kozhamthadam (Indian Institute of Science and Religion, New Delhi)
3. Dr Lluis Oviedo (Pontifical University Antonianum, Rome)
4. Dr Martha Helena Freitas (Catholic University of Brasilia, Brazil)
5. Dr David Leech (Bristol University, England)
6. Dr Ramesh Pattni, OBE, Chinmaya Vishwa Vidyapeeth, Deemed University, Kochi
7. Dr Pius Thomas Vazhappilly (Assam University, Silchar)
8. Dr Gerald Grudzen (Global Ministries University, California)
9. Dr Kuruvilla Pandikattu (XLRI, Jamshedpur)
10. Dr Reginald Nalugala (Tangaza University, Kenya)
11. Dr Robert Graf (Global Ministries University, California)
12. Dr Binoy Jacob (Loyola Institute of Peace and International Relations, Kochi)
13. Dr Saji Varghese, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong
14. Dr Sreekala M. Nair, Department of Philosophy, SSUS, Kalady
15. Dr Thomas James (Global Ministries University, California)
16. Dr Augustine Pamplany (Institute of Advanced Interdisciplinary Studies, Aluva)
17. Ms Mary Liya PE, Research Assistant, KE College, Mannanam.
18. Ms Sreeparvathy, Research Assistant, KE College, Mannanam

Honorary Guests

19. Dr Jojo Joseph CST, Superior General, Little Flower Congregation
20. Dr K Babu Joseph (Former VC, Cochin University of Science and Technology)

21. Dr KS Radhakrishnan (Former Chairman, Kerala PSC.)
22. Dr Joseph Mathew, Loretto Ashram, Moovattupuzha
23. Dr Martin Kallungal, Institute of Advanced Interdisciplinary Studies, Aluva
24. Dr TV Antony, Former Professor, St. Joseph's College, Trichy.

Short Paper Presenters

25. Nisha Jose, Vathil Foundation, Kottayam.
26. Sr. Asoontha Mathew, Sacred Heart Higher Secondary School, Dwaraka, Manan-thavady
27. Jos Parambi, Business Consultant and Former Director, Mohinai Group, Hong Kong
28. Yadunath R Varma, Self Realization Initiative, Kochi.
29. Skhemborlang Kurbah, Research Scholar, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya.
30. Tengrik Marak, Research Scholar, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Megha-laya.
31. Radhakrishna Panikkar, Saisree Math Centre, Tripunithura
32. Nayana Anish, Department of Psychology, Chinmaya Viswa Vidyapeeth, Kochi
33. Lakshmi S Priya, Department of Psychology, Chinmaya Viswa Vidyapeeth, Kochi
34. Anjana Devi, Department of Psychology, Chinmaya Viswa Vidyapith, Kochi
35. Aparna Rajiv, Department of Psychology, Chinmaya Viswa Vidyapeeth, Kochi
36. Remya C., Research Scholar, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady
37. Gayatri S., Research Scholar, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady
38. Dr. Shameera Beevi, Department of Philosophy, St. Xavier's College, Trivandrum.
39. Dr Thomaskutty, Open International University, Colombo.
40. Rev. Jusline Padinjaremattom, Little Flower Higher Secondary School, Muktsar, Punjab.
41. Fr Sijo Azhakathumannil, Snehalayam, Choondy, Aluva
42. Anju Abraham, Research Fellow, Department of Physics, Kerala University.
43. Dr Joby Edamuriyil, Jnana Niketan Institute of Philosophy, Aluva
44. Dr Libin Kozhikkott, Jnana Niketan Institute of Philosophy, Aluva
45. Dr Pooja Dabral, Department of Philosophy, Nalanda University, Nalanda, Bihar
46. Dr Pramod SK, Department of Psychology, Loyola College, Trivandrum.
47. Meera Maheswari PS. MSc Psychology, Loyola College, Trivandrum
48. Ahada Kabeer, MSc Psychology, Loyola College, Trivandrum

49. Ms Anila Daniel, Loyola College, Trivandrum
50. Afsana Ninar, MSc Psychology, Loyola College, Trivandrum
51. Rebecca Johnson, MSc Psychology, Loyola College, Trivandrum
52. Thomas Biju, MSc Psychology, Loyola College, Trivandrum
53. Ahinasha NS, St. Theresa's College, Ernakulam
54. Dr. Mini M Abraham, St. Theresa's College, Ernakulam
55. Dr Tigi Abraham, Jnana Niketan Institute of Philosophy, Aluva (Online)
56. Tenzin Bhutia, Department of Philosophy, Sikkim Central University (Online)
57. Dr Jogi Joseph, Department of Psychology, Dindigal (Online)
58. Dr Arockiaraj SJ, Satyanilayam Research Institute, Chennai (Online)
59. Dr Sr Nikhila SD, St. Thomas College of Nursing, Balasore (Online)
60. Rajeev Palackacherry, Research Scholar, Dharmaram College, Bangalore (Online)

Participants

61. Dr Shibu Joseph, St. Xavier's College, Trivandrum
62. Rev Sr Merlin Paul, National Institute of Technology, Kozhikode
63. Sr Mable Dmello BS, Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany, Mangalore.
64. Sr Shalet Dsouza BS, Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany, Mangalore.
65. Rishanlang Nongrum, Department of Philosophy, NEHU, Shillong.
66. Sebastian, Freelance Researcher and Publisher, Kochi.
67. Noel Panatt, Cherthala, Kerala.
68. Deepthi KS, St. Xavier's College, Thumba, Trivandrum
69. Adithya AJ, St. Xavier's College, Thumba, Trivandrum
70. Sandra S Santhosh, St. Xavier's College, Thumba, Trivandrum
71. Anisree AS, St. Xavier's College, Thumba, Trivandrum
72. Sumesh, St. Xavier's College, Thumba, Trivandrum
73. Midhila, St. Xavier's College, Thumba, Trivandrum
74. Dr EP. Mathew, Christ Hall, Kozhikode.
75. Dr Saji Thomas, Mananthavady.
76. Dr George John, Psychiatrist, Kochi
77. Dr KM Mathew, Loyola Institute of International Relations and Peace Studies, Kochi
78. Manoj, Ezhuthu Magazine, Kochi
79. Dr Aby Sebastian, Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, Rome

80. Merin Cherian, Department of Psychology, Bharata Mata College, Kochi
81. Mehrin KS, Department of Psychology, Bharata Mata College, Kochi
82. Bhavya D Naick, Department of Psychology, Bharata Mata College, Kochi
83. Navya PR, Department of Psychology, Bharata Mata College, Kochi
84. Vismaya Vinod, Department of Psychology, Bharata Mata College, Kochi
85. Emil Rose Valooran, Department of Psychology, Bharata Mata College, Kochi
86. Anjanadevi Manjesh, Department of Psychology, Bharata Mata College, Kochi
87. Nisha Maria PA, Department of Psychology, Bharata Mata College, Kochi
88. Manna Rose Davis, Department of Psychology, Bharata Mata College, Kochi
89. Dr Gayatri Devi MS, HOD, Department of Psychology, Bharata Mata College, Kochi
90. Ms Punya, Research Scholar, Loyola College of Social Sciences, Trivandrum.
91. KR George Jose, Freelance Researcher, Vyttila, Kochi.
92. Ms Helena Vadakkumthala, Choondy
93. Namratha Ramesh R, MSc Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
94. Aswathi P.D, MSc Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
95. Greeshma Thomas, MSc Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
96. Jefia Chacko, MSc Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
97. Jyothika Nair, MSc Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
98. Keerthi G Prasad, MSc Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
99. Liya Joseph, MSc Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
100. MV Nandana, MSc Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
101. Namitha Ramesh R, MSc Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
102. Reema Wilson, MSc Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
103. Sandra Samuel, MSc Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
104. Teresa Salas, MSc Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
105. Adithyan R, MSc Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
106. Muhammed Shihas K, MSc Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
107. Sobin K Jose, MSc Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
108. Chinchu Rani Vincent, Professor of Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
109. Julia Mackolil Professor of Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
110. Jishnu Pradeep, Faculty, Department of Psychology, KE College, Mannanam
111. Devika DP, MSc Psychology, Loyola College, Trivandrum
112. Nayana A, MSc Psychology, Loyola College, Trivandrum

113. Athira Sankar, MSc Psychology, Loyola College, Trivandrum
114. Alvin Gigi, MSc Psychology, Loyola College, Trivandrum
115. Archana R, MA Archaeology, Maharaja's College, Ernakulam
116. Anoop KS, Research Scholar, Maharaja's College, Ernakulam
117. Naivedya J, MSc Physics, Maharaja's College, Ernakulam
118. Hishana P, MSc Physics, Maharaja's College, Ernakulam
119. Reshmi TR, Maharaja's College, Ernakulam
120. Shajin Shaji, Mar Thoma Seminary, Kottayam
121. Christy K Santosh, Mar Thoma Seminary, Kottayam
122. Linto Lalachan, Mar Thoma Seminary, Kottayam
123. Sijo Varghese, Mar Thoma Seminary, Kottayam
124. Nidhin Raj Panackal, Saisree Math Centre, Tripunithura
125. Ms Aleesha Moideen, St. Theresa's College, Ernakulam
126. Ms Sreepadma Panicker, St. Theresa's College, Ernakulam
127. Jose Jacob, Lumen Jyothis, Kochi
128. Joye James, Shantigram, Integral Centre for Transactional Analysis, Kalamassery
129. Gracious Stephen, Loyola, Aluva
130. MJ Thomas, Lumen Jyothis, Kochi
131. Xavier Tharamel, Sameeksha, Kalady
132. Rachans Lukose, Loyola, Aluva
133. Dr Sr Sijo Francis, HoD, Department of Chemistry, St Joseph's College, Moolamattam
134. Rev Roy Thottam, Director, Thanmaya Jesuit Media and Arts Centre, Kottayam
135. Prof Sivakumar, Saisree Math Centre, Tripunithura

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Abstracts & Speaker Profiles

Keynote Address:

From Mystery to History: How Neuroscience-AI Collaboration Is Relegating Traditional Myths about the Mind & Brain to the Archives of History?

Dr Job Kozhamthadam

Recent developments in AI (Artificial Intelligence) and neuroscience are among the greatest achievements of humans to date. Not only are these two making remarkable progress in their own respective domains, but, more importantly, they are supporting and enriching each other through active and productive collaboration. After presenting some of the basic elements of both neuroscience and AI-technology, this paper discusses some instances of this mutually enriching collaborative interaction between the two. It also discusses some of the social impact of these developments by pointing out how these new knowledge and insights into the complexity of the brain and the functioning of the mind have helped correct

and banish some of the old false ideas about the nature and functioning of the brain and the mind, particularly about the source of and remedy for mental disorders and diseases. These false ideas have been abandoned by the new generation and have been relegated to the archives of history. Finally, while appreciating and applauding this creative collaboration, it points out also some of the risks involved in some of these developments and calls for keeping prudent oversight and applying judicious control by appropriate authorities.

Dr. Job Kozhamthadam earned his Ph.D. in History and Philosophy of Science from the University of Maryland, USA, following his M.A. in the same field from the University of Notre Dame, USA, and an M.Sc. in Physics from Patna University, India. Dr. Kozhamthadam served as a Professor of Philosophy of Science, Cosmology, and Science & Religion at Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth in Pune and was a Visiting Professor at Loyola University of Chicago from 1989 to 1994. He served as President of Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth from 2006 to 2012. Dr. Kozhamthadam is widely recognized for pioneering the Science-Religion Dialogue in India. He established several institutions, including the Indian Institute of Science and Religion (IISR), the Association of Science, Religion & Society (ASSR), and the CBCI Committee for Science, Religion and Society (CBCI-CSRS). A prolific writer, he has authored 11 books and over 180 papers published in national and international journals. His publication, The Discovery of Kepler's Laws: The Interaction of Science, Philosophy, and Religion, received the Outstanding Academic Book of the Year Award in 1994 from Choice Magazine. His contributions have been honored with numerous accolades, including the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2014 for promoting education and the Science-Religion Dialogue in India, presented by Smt. Pratibha D. Patil, former President of India. Dr. Kozhamthadam has held prestigious memberships, including the Indian National Commission for the History of Science (INSA), the New York Academy of Sciences, and The British Society for the Philosophy of Science. He is a Fellow of the International Society for Science and Religion (ISSR) in Cambridge, UK. Currently, Dr. Kozhamthadam is engaged in a multi-volume project titled Jesuits and Modern Science: Jesuit Contribution to the Origin and Development of Modern Science.

From the Heart: Testing the Efficacy of Heart-centred Contemplation

Dr. Miguel Farias, Mary Liya PE, Sreeparvathy

We will discuss an ongoing project which presents three novelties in meditation research: first, it aims to expand the current contemplative science by focusing on techniques which were developed within Christian and Islamic traditions; second, it retains its original other/God-centered focus; and third, it uses techniques which include core elements of heart visualisation and elicit strong emotions (in contrast

to mindfulness and other secularised meditation practices that typically have a relaxation effect). Psychophysiological, cognitive, social functioning, and self-report outcomes, including heart rate variability, pain tolerance, attention, prosociality, forgiveness, stress, anxiety, and depression will be assessed at three timepoints. This trial is ongoing at two locations in Kerala.

Dr Miguel Farias's research expertise is on the science of meditation, and in the interaction between cognitive-behavioural and biological dimensions of spiritual practices and experiences. He studied psychology and cognitive-behaviour therapy at the University of Lisbon, followed by a doctorate in experimental psychology at Oxford University (2000-2004), and an MA in the study of religion/religious experience at the University of Wales, Lampeter (2005). He has been a postdoctoral researcher at Cambridge University and Oxford University (2005-2007) and a Lecturer in Experimental Psychology at Oxford University (2008-2013). He has been a principal investigator or co-principal investigator in 16 research grants, and his work has been reported across international newspaper and magazines, radio and tv documentaries. He has written for New Scientist, Spectator, and the BBC. His book The Buddha Pill: Can Meditation Change You? with Catherine Wikholm, has been translated into various languages. In 2017 he won the William Bier award, given by the American Psychological Association, Division 36, for his contributions to the psychological study of spirituality. His most recent book is the Oxford Handbook of Meditation.

Mary Liya PE holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from St Teresa's College, and a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology, with second rank from Kuriakose Elias College. Liya developed strong academic skills. She worked as a Psychology Lecturer at Mater Dei CMI College, Adoor. Later she worked at Sree Narayana Public School, Ernakulam, as a Psychology Teacher and Counsellor. She joined the Research team as a Research Assistant to conduct experiments for the multi-site project titled 'From the Heart: Multi-center Stratified 3-arm Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) in June 2024.

Sreeparvathy J is a dedicated psychology professional with a solid academic background, holding both a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in Psychology from Kuriakose Elias College, affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, where she graduated with third rank in the MSc Psychology program. Her professional journey began at Kuriakose Elias College in Mannanam, where she graduated and was later hired as a guest lecturer. Starting in December 2023, she contributed to the academic environment as a lecturer. Since June 2024, she has been working as a Research Assistant, contributing remotely from India to a multi-site project titled "From the Heart: Multi-center Stratified 3-arm Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)."

The Heart: A Philosophical Model of the Moral and Religious Emotions

Dr. David Leech

In the first part of this talk I will survey some classical (Aquinas, Palamas, Pascal, Al Ghazali) and more recent (Wynn, Steinbock, Depraz) philosophical/phenomenological models of the 'religious heart', specifically, as it is understood as a sui generis mode of moral and religious cognition. In the second part, I will explore some existing attempts to correlate heart knowing with psychological models such as implicational knowing (Teasdale and Barnard) and somatic markers/gut feelings (Damasio). I argue that while these psychological models do, to a degree, illuminate what heart cognition is, their implicit phenomenology is only a partial fit with traditional models of the religious heart, and I explore ways in which the philosophical/phenomenological models can help refine or even shape new research agendas for the psychology of religious heart cognition.

David Leech is Senior Lecturer in the Philosophy of Religion at the University of Bristol, UK. His research spans work on early modern philosophy, philosophical implications of cognitive and evolutionary accounts of religion, and philosophical atheism/agnosticism. He is currently working on a monograph on the religious heart.

Connecting the Scientific Study of Religious Believing and Mental Health. Does Theology Play any Role?"

Dr Lluis Oviedo

Beliefs and the process of believing have been studied extensively in recent years, combining cognitive psychology, epistemology, neuroscience and even artificial intelligence. As a result, we now have a better understanding of the process and the many factors that influence what we believe or how we form new beliefs. It is clear that beliefs play an important role in mental and physical health. This link has been increasingly emphasised in psychotherapy and psychiatry, with many conditions resulting from problems in adjusting beliefs or in holding those that become healthier. Emotions are clearly involved in this process. This presentation tries to outline the state of research in this interface between beliefs and health, and to

explore the role that theology could play in better guiding the believing process, a role that has been quite absent until now.

Lluís Oviedo is a distinguished theologian specializing in Fundamental Theology. He earned his doctorate in Theology (PhD) from the Gregorian University of Rome in 1989. Since 1992, he has served as an Ordinary Professor of Theological Anthropology and Fundamental Theology at the Pontifical University Antonianum in Rome. Additionally, he has been an Invited Professor at the Gregorian University of Rome since 2003, focusing on the interplay between Christian faith, society, and science. Professor Oviedo Torró has made significant contributions to academic publishing, including his tenure as editor of the periodical Antonianum from 1997 to 2004. He currently leads a project on "Interdisciplinary and Empirical Theology" at the Antonianum University, which fosters dialogue between theology and the human and social sciences. Since 2008, he has also been the editor of ESSSAT News, the official bulletin of the European Society for the Study of Science and Theology. An active scholar, Professor Oviedo Torró regularly contributes to Reviews in Religion and Theology. His academic memberships include the European Society for the Study of Science and Theology (ESSSAT), the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR), and the International Association for the Cognitive Science of Religion (IACSR). His ongoing efforts highlight a commitment to exploring the intersections of theology, science, and society, reinforcing his role as a key figure in contemporary theological scholarship.

Brazilian Indigenous Beliefs: A Cosmology of Bidirectional Intentionality

Dr Marta Helena de Freitas

During this conference we will establish a dialogue between the phenomenological and cognitive approaches, intending to describe and understand Brazilian indigenous cosmology and its psychosocial implications in the contemporary world, especially in the health contexts. To support this dialogue, we consider the phenomenological concept of intentionality and the cognitive concept of belief, making links between contributions from philosophy, psychology, and anthropology. We believe that these links will help us to describe, contextualize and understand similarities and differences between Brazilian and other indigenous groups in the contemporary world and its implications for their health treatments.

Marta Helena de Freitas is a clinical psychologist, earned a master's degree and doctorate in Psychology (University of Brasília, Brazil), with post-doctorates in Psychology of Religion (University of Kent at Canterbury, UK), Intercultural Psychology (University of OPorto, Portugal) and Anthropology of Religion (University of Wales Trinity University Saint David - UWTSD, UK). She is professor and researcher in the

Psychology Program at the Catholic University of Brasília, Brazil, where she coordinates the lab "Religion, Mental Health and Culture". She has extensive technical and bibliographical production in the psychology of religion, and phenomenology. She also has a scholarship in Researcher Productivity with the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) in Brazil. She is also an Honorary Research Fellow at the UWTSD, in the UK, a member of the American Psychology Association (APA), and currently the President of the International Association for the Psychology of Religion (IAPR).

The Affective and the Existential: An Indigenous Norm

Dr. Saji Varghese

The primordial characteristic of the indigenous communities is built on these aspects of affectivity as in contrast to 'modern rationality.' Humean sense of human being more passionate than rational is a paradigm shift from the arena of the intellect to the context. Heidegger describes the human being as a historical being. In its thrownness, Dasein discovers itself within a historical context. This context is nothing but the domain of the 'they-self' or culture. The historical phenomenon of culture is the way of life of a people. Culture comes into expression and institutes itself through history and language. Without a specifically vibrant historical consciousness, conscious reflection over the creative forces of culture cannot be undertaken. The paper would delve into the affective mode as a unique and historical mode of transformation within indigenous communities and can have their relevance in contemporary global scenario.

Saji Varghese is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy, North- Eastern Hill University, Shillong. His Ph. D dissertation (2003) is on Political Philosophy of Antonio Gramsci. His areas of interests are in Environmental Ethics, Cultures in transition, and on transformative ideologies. He has a number of papers in National and International journals ,two self-authored books and edited volumes including Beyond Humanism (New Delhi,2014).The book is in the PG syllabus of paper code MASOC 508 ,Sociology of Development in the Department of Sociology ,Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh , Nature, Culture and Philosophy (New Delhi,2014). This book is in the PG syllabus of paper code ENGADL14054 ,Studies in Environmental Humanities ,Department of English ,Bodoland University, Assam. Culture, Identity and Development (New Delhi,2015), Globalization and Cultural Pluralism (New Delhi, 2016). Special Issue on the theme 'Socio-Political Dimensions of the Covid-19 Pandemic: India and the world'(Vol.VII and Vol.VII ,Keanean Journal of Arts ,2020 and 2021), Philosophy and the calling of Global Responsibility (co-editor New Delhi,2022) , Living with other Faiths : Indian Challenges and Musings (

New Delhi,2023), Better Indeed Than all the Lands : The Contemporary South Asian Discourse of Nationalism (New Delhi,2023), The End of Conflict : Essays on War ,Peace and Reconciliation (co-editor New Delhi, 2023) . Dharma of Peace Building (Springer, Singapore, co-editor ,2024). Practices of Peace: Essays on War, Peace and Reconciliation (co-editor New Delhi ,2024). Culture, Traditions and Philosophy: Contemporary Narratives (New Delhi ,2024). He taught Philosophy at Lady Keane College, Shillong, Meghalaya from September ,1994 to September 2023. Email: saji_villa@yahoo.com; ORCID 0000-0003-3447-8574.

New Psychological and Spiritual Paradigms for Small Faith Communities

Prof. Dr. Gerald Grudzen, Dr. Reginald Nalugala, Dr. Thomas James

The growth of small spiritual communities is a hallmark of our contemporary historical era. My brief paper discusses this phenomenon from a historical and interfaith perspective. It also attempts to show the interface between one's spiritual and social identity and the complementary role played by a small spiritual community that expands our identity and purpose in our life journey. We are witnessing today the decline of more traditional religious institutions but also the growth of small spiritual communities that may transcend the boundaries of formal religious bodies. These communities often draw from multiple scientific and spiritual viewpoints and traditions. I will begin with the Catholic spiritual tradition.

Small spiritual communities were common in the first few centuries of Christianity. Since Christianity was considered an alien religion in the Roman Empire, Christians had to find refuge in household gatherings rather than large public buildings. The clerical structure of Catholicism largely developed in the fourth century after the conversion of Constantine. The resurgence and growth of small spiritual communities within Catholicism has largely evolved with the current theological and sociological changes brought about by Vatican Council II (1962-1965). The teachings of Vatican II provided an opening for new structures to emerge, which gave credence to the role of the laity in the life of the church and society at large. The alienation of many people in Western societies from traditional religious organizations and the decline of vocations to the priesthood and religious life in Roman Catholicism has led to new spiritual groups emphasizing psychological and spiritual growth and support for each other's life challenges and crises. Most of these groups are now led by lay people given the decline of men and women entering the priesthood or religious life.

Further developments in these small communities include opening to diverse spiritual paradigms drawn from multiple cultural and humanistic paradigms that have roots in the scientific studies of spiritual experience. Some of these groups have drawn from the meditative experience of Buddhism and Hinduism, emphasizing that there are many paths to enlightenment and human solidarity. In our age, the proliferation of false and delusional states of consciousness have proliferated through social media leading to the breakdown of human connections. Recent studies in the neurological sciences indicate that meditative practices can help to break these delusional states of consciousness. "Enlightenment consists in transforming delusions into wisdom that is the realization of Buddhahood in everyday life." ´Chan Consciousness and Enlightenment and the Spiritual; Dimension of Humans: Jijimon Alakkalam Joseph, The Human Soul in a World of the Neurological Sciences, page 214). Recent studies on the nature of the soul in human experience indicate that the soul stands at the center of spiritual experience. "Following the insights from neurosciences and from (the) narrative self, we may hold that the soul is the center of our spiritual experiences. From a spiritual perspective, the soul may be considered as the narrative of our spiritual story." (Neurology and the Soul: Exploring the Story of Spiritual Dimension of Human Existence. page 140, Ibid).

One of the key roles of the small spiritual communities could be to help the participants remove false states of consciousness that have proliferated in the modern world of social media and attain a new consciousness that connects us with the cosmic spiritual wholeness of the universe. S9ee Hymn of the Universe and Mass on the World: (Summary in Google Books online)

The concept of the Basic Christian Community (Comunidad de base) first emerged in Latin America in the 1960s under the influence of progressive theologians such as Gustavo Guttierez in Peru and Leonardo Boff.in Brazil. This movement embraced a social justice philosophy that threatened the established hierarchical structures of society in Latin America, Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador was one of the leading prelates in Latin America, emphasizing social justice, who became the target of political assassins in 1980. The Roman Catholic Church canonized him on October 14, 2018. In the past month Sister Dorothy Stang, a Catholic nun working among the poor in Brazil has been recognized as the first ecological martyr in the Catholic church tradition. Pope Francis has stressed a movement of the Roman Catholic Church toward less hierarchical structures based on the theology of synodality in which everyone will have a voice in Church governance. Pope Francis has also embraced a theology of inclusivity in which no one is left outside the church or human community. Pope Francis has embraced a new model of socially engaged

spirituality around the issues of climate justice and Interfaith dialogue, which are found in his key encyclicals, Laudato Si and Fratelli Tutti. The prevalence of disinformation and authoritarian ideologies in the contemporary world requires a new paradigm for adult spiritual development. The Basic spiritual community can clarify and promote a search for Truth in an era of the commercialization of many social platforms. Basic Spiritual communities can help participants to live more clearly in accord with Gospel values.

The leadership of small spiritual communities in the Western world is often led by women who have felt ostracized from prominent leadership roles in Roman Catholicism. These groups have had to find new philosophical and theological meanings within the new paradigm of the Basic Spiritual Community. Viktor Frankel's development of Logotherapy during World War II provides an existential context for how members of a historical, spiritual tradition can transform an outdated social and religious structure. The intimacy of the small spiritual human community allows freedom of expression and integration of new psychological and spiritual insights into the modern context of life in our emerging technological era. The patriarchal structures of the monotheistic religions have limited the roles for women in these religious bodies. Basic Spiritual or Familial Communities function more like a household, allowing men and women to interact more equally, challenging patriarchal assumptions. I have been a member of several small household communities for over 40 years. They have provided me with an existential context for the sharing of my life journey across a wide spectrum of human experiences and the challenges posed to my spiritual journey. Most of these communities encourage equal participation and leadership by women and men. For an analysis of the global scope of Small Christian Communities, see The Catholic Review for October 29, 2023, Small Christian Communities prominent in Asia, and Latin America are seen as a model for the whole church (OSV news online by Barb Fraze).

The small spiritual community movement has grown exponentially in parts of Africa where Catholicism is thriving. Father Joseph Healey, MM, a Maryknoll missionary priest, has traced and supported the development of Small Christian Communities for over 50 years. (Father Healey and Jeanne Hinton co-authored Small Christian Communities Today, Orbis books, 2005) On October 5, 2024, over 50,000 pilgrims came to a Marian Shrine in Subukia, Kenya to celebrate the Closing of the Golden Jubilee of Small Christian Communities (SCCs). Representatives of this movement of SCCs came from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda. The Small Christian Community (SCC) movement in India has fostered Neighbourhood Human Communities (NHCS) in the West Bengal region of India. Hundreds of these

human communities have formed in West Bengal, India." The aim of NHCs is to promote neighbourhood communities with people of all religions and castes and thus promote interreligious harmony." (Small Christian Communities.org)

Some of these small spiritual communities now exist in an online format. (HTTP: Small Christian Communities.org) This allows these communities to transcend local, regional, or national boundaries. For people who live in isolated regions and find it difficult to travel, the virtual online community can provide an important connection and support their mental and spiritual health. Many studies on the existential context of seniors indicate that loneliness is one of the most important factors in the decline of their mental and physical health. Infrequent social contact is often correlated with poor mental health, (National Poll on Healthy Aging from the University of Michigan). During the Pandemic the level of social isolation reached record levels in American society. "Particularly notable are the high rates of measure of loneliness among older adults with fair or poor physical health. Feelings of social isolation and lack of companionship were reported by more than seven in ten with fair or poor physical health." (National Poll of Healthy Aging, University of Michigan- Healthy Aging poll.org)

In the nation of Kenya, we have established the first interfaith Small Spiritual Community with Christian and Muslim participants. This community meets monthly online via Zoom. It has helped to foster a sense of solidarity among Christians and Muslims in the coastal region of Kenya. This movement toward human solidarity fulfils the vision of Pope Francis in his encyclical, Fratelli Tutti. Recently one of the members of the small faith community was kidnapped and unlawfully returned to Turkey. Those of us in the USA are working for his release through our US Congress. Authoritarian political movements have continued to grow throughout the world. These political ideologies seek to control or marginalize those movements they view as not under their domination. For this reason, small spiritual communities are less susceptible to control by political or ideological forces. They can enhance and preserve their identity in societies that are hostile to freedom of expression or alternative points of view.

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The Basic Spiritual Community can be a vehicle for the integration of universal social values that transcend any one society or ethnic background. The Hizmet educational model, first developed in Turkey by Fethullah Gulen (now deceased), has spread to diverse parts of the world and continues to inspire his legion of followers. This model can facilitate the growth of basic spiritual communities that are interfaith models of solidarity and transcend any ideology. For humanity to prosper in the present ecological crisis, we need to see ourselves as members of one earth-bound community. The recent tragic fires in California require the formation of new forms of solidarity across a spectrum of needs created by these catastrophic fires. Other forms of ecological disasters are occurring around the globe without respect to religion, political affiliation or ideology. Basic spiritual communities can take diverse forms, but they are most successful when they are flexible, open, and organic. The collapse of rigid patriarchal structures is a sign for our times to re-imagine the nature of identity on this planet earth. Science and Religion together can play a key role in this reconceptualization... Both Science and Religion need to adapt to the existential crises of our era. The Small Spiritual Community Movement can be considered a new platform for experimentation with new expressions for people of all religious traditions or universal human values. Given the challenges of secularization for all communities of faith, we need new ways to embody spiritual movements into more personalistic relationships and social expressions that transcend existing barriers to peace and solidarity. Given the challenges of secularization for all spiritual communities we need new ways to embody spiritual movements into more personalistic relationships and social expressions that transcend existing barriers to peace and solidarity. This form of social and spiritual solidarity could be considered a new spiritual platform for scientific research on the role of spirituality in promoting both mental and spiritual health.

Gerald Grudzen is President of Global Ministries University and teaches Philosophy and Comparative Religion for San Jose City College, Gavilan College and the University of Phoenix Online. He has worked extensively in the dialogue between Christianity and Islam and participated in interfaith conferences and educational travel programs in Egypt, Turkey, Bangladesh, Thailand, Kenya and the USA. He has earned graduate degrees in theology and ministry from Maryknoll Seminary in New York and the Master of Philosophy and PhD degrees from Columbia University in the

History of Islam and Christianity. Grudzen is the author or coauthor of seven books dealing with the history of Christianity and Islam past and present.

Reginald Maudlin Nalugala is vice president of Global Universities Network (GMU), a postgraduate tutor at Tangaza University, Karen, Nairobi. He teaches PhD and master's in social transformations taking place across Africa. The key courses are Governance Principles, Politics and Democracy in Africa, Religion in dialogue with Science at Tangaza University. SDGs & environmental ethics, critique of development theory application in Africa, Anti-radicalization Measures and conflict transformation in Africa. Since 2024 he is part of a global research on representation by Africa, in collaboration with Leeds University, UK, Witswatersrand University, SA and Tangaza University, Kenya. He is also part of the Vatican think tank for a better transformed Africa beyond covid19 under the Pontifical academy of sciences and social sciences. He sits on advisory board of Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF) New York.

Thomas James is the editor and publisher of the past two GMU Global Conference proceedings. He is currently a doctoral student in Theology at GMU, with a focus on evolutionary theology and spirituality, and has studied theology in Rome. In addition to his academic pursuits, he has had a long and distinguished career as a sacred music professional. Thomas is a former naval officer, corporate executive, and a long-time mathematics instructor at both the secondary and university levels.

The Psychological and Cognitive Dynamics of Faith Growth in Small Communities: A Case Study of Science and Faith Dialogue Over 13 Years

Dr. Robert Graf

For over 13 years, a small community of 12-20 persons (Active Catholics, Reform Catholics, Former Catholics, Unitarian, Presbyterian, Buddhist, Bahai etc.) has met monthly for 3-4 hours in Charles Town West Virginia USA to explore a wide range of faith and science topics, concluding with liturgical prayer and a meal. Most participants travel 60-90 minutes in each direction to participate. Depending on schedules and health, some participate actively as needed by Zoom. This case study will discuss: 1. Small group cognitive / learning process over a wide range of faith and science topics, compared to large group processes; 2. Faith and psychological growth effect of small group welcoming, mutual openness, listening, questioning and sharing; 3. "Belonging" effect of peer participation in all aspects of the learning activities, liturgical prayer, meal preparation and cleanup; 4. Beneficial effects for larger communities. We set out to develop a model for faith exploration, renewal,

and mutual support among people looking for deeper more meaningful spiritual and social justice integration into our lives. Members include a lawyer, a physician, conservationist, nurses, artist, teachers, etc. For context, the presentation will survey small group dynamics in the 2021-2024 Roman Catholic Bishops synod on synodality, and several other particular examples of small faith communities, Comunidades de Base / Basic Ecclesial Communities including teams for the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA).

Robert Graf, D.Min. has served as a Pastoral Associate, Prison Chaplain, Religious Radio and TV producer and speaker, Parish Director of Religious Education, Adjunct Professor of for Business and Society in the Master of Business Administration programs of Loyola University in Maryland, and Johns Hopkins University, Adjunct professor at College of Notre Dame in Maryland for Moral Theology, Religion in America, Marriage, and Christian Religion Experience. He is the Social Justice Chairperson of the West Virginia Unit of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). He is the Chairperson of Global Ministries University, and a small faith community participant and leader.

Psychological and Cognitive Aspects of Atheism

Dr Augustine Pamplany

Though the psychological factors behind atheism cannot be reduced to any one hypothesis, there are studies identifying factors such as the authoritarian father figure, absenteeism of the father, family relations, etc., as shaping the negative images of God and conversely the negation of a personal God (Birgegard & Granqvist, 2016; Vitz., 2013). A stream of research along the line of cognitive psychology seemed to suggest that people who believe in God appear to suppress the brain network used for analytical thinking and engage the empathetic network. So too, in order to think analytically about the world, people tend to turn off the empathetic network. Studies seem to suggest a statistical relationship between people who have faith and their thinking that they are less intelligent. When presented with a physics problem or ethical dilemma, a healthy brain fires up the appropriate network while suppressing the other. Because of the tension between networks, pushing aside a naturalistic worldview enables one to delve deeper into the social/emotional side. As for atheists, this pushing aside does not occur (Jack 2016). It does not mean that believers reject the reasoning, rather they strike the balance between the analytical and the empathetic. Some studies make a very contentious

claim that there is a correlation between atheism, autism and left handedness (Dutton 2015).

Augustine Pamplany is the Founder-Director of the Institute of Advanced Interdisciplinary Studies (iaiss.com) at Jnana Niketan Institute of Philosophy & Religion, Kochi. He obtained PhD in the Ethics of Geoengineering from Dublin City University, Ireland (2017), and in Philosophy of Science from Open International University, Colombo (2006). He did special research on the Cognitive and Neurological Aspects of Atheism, in Oxford England (2023-24). He holds Master's in psychology from Madras University, in Bioethics from Catholic University, Leuven, and in Philosophy from Jnana Deepa, Pune. He is a Fellow of the International Society for Science and Religion, Cambridge, England since 2023. He is a recipient of the Erasmus Mundus Fellowship from the European Commission (2006); Science-Religion Course Award from the Centre for Theology and Natural Sciences, Berkeley (2002); Global Perspectives on Science and Spirituality (GPSS) Fellowship from Elon University (2005), USA. He was selected for the Mental Health Center Grand Rounds (2021-22) Programme of the Harvard Medical School. He is a member of the UNESCO Forum of Teachers in Bioethics. He is the Academic Dean of the Masters and Doctoral Degree in Religion and Science under the Global Ministries University, California, and the regional coordinator of the MSc in Biomedical Ethics and Law under the International Chair in Bioethics in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Porto, Portugal. He has authored and edited 9 books and has published several peer-reviewed articles in national and international journals (Email: apamplany@iaiss.com).

Explaining Atheism Research Programme

Dr Miguel Farias

Explaining Atheism is a three-year programme (2022-2024) led by Queen's University Belfast in collaboration with the University of Kent, Brunel University London, Coventry University, St Mary's University Twickenham London and the University of Notre Dame Australia. The Explaining Atheism programme tests both popular and academic theories of why some individuals are atheists and why some countries have higher percentages of atheists than others. It aims to advance both our academic and public understanding of the causal origins and possible futures of belief and non-belief. The Explaining Atheism team is conducting multidisciplinary research to better understand the causes of atheism around the world. The research programme included a cross-cultural core project investigating atheism in 6 countries, and 15 affiliated projects carrying out research in 19 countries.

The Spectrum of Dissipated God-Concepts: Some Observations on the Social Psychology of Atheism

Dr. Pius V Thomas

The single most important concept that haunts the Philosophy (of Religion) is the concept of God and the nature of God. A major engagement of Philosophy revolves around the core issue of life and lifeworlds in general, that is, the concept of Deus, God, or the Holy/Divine. Einstein once said, "I want to know how God created this world, I am not interested in this or that phenomenon. I want to know his thoughts; the rest are details." The various philosophical approaches to the concept of God make a spectrum of conceptual positions. They are Theism, Monotheism, Polytheism, Deism, Pantheism, Atheism, etc. Atheism is the positive belief that no god(s) exist. Atheism, as the disbelief in the concept of God, however, makes a range of arguments, which include metaphysical, ethical, psychological, and social psychological. The presentation examines the genealogy of the social psychological and psychoanalytic arguments against the concept of God and religiosity. It attempts to analyze the central outlook on the antagonism between the individual and society and the role of the concept of God as the major faulty agent that instigates faulty or abnormal social and cultural life. The presentation, therefore, investigates the major thinkers in the psychoanalytic, social psychological tradition, which is based on the insight that the concept of God is so patently infantile, so foreign to reality, that to anyone with a friendly attitude to humanity, it is painful to think that the great majority of mortals will never be able to rise above this concept and view of life. The paper picks up on the psychoanalytical arguments of Sigmund Freud and tries to traverse through the conceptual terrains of Erich Fromm, Jacques Lacan, and Byung-Chul Han and takes the discussion to the scattered conceptual spectrum of the concept of God to make a dialogue with some ideas of negative theology.

Pius V Thomas, Associate Professor, is presently Faculty at the PG and Research Department of Philosophy, Assam University, Silchar. Teaches Contemporary Western Philosophy, Critical Hermeneutics, Ethics-Applied Ethics, Philosophy of Religion, Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhi, and Human Rights. Current research interests are focused on the question of the possibility of contextualizing Human Rights, along with cultural critique, which stimulates themes like Philosophical concepts of Interculturality and Critique, Theories of Democracy and Religion, Ethics and Reason, Environmental Ethics, Philosophy of Education and Critical Religiosity-Christianity and Buddhism. Published more than forty papers in journals and edited

volumes. Published the following edited Volumes titled, 1. 'Knowledge, Theorization and Rights: Renegotiating the Connectives'. Published by Salesian College Publication, Siliguri (2015). 2. 'Cosmopolitan Thought and the Displaced, Edited Volume, Authors Press, New Delhi. Published, Reflections: Collected Papers, Authors Press, New Delhi, 'Journeys on the Margin', Authors Press, New Delhi. The forthcoming Volumes are Relocating the Political Gandhi: The Contemporariness of Gandhi', Edited Volume of Collected Papers, 'Human Rights: Perspectives', Edited Volume of Collected Papers and 'The Patterns of Inter-subjectivity'. Presently serving as the Head, Department of Philosophy, Assam University, Silchar.

Mindfulness as an Atheist Practice: Towards Coherentist and Pragmatic Theories of Truth

Dr. Sreekala M Nair

Buddhist epistemology, as developed by thinkers like Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, integrates metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics into a cohesive framework. Among the two valid means of knowledge identified by this school viz., direct perception and inference, direct perception involves pure sensation and a subsequent conceptual judgment, while yogic perception refines awareness to uncover subtle truths like impermanence and selflessness. This process is rooted in the practical validation of knowledge through causal efficacy and coherence in truth analysis. But by training the mind to move beyond conceptual abstraction through meditation and mindfulness, individuals can overcome habitual misconceptions and gain clarity about reality, reducing suffering and fostering positive transformation. This paper intends to bring out that such an epistemic practice, supported by Buddhist metaphysics, offer a coherent framework for spiritual and cognitive liberation.

Sreekala M. Nair Professor, Department of Philosophy, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, Kerala. She has served this University in various capacities, both academic and administrative since the time of its inception. Formerly worked as Professor at the School of Buddhist Studies at Nalanda University. She has held prestigious positions like Member, Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi; Joint Secretary, Indian philosophical congress; Member, NAAC Peer team; Member of Board of Studies, Faculty and Academic council of various Universities among others. Some of the honours / awards she received are, first Rank and Gold medal for M.A Philosophy in Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, A.P, 1988, ICPR Young Scholar Award in the National Level competition in 1992, Best state Coordinator award of Bharatiya Mahila Darshanika Parishad, 2007, Sastri Indo – Canadian Fellowship awarded by Sastri Indo Canadian Institute, 2012 and the Best paper award in the 4th Annual International Conference of PYTT held in Singapore in 2016. She has authored a book titled, Analysis of Knowledge: Classical and Con-

temporary Approaches (Progressive Books, Chennai), co-edited two other volumes and has published over 60 research papers. Four research projects were undertaken by her and has produced 8 Ph.Ds and 46 M.Phils. She has participated and presented papers in over 200 Seminars / Conferences / Workshops and also delivered several lectures in educational institutions across the globe. More than thirty academic Seminars / Conferences / Workshops / Lecture Programs were organized by her in India. Dr. Nair has visited several foreign countries like Canada, USA, Greece, Singapore, Malaysia, and China to deliver academic talks / present papers in conferences. Her areas of primary scholarly interest are Contemporary Epistemological Issues, Buddhist Philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, Indian Philosophy of Language, Contemporary Analytic Metaphysics, Consciousness Studies (Indian), Cultural Studies (Indian), and Indian Aesthetics.

Ethical Resilience and Emotional Regulation: Fostering Integrity and Well-Being in the Face of Emotional Challenges

Dr Kuruvilla Pandikattu

In an era marked by heightened emotional stress and mental health challenges, the concept of resilience takes center stage in discussions about emotional well-being. Ethical resilience, an integration of moral integrity and emotional strength, provides a powerful framework for navigating life's adversities. This presentation delves into the role of ethical principles in shaping emotional regulation strategies, emphasizing the profound interconnection between moral values, cognitive processes, and mental health. Drawing from cognitive and neurological studies as well as behavioural ethics, the presentation explores how adherence to ethical values such as honesty, accountability, and empathy enhances adaptive coping mechanisms like mindfulness, cognitive reappraisal, and gratitude. Ethical resilience not only reinforces emotional stability but also strengthens interpersonal relationships and social cohesion, fostering a supportive environment for mental health recovery.

Conversely, the absence of ethical grounding often leads to maladaptive emotional strategies, such as suppression and avoidance, which are linked to increased vulnerability to anxiety, depression, and social discord. The presentation highlights practical applications of ethical resilience in therapeutic settings, offering insights into how faith-based and secular interventions can cultivate a sense of purpose, meaning, and moral clarity to bolster emotional regulation. By examining real-world examples and case studies, this presentation indicates the dynamic

interplay between ethics, emotions, and resilience, advocating for a holistic approach to mental health. Ethical resilience emerges as not just a personal virtue but a communal asset, enabling individuals and societies to thrive amidst uncertainty and challenges. The study aims to equip participants with actionable strategies to integrate ethical principles into emotional regulation practices, fostering a culture of integrity and well-being.

Kuruvilla Pandikattu SJ (born 1957-) is currently Chair Professor, JRD Tata Foundation for Business Ethics, XLRI, Jamshedpur, India. Earlier, he was a professor of Physics, Philosophy and Religion at Jnana Deepa Institute of Philosophy and Theology, Pune, India. He has been actively involved in the dialogue between science and religion. Author/Editor of more than 45 books and 240 academic articles, Pandikattu is a Jesuit priest belonging to Dumka-Raiganj Province, India. The main topics of his research are Ethics (incl. business and applied), anthropology, artificial intelligence, life management and transhumanism. Linkedin: https://www.linkedin.com/in/kurusj, Email: kuru@kuru.in (personal) or kuru@xlri.ac.in (professional). Site: www.kuru.in. | GND: 124567274 | Vidwan: 289917 | ISNI: 0000 0001 2275 7942 | ORCID: 0000-0001-9815-3707.

Spiritual Practices and Mental Health: Insights from the Bhagavad Gita

Dr Ramesh Pattni

This paper explores the profound relationship between spiritual practices delineated in the Bhagavad Gita and their implications for mental health, emphasizing their relevance in contemporary psychological paradigms. Drawing upon the Advaita Vedanta interpretation, the Gita is examined as a transformative framework addressing existential crises, identity conflicts, and emotional disintegration, exemplified through Arjuna's crisis on the battlefield. Key spiritual practices—Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Dhyana Yoga—are analyzed for their psychological dimensions, such as promoting equanimity, resilience, self-awareness, and detachment. The paper integrates these ancient teachings with modern psychological constructs, including emotional regulation, stress management, and coping strategies. The Gita's definitions of Yoga as equanimity, skill in action, and the severance of union with pain are discussed as pathways to inner harmony and mental stability. These practices align with contemporary therapeutic approaches that emphasize self-regulation, mindfulness, and resilience.

This study, further, contextualizes the Bhagavad Gita within the World Health Organization's holistic definition of health, highlighting spirituality as a core dimension of well-being. Empirical studies on the positive correlation between spiritual

engagement and mental health are reviewed to substantiate these claims. The paper concludes by advocating for the integration of Gita-inspired spiritual practices into mental health interventions. By bridging ancient wisdom and modern psychological frameworks, it offers a holistic approach to addressing mental health challenges and fostering psychological resilience, making a compelling case for the relevance of Indian Psychology in global mental health discourse. Future research directions are suggested to empirically validate these findings.

Dr. Ramesh Pattni is a distinguished psychologist and Hindu theologian whose work bridges these disciplines to promote psychological well-being. With a profound interest in bringing the psychological tools of ancient traditions into contemporary contexts, he has established himself as an authority in Yoga Psychology. His doctoral research at the University of Oxford explored Patanjali's Yogasūtra and Western Positive Psychology, delving into the phenomenology of Flow and the altered states of consciousness experienced in samadhi meditation. Dr. Pattni holds three master's degrees in psychology, the psychology of religion, and the study of religion. He works as a counsellor and psychotherapist, supporting individuals facing mental health challenges. As a tutor at the University of Oxford, he teaches at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies and is affiliated with the Faculty of Theology and Religion. Through the Chinmaya Mission UK, he conducts public talks on Hinduism and holds regular classes, making ancient wisdom accessible to diverse audiences. Dr. Pattni's contributions to interfaith relations and community services in the UK earned him an OBE in the New Year's Honours 2020. In his leisure time, he writes poetry, enjoys music, plays the guitar, and cherishes walks in nature with loved ones, embodying a harmonious balance of intellect, creativity, and community service.

Emotions, Beliefs and Mental Health: Concluding Exhortation

Dr Binoy Jacob

Binoy Jacob is a Jesuit Priest of Kerala Province. He holds doctorates in Mathematical Statistics (Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, India) and in Systematic Theology (Santa-Clara University, Berkeley, USA). He is a member of Clavius group for Mathematicians, U.S.A. He is a recipient of Alpha Sigma Nu Award (2013) from Santa Clara University, California. He has published books and numerous articles both in national and international journals. He is a visiting faculty in institutions in India and abroad. Currently, he is the Director of Loyola Institute of Peace and International Relations (LIPI), Kochi, and the Managing Editor of Pax Lumina (bi-monthly in English: www.paxlumina.com) and EZHUTHU Magazine (monthly in vernacular: www.ezhuthu.org), published by LIPI. He is the Coordinator of the Higher Education Commission of Kerala Jesuits, the Consultor of the Province, and also the Coordinator of the Peace and Reconciliation Network of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia. He was awarded 'Visiting Fellowship' at Boston College, USA from January-May 2024.

Short Paper Abstracts & Speaker Profiles

PARALLEL SESSIONS

From Guilt to Growth: A Psychological Reinterpretation of the Seven Deadly Sins

Nisha Jose T

The seven deadly sins, rooted in early Catholic teachings, resonate across various religious traditions such as Hinduism (arishadvarga), Buddhism (kleshas), Sikhism (five thieves), and Jainism (four kashayas), as well as ancient philosophies and Hellenistic thought. These sins symbolize universal human concerns about moral failings. Religious interpretations traditionally emphasize guilt and penance, but such frameworks may hinder psychological growth by fostering shame and internal conflict. This paper redefines the seven deadly sins as maladaptive expressions of fundamental psychological and physiological needs, offering an empathetic, growth-oriented perspective. Drawing from evolutionary psychology, cognitive psychology, neuropsychology, theories of emotion, moral psychology, and sociological insights, the paper examines how these sins emerge as exaggerated responses to unmet needs. For instance, pride reflects a distorted pursuit of

self-esteem, while greed arises from an amplified desire for security and control. Addressing these needs appropriately allows for transforming vices into virtues—pride into humility, greed into generosity, and so forth—fostering personal and ethical development. The analysis considers sociocultural influences, emphasizing how societal norms and structures reinforce maladaptive behaviors. Incorporating insights from positive psychology, the paper proposes strategies for transformation, such as mindfulness, gratitude, and strengths-based interventions. This interdisciplinary approach redefines the seven deadly sins not merely as moral failings but as opportunities for self-awareness, compassion, and resilience, promoting a continuum from vice to virtue that aligns with psychological well-being and ethical growth.

Nisha Jose T is a counselling psychologist with 13 years of experience and the founder of Vathil Foundation, a non-profit organization for inclusion, equity, wellness, and sustainability. She holds an MSc in Psychological Counselling from Montfort College, Bangalore, and a Diploma in Narrative Therapy, with specialized training in Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT). Nisha serves as the Principal Investigator of an academic project for digital inclusion, awarded by Mozilla Foundation. She excels in counselling, program development, and workshops. A published writer on psychosocial, psychospiritual, and disability topics, she also lends her voice to DC Books as a voice-over artist, blending expertise and creativity to inspire inclusion and personal growth.

Sattva Guna Qualities in Individuals and their Correlation with Mental Wellbeing

Anjana Devi PD & Lakshmi S Priya

Mental wellbeing is a concept that is contributed by multiple factors such as emotional, psychological and social health. In Indian Psychology, the three Gunas- Sattva, Rajas and Tamas plays a crucial role in shaping an Individual quality of life and wellbeing. Among these, Sattva Guna is characterized by wisdom, purity, harmony, ethics, knowledge and balanced approach to life. This study investigates the relationship between Sattva Guna qualities and positive mental wellbeing, aiming to understand if these characteristics contribute to resilience and overall wellbeing. The method of study is quantitative, the research will examine self-reported individuals who has dominant sattvic guṇa qualities and its association with indicators of mental health such as optimism, life satisfaction, reduced stress levels. Quantitative data will be collected by integrating Subjective Well Being Scale and Positive psychology questionnaire. However, the initial data will be collected by circulating

Vedic Personality Inventory to determine the sattvic individuals among the whole population. The expected outcome is to determine whether there is a positive or negative correlation between Sattva Guna qualities and mental wellbeing. If the research indicates a positive correlation among these two variables, it will offer implications for therapeutic interventions, emphasizing the integration of Guna theory into mental health strategies to promote sustainable psychological well-being. This study bridges Indian philosophy and modern psychology, promoting a holistic approach to mental health.

Anjana Devi PD & Lakshmi S Priya are final year BSc applied psychology (h) students in Chinmaya Viswa Vidyapeeth, Deemed to be University, Warriom Road, Ernakulam, Kochi – 682016.

Quantum Analogies in Emotion: Superposition and Decoherence in Plutchik's Wheel

Puthuparambil Anju Abraham

Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions is a conceptual framework that illustrates the spectrum and intensity of human emotions as interconnected and dynamic states. This study explores an analogical perspective of the wheel through the principles of quantum superposition and decoherence, bridging psychological theory with quantum mechanics. Emotions, parallel to quantum states, are proposed to exist in a superposed state, where multiple emotions can coexist and influence human cognition and behaviour. Quantum decoherence describes how these emotional superpositions collapse into distinct, observable emotional states due to external stimuli or internal conflicts. The analysis influences the structural symmetry of Plutchik's Wheel to map primary and secondary emotions onto quantum states, emphasising the flexibility and entanglement of emotional experiences. Emotional intensity and polarity are conceptualized as wave functions that undergo constructive and destructive interference. The study highlights how environmental interactions serve as measurement events, precipitating the decoherence of emotional superpositions into dominant emotional expressions. This interdisciplinary approach provides a novel lens for understanding the dynamic interplay of emotions, offering insights into emotional regulation, decision-making, and mental health from a quantum-inspired viewpoint.

Anju Abraham P. is a research scholar in the Department of Optoelectronics at the University of Kerala, where she is currently investigating the thermal and nonlinear optical properties of nanofluids as part of her Ph.D. research. She holds an M.Sc.

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Buddhist Teachings on Compassion: Cultivating an Emotion for Liberation

Arockiaraj SJ

One of the central teachings of Buddhism is compassion—known in Buddhism as karuna. It is not just an emotion, but a powerful force for transforming suffering, cultivating wisdom, and realizing the true nature of interconnectedness.

I. Understanding Compassion in Buddhism

Compassion, or karuna, is often defined as the desire to alleviate the suffering of others. It is one of the Four Brahmaviharas or Divine Abodes, which also include loving-kindness (metta), sympathetic joy (mudita), and equanimity (upekkha). Together, these virtues form the foundation of a Buddhist's ethical and meditative practice. However, compassion in Buddhism is not the same as pity. Pity assumes a position of superiority, a separation between the one who suffers and the one who feels sorry. Compassion, on the other hand, arises from a deep recognition of our shared human experience. Emotion of compassion recognizes our shared vulnerability to suffering. This insight into interconnectedness is key to understanding why compassion is so vital in Buddhism. The Buddha taught that all beings are interconnected, bound by the laws of karma and dependent origination. When we realize that our happiness and suffering are intimately tied to the happiness and suffering of others, the walls between "self" and "other" begin to dissolve. This recognition is the seed of compassion.

II. The Role of Emotions in Buddhism

To appreciate the depth of compassion in Buddhism, we need to understand how emotions are viewed in Buddhist psychology. In contrast to many Western views,

where emotions are often categorized as inherently good or bad, Buddhism sees emotions as part of the Five Skandhas or aggregates that constitute a person. These aggregates include form, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. Emotions, like all phenomena in Buddhism, are seen as impermanent and interconnected. They arise in response to conditions and can lead either to suffering or to liberation, depending on how they are understood and managed. In this context, negative emotions, known as kleshas or afflictive emotions, such as anger, greed, and hatred, are seen as distortions of reality that lead to suffering. These emotions cloud our ability to see things as they truly are, reinforcing the delusion of a separate self and creating cycles of suffering. Compassion, however, is a positive emotion or state of mind that counteracts these afflictions. When we cultivate compassion, we soften the edges of our ego and begin to dissolve the barriers that separate us from others. Compassion helps to transform the kleshas, turning negative emotions into opportunities for wisdom and growth.

III. The Bodhisattva Ideal: Compassion in Action

A key figure in Buddhist teachings on compassion is the Bodhisattva or the Enlighted being. The Bodhisattva though having achieved enlightenment, out of great compassion, postpones their own final enlightenment to help others attain liberation. In Mahayana Buddhism, the Bodhisattva ideal is held up as the highest aspiration, embodying selfless compassion. The Bodhisattva is not just a symbol of compassion; he is also a reminder that compassion is inseparable from wisdom. True compassion arises from the understanding that all beings are interconnected, and that suffering is universal. This wisdom, known as prajna, is what allows the Bodhisattva to navigate the suffering of the world without becoming overwhelmed by it.

IV. Cultivating Compassion through Meditation

How can we cultivate compassion in our own lives? In Buddhism, compassion is not just a passive feeling; it is an active practice. One of the primary ways Buddhists develop compassion is through meditation. A common practice is Metta Bhavana, or loving-kindness meditation. This meditation begins with cultivating love and kindness toward oneself, then extends outward to others: first to loved ones, then to neutral individuals, and finally to those we may consider enemies. The goal is to expand our capacity for unconditional love, breaking down the barriers of judgment, aversion, and indifference that separate us from others.

V. Compassion in Daily Life: Engaged Compassion

While meditation is crucial, the true test of compassion is how we live it in our daily lives. The Buddha's teachings call for what can be termed engaged compassion. The emotion of compassion that doesn't remain confined to the meditation cush-

ion but extends to all areas of life. Engaged compassion asks us to act in ways that alleviate the suffering of others. This might involve social action, environmental stewardship, or simply being present with someone in their pain. It is not always easy, and sometimes we may feel overwhelmed by the suffering we encounter. But this is where the wisdom aspect of compassion comes in: we act with the understanding that we cannot solve all the world's problems, but we can make a difference in the lives we touch. One challenge we often face when practicing compassion is the risk of burnout, sometimes called "compassion fatigue." This happens when we give and give without replenishing ourselves. Buddhism reminds us that compassion must include ourselves. The Buddha taught that we cannot pour from an empty cup, and therefore, self-compassion is as important as compassion for others. When we care for ourselves, we strengthen our capacity to care for others.

VI. Conclusion: The Transformative Power of Compassion

In conclusion, compassion in Buddhism is far more than an emotion. Compassion is a path to liberation. Through the cultivation of compassion, we transcend the illusion of separateness and begin to see the world with the eyes of a Bodhisattva. Comapassion allows us to transform suffering, both our own and that of others, and to move toward wisdom and enlightenment.

Fr Arokiaraj Patrick SJ is a member of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and currently teaching philosophy and psychology at Satya Nilayam, Institute of Philosophy for Jesuits at Chennai. He holds a Ph.D. in Psychology from the Gregorian University, Rome. He also holds an MPhil degree in Philosophy from the University of Pune. The author has been conducting courses on various topics in the areas of philosophy, psychology and religion. Email: patrickarokiaraj@gmail.com

Cosmic Anthropic Principle and the Evolutionary Roots of Religious Belief: An Interdisciplinary Exploration

Asoontha Mathew

The intersection of cosmology, biology, and neurology presents a fascinating framework for understanding the evolutionary origins of religious belief. This study explores the Cosmic Anthropic Principle as a paradigm for linking cosmic fine-tuning with the biological predispositions underlying spirituality and religiosity. The principle posits that the universe's physical constants and conditions appear finely tuned to support the emergence of human life. Parallelly, neuroreli-

gion suggests that human beings are biologically and neurologically wired to seek and interpret transcendence, manifesting as an innate capacity for religious belief. Drawing upon this convergence, the study investigates the evolutionary roots of religious as a natural extension of cosmic fine-tuning. It is proposed that just as the universe is configured for the possibility of life, human cognition is primed for spiritual and existential reflection. This argument is articulated through an exploration of physical and biological predispositions for belief, the evolutionary emergence of innate spirituality, and the cosmic foundations of human cognition. Furthermore, the study highlights the shared quest for meaning and purpose that permeates both cosmic phenomena and human consciousness. The final synthesis offers an analogical unification of neurology, biology, and cosmology, underscoring how the cosmic anthropic principle provides a metaphysical and scientific grounding for humanity's spiritual inclinations. This interdisciplinary approach not only sheds light on the origins of belief but also fosters a deeper understanding of the universe's role in shaping human cognition and religiosity.

Sr. Asoontha Mathew, a member of the Franciscan Clarist Congregation, is a dedicated academician with extensive qualifications in Physics, Theology, and Science and Religion. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Science and Religion at Global Ministries University (GMU), California, USA. She holds an MPhil in Physics from St. Joseph College, Trichy, under Bharathi Dasan University, Tamil Nadu, as well as master's degrees in science and religion from GMU and Dogmatic Theology from Alpha Institute, Thalassery. She also earned an MSc in Physics from the University of Calicut, Kerala. Sr. Asoontha currently serves as a Higher Secondary Physics Teacher at Sacred Heart Higher Secondary School in Dwaraka, Mananthavady. Her research interests span the hermeneutical integration of science and theology, bridging the Big Bang theory with the Genesis creation narrative, and interdisciplinary studies on the relationship between faith and reason. She has also worked on the preparation of thin films of polyaniline nanoparticles and polyaniline ZnO composites and conducted studies on their gas-sensing properties. Email: asoonthafcc@gmail.com.

Vāda and Inner Balance: Argumentation in Nyāya for Mental Fortitude

Gayatri S.

This paper delves into vāda (reasoned argumentation) in Nyāya philosophy, examining its role in fostering mental fortitude and inner balance. Rooted in a commitment to truth and rational inquiry, vāda transcends adversarial debate, focusing on constructive dialogue guided by logical rigor and epistemic clarity. Nyāya philosophy highlights the ethical and intellectual virtues essential for effective argumen-

tation, such as humility, patience, and a willingness to engage with opposing views. These qualities not only enhance critical reasoning but also promote emotional stability and self-discipline, fostering equanimity amidst intellectual challenges. By integrating principles of reasoned discourse with a pursuit of mental harmony, vāda provides a unique framework for harmonizing logic with psychological resilience. This synthesis offers insights into the transformative potential of philosophical debate, both as a tool for intellectual growth and as a means to cultivate inner peace and balance in personal and societal contexts.

Gayathri S. is a Research Scholar in the Department of Philosophy at Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady. She completed her undergraduate, postgraduate, and M. Phil degrees from Kerala University. She has also worked as a Project Assistant in the Department of Philosophy at Kerala University. An active member of the Global Forum for Young Philosophers, she has presented papers at the Indian Philosophical Congress, Banaras Hindu University, International School for Sree Sankaracharya Studies, and Kerala University. Her research interests include Indian Philosophy, Philosophy of Counselling, and Philosophy of Management.

Addressing Spiritual Requirements of a Person in Need of Palliative Care: The Present Context in Indian Scenarios

Dr Jerry Joseph

People with chronic or progressive life-threatening diseases have spiritual requirements. which in most situations are incompletely known by healthcare professionals. These needs are assessed by multiple ways in various countries (for example with the Spiritual Needs Questionnaire). Cultural and religious issues, personality, mood states, course of disease, life situations and place of care are some of the factors that have relation to spiritual requirements. Healthcare professionals may be the first to perceive such needs and specifically support patients. For this purpose, the development of spiritual care competencies suitable for Indian scenarios is a must for health care workers.

Dr. Jerry Joseph is a distinguished medical professional with an extensive academic background and a rich history of clinical and teaching experience. He began his medical education at St. John's Medical College in Bangalore, earning his MBBS in 1993 under Bangalore University. His postgraduate training includes a Diploma in Anaesthesiology from KMC Mangalore through the Manipal Academy of Higher Education in 1999 and a DNB in Anaesthesiology from the Government Medical College,

Calicut. Dr. Joseph expanded his expertise with postgraduate diplomas in Palliative Medicine from Edith Cowan University, Australia, and in Hospital Management from Annamalai University. He is currently pursuing a Postgraduate Diploma in Bioethics from the UNESCO Chair on Medical Education and Ethics and a Doctorate in Theology with a focus on Spirituality in Palliative Care from Global Ministers University, California. He served as a lecturer at the Center for Paramedical Science, Calicut, and as a lecturer in anaesthesiology at the Government Medical College, Calicut. Dr. Joseph worked as a specialist in anaesthesiology and palliative care at Hamad Medical Corporation in Doha, Qatar. Currently, Dr. Joseph is the Medical Director and Managing Trustee of the Home of Hope Educational and Charitable Trust, an organization based in Pudukad, Thrissur, Kerala, which provides free palliative care.

The Silent Struggle: Religio-Phobia's Impact on Mental Health

Dr. Joji Valli

Religio-phobia, a pervasive fear, prejudice, or aversion toward religion, has profound consequences for mental health and societal harmony. This article delves into the complex relationship between religio-phobia and psychological well-being, shedding light on its origins, manifestations, and devastating effects. Religio-phobia can lead to a range of mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. It can also contribute to social isolation, identity crises, and strained relationships. Real-world case studies illustrate the far-reaching impact of religio-phobia, from workplace discrimination to educational bias. To combat this silent struggle, essential coping mechanisms include resilience-building, therapy, and community support. Mental health professionals play a vital role in providing culturally sensitive approaches and safe spaces for clients. This article advocates for awareness campaigns, interfaith dialogues, and legislative action to address religio-phobia. By promoting empathy, understanding, and inclusivity, we can foster a society where diverse faiths and beliefs are respected and valued. Ultimately, recognizing religio-phobia's impact on mental health is crucial for individual well-being and communal harmony. As we strive for a more compassionate world, we must ask: What role can we play in breaking the silence surrounding religio-phobia?

Dr. Joji Valli is a distinguished author, speaker, professor and social entrepreneur based in Pune, India. With a profound commitment to personal growth and spiritual development, Valli has authored numerous books and articles focusing on mindfulness, meditation, and holistic living philosophy, including the acclaimed HeartSpeaks series of self-help books. His teachings seamlessly integrate mindfulness, meditation,

and holistic living philosophy, promoting emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and inner fulfilment. Valli's interdisciplinary educational background in philosophy, theology, human resources (MBA), sociology (MA), and psychology (MSc) deeply influences his writing and teachings. A specialist in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), he holds a PhD in this field and has authored several books and articles on the subject. Email: jojivalli@gmail.com LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/jojivalli/.

Franics Collins as a Model of the Dialogue Between Science and Religious Belief

Jos Parambi

The paper is a response to the following questions:

If the genetic code is God's language, as Collins proposes, to what extent does this perspective influence our understanding of human identity and individuality? Do you see this as empowering or limiting, and why?

Collins asserts that atheism and agnosticism are not tenable based on our current scientific knowledge. How can one critically evaluate this claim while balancing the realms of faith and reason? What evidence would you use to argue for or against this position?

The metaphor of genetics as a divine instruction book implies a purposeful design.

Considering Collins's view, do you think the natural world's complexity and structure necessarily point to a higher intelligence, or can they be fully explained through evolutionary processes alone?

Collins highlights the necessity of resolving the deepest questions about life's meaning with the available scientific data. Are there universal truths that science and faith might overlook, or do they cover all bases when combined? How do you prioritize between scientific inquiry and spiritual reflection in search of these answers?

In proposing that science and faith are complementary pillars of truth, Collins envisions a harmonious relationship between the two. How feasible is it to maintain this synergy in academic and personal life, especially when faced with conflicting discoveries and beliefs?

Jos Parambi holds a master's degree in science (Biology) from Calicut University and a master's degree in business administration from the Academy of Management Studies, affiliated with the European Management Association. He has also earned a

Certificate in Material Management from the British Institute in India and completed specialized programs such as Strategic Industrial Marketing at the Management Centre in Brussels, Belgium, and Advanced Leadership at Thunderbird University in Phoenix, USA. Additionally, he has attended several other management courses, including programs focused on personal influence and impact at the Management Centre in Brussels. Jos is a devout Catholic who has actively participated in spiritual enrichment programs. He attended the Life in Spirit Seminar conducted by the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services in Dubai in 2015. He has also pursued Bible studies at the Divine Institute of Bible & Spirituality in Muringoor, Kerala, including specialized courses on the Book of Revelation. His professional career began in 1975 when he worked in Kuwait before relocating to Dubai, where he remained until mid-2017. Since 1985, he served at ExxonMobil, one of the world's most respected companies. Initially, he held the position of Manager for the Arabian Peninsula and Pakistan before being promoted to Area Manager for the Middle East and Africa, including Turkey, Israel, and Pakistan. From 2019 to March 2024, he served as a Non-Executive Director for the Mohinani Group, a UK/Hong Kong-based conglomerate, and continues to act as their business consultant. Throughout his career, he has travelled extensively across the Middle East, Africa, Western Europe, and parts of the United States, gaining valuable international experience in various markets and industries.

Unveiling the Dark Side: The Adverse Impact of Religious Guilt and Shame on Mental Health

Rebecca R Johnson, Afsana Ninar, Thomas Biju, Dr Pramod SK

This study investigates how feelings of guilt and shame are shaped by the "fear of God," which frequently results in mental distress, anxiety, and despair. The detrimental effects of excessive religious guilt on mental health are examined, and the significance of comprehending how some religious behaviors may inadvertently impair wellbeing is emphasized. To address these problems and advance constructive spiritual interpretations that support emotional healing and resilience, it is imperative that people, religious leaders, and mental health professionals increase their awareness.

Objectives

1. To review existing studies on the link between religion, spirituality, guilt, and shame in mental health.

2. To examine how religious beliefs and practices may lead to excessive guilt and shame, negatively impacting mental well-being.

3. To deepen understanding of how religion influences mental health through the concepts of guilt and shame.

Methodology

The study uses content analysis to examine the narratives of individuals discussing their religious beliefs and mental health experiences, focusing on prevalent topics such as guilt,

shame, and fear of divine punishment. Additionally, a meta-analysis was conducted to synthesize findings from existing studies, providing a comprehensive thorough understanding of the broader psychological impact of negative religious ideologies.

Result

Although preliminary research points to a potential connection between negative religious beliefs and mental health challenges, the results are still in the process of validation.

Conclusion

This study highlights the significant impact of negative religious beliefs on mental health, particularly in increasing vulnerability to anxiety and depression. It emphasizes the importance for counselling psychologists to integrate knowledge of these beliefs into their practice by enhancing their strategies, offering quality care and more effective therapeutic outcomes in clinical settings.

Rebecca R Johnson, a MSc Counselling Psychology student at Loyola College of Social Sciences, is a dedicated and skilled professional with diverse experiences. She has interned at Santhwana Institute of Counselling and Psychotherapy, The Centre for Autism and other Disabilities Rehabilitation Research and Education, and Hi-Q Mental Health & Counselling Clinic. She has certificate in Transactional Analysis (ICTA), Art-Based Psychosocial Care and Specific Learning Disabilities Evaluation. Rebecca has presented research on LGBTQ+ inclusion, participated in the Manomedham Psych Expo, and served as a resource person for "Inspire to Rewire: Focus on Emotional Intelligence." She has also set up exhibits at Psychopark and conducted street theatre for awareness.

Afsana Ninar, a M.Sc. Counselling Psychology student at Loyola College of Social Sciences, has a B.Sc. in Psychology from MG University, Kottayam. She has gained practical experience through internships at Vimukthi De-addiction Centre, Pala Government Hospital, and Max Minds Rehabilitation Centre. Actively involved in workshops on CBT, life skills, and art-based psychosocial care, she has also volunteered at Kanthari, Thiruvananthapuram. Her research explores compassion fatigue and coping styles among social workers. Afsana's accolades include second prize for a paper on LGBTQ+ at Manomedham Psych Fest. She is dedicated to promoting psychological well-being and advancing her field.

Thomas Biju, a MSc Counselling Psychology student at Loyola College of Social Sciences, University of Kerala, where he also completed his BSc in Psychology in

2024. His research focuses on the cognitive and psychological foundations of belief and non-belief systems, the role of emotional intelligence in career growth, and the intersection of psychology and spirituality in mental health. He is also committed to developing and validating psychological tools and scales. Driven by a passion for understanding human behavior, Thomas seeks to contribute meaningfully to the field of mental health and promote holistic well-being.

Efficacy of using Digital Apps in fostering Spirituality and Mental Well-being in Generation Z

Nayana Anish & Ms. Aparna Rajeev

Generation Z (Gen Z) faces high rates of anxiety and depression, underscoring the need for effective mental health interventions. Many Gen Z individuals identify as spiritual, highlighting opportunities to integrate spirituality into mental health care. Research links spirituality to lower depression levels, suggesting its potential role in holistic treatment approaches. While Millenials often exhibit higher levels of spirituality, Gen Z's unique practices present opportunities for tailored interventions. However, limited research exists on the intersection of spirituality and mental health in Gen Z, particularly regarding digital platforms. The study aims to assess the efficacy of digital platforms in fostering spirituality among Gen Z and Millenials. It addresses research gaps by exploring how digital applications can integrate spirituality and mental health care. A quantitative research approach was used, where data was collected through online surveys from 140 participants (70 Gen Z and 70 Millenials) who had used spirituality-focused applications for over a year. Key variables, including Spiritual well-being, App usage frequency and Duration were measured using the Spiritual Well-Being Scale. By comparing generational differences, the findings of this study highlight the potential of digital tools in promoting effective spiritual practices, developing tailored interventions, and addressing mental health challenges in Gen Z. This study emphasizes the potential of digital platforms to positively impact Gen Z's spiritual and mental health. It also encourages collaboration among professionals to innovate approaches integrating spirituality and mental health care. Ultimately, this research provides a foundation for leveraging digital platforms to support Gen Z's unique needs while advancing holistic care practices.

Ms. Nayana Anish is currently pursuing her master's in psychology at Chinmaya Vishwa Vidyapeeth, Kochi. Her research interests include Mental Health, Personality,

Abnormal Sexual Behaviour, Trauma-informed Care, and Mindfulness practices. She has participated in clinical and counselling internships and has carried out research within the domain of Personality and Risky Sexual Behaviour. She is currently passionate about exploring Spirituality and Mindfulness.

Ms. Aparna Rajeev is a Clinical Psychologist and Assistant Professor at the School of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Heritage, Chinmaya Vishwa Vidyapeeth, Kochi. With an M.Phil. in Clinical Psychology, her research focuses on integrating Indian psychological concepts with contemporary psychotherapy practices. She has two years of experience in clinical practice. She has co-authored a research paper and contributed to a book chapter on Indian psychology and well-being. She currently serves as the Program Director for MSc Clinical Psychology, overseeing internship training and curriculum development.

Mindfulness, Meditation, and Mental Health

Dr Sr Nikhila Purayidathil (Shijimol Thomas)

Mindfulness: Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present and aware of the current moment, acknowledging thoughts, emotions, and sensations without judgment. This intentional awareness encourages individuals to observe their experiences as they occur, without attempting to control or suppress them.

Scientific Perspective: Neuroscience research demonstrates that mindfulness activates brain regions responsible for emotional regulation, such as the prefrontal cortex, while decreasing activity in the amygdala, which governs the body's stress response.

Religious Perspective: Mindfulness has deep roots in Buddhist teachings as part of the Noble Eightfold Path to enlightenment. In Christian practices, mindfulness is akin to contemplative prayer, fostering awareness of divine presence and gratitude.

What is Meditation? Meditation encompasses a wide variety of practices aimed at achieving mental clarity, emotional stability, and heightened awareness. Techniques may include focused attention, mantra repetition, or open monitoring of one's thoughts and feelings.

Scientific Perspective: Studies indicate that meditation fosters cognitive flexibility, reduces stress, and enhances gray matter density in brain areas related to memory, empathy, and self-awareness.

Religious Perspective: Meditation is integral to many spiritual traditions. In Hinduism, it is associated with achieving unity with the divine (Samadhi). In Islam, Dhikr

involves repetitive chanting to focus the mind on God. Christianity incorporates meditative practices such as Lectio Divina for reflective scripture reading.

The Benefits of Mindfulness and Meditation for Mental Health:

Mindfulness and meditation have been widely acknowledged for their positive impact on mental health, promoting present-moment awareness and non-judgmental observation. Below are some key benefits:

Reduction in Stress and Anxiety

These practices regulate stress by lowering cortisol levels, a key stress hormone, and breaking cycles of anxious thinking. A meta-analysis by Khoury et al. (2015) demonstrated significant reductions in stress, anxiety, and depression through mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) programs. Additionally, a (2022) Mayo Clinic article highlights meditation's effectiveness in alleviating symptoms related to stress-related conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and fibromyalgia.

Enhanced Emotional Well-being

Regular mindfulness practice fosters positive emotions like gratitude and compassion while reducing negative feelings such as anger. Goyal et al. (2014) found that mindfulness meditation improves emotional well-being and diminishes negative affect. UC Davis Health (2022) notes that meditation reduces stress-related symptoms and enhances emotional well-being.

Improved Focus and Concentration

Mindfulness strengthens attention and memory recall by training the mind to stay focused on the present. Zeidan et al. (2010) reported that even brief mindfulness training significantly improved attention and cognitive functioning. UC Davis Health emphasizes that regular meditation can help combat age-related memory decline and dementia.

Support for Depression Management

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) effectively prevents relapse in patients with major depressive disorder by altering negative thought patterns. Teasdale et al. (2000) found that MBCT significantly reduced depression relapse rates. Harvard Gazette (2018) highlighted the influence of mindfulness on brain regions linked to depression.

Improved Sleep Quality

Mindful breathing and relaxation techniques promote restful sleep by calming the mind and reducing rumination. Black et al. (2015) demonstrated that mindfulness

meditation reduced insomnia severity. Welia Health (2022) highlighted meditation's ability to alleviate stress, contributing to better sleep.

Increased Self-awareness

Meditation promotes deeper self-reflection, helping individuals identify and address unhelpful behaviors. Farb et al. (2007) found that mindfulness alters brain activity patterns associated with self-awareness. Vital PsychMD (2022) emphasized the physical and mental health benefits of mindfulness.

Boosted Compassion and Interpersonal Relationships

Loving-kindness meditation enhances empathy and strengthens social bonds. Fredrickson et al. (2008) found that such practices increased positive emotions and social connectedness. The American Psychological Association (2012) noted that mindfulness supports self-control, objectivity, emotional tolerance, and effective communication.

Pain Management

Mindfulness reduces the perception of pain and associated emotional distress. Grant et al. (2010) found that experienced meditators showed decreased pain sensitivity due to altered brain responses. Welia Health (2022) indicated that meditation helps manage conditions like IBS and fibromyalgia by lowering stress levels.

Conclusion

Incorporating mindfulness and meditation into daily routines can significantly enhance mental health by fostering emotional balance, reducing stress, improving focus, and promoting better sleep. These simple yet powerful practices are recognized by both science and religion for their transformative potential in building resilience and improving well-being. Together, they offer a holistic approach to nurturing mental and emotional health.

Dr. Shiji Thomas is currently serving as the principal of St. Thomas College of Nursing in Odisha, India. She obtained her Ph.D. in 2021 from Maharaj Vinayak Global University (MVGU) in Jaipur, Rajasthan. She holds an M.Sc. in Psychiatric Nursing from Father Muller College of Nursing, Karnataka. She also holds a post-graduate diploma in Biomedical Ethics and Law from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Porto, Portugal under the International Chair in Bioethics. Over the years, she has contributed papers to many peer reviewed nursing and mental health journals. She has made presentations in various national and international conferences. She has been teaching courses in psychiatric nursing for 20 Years. She is involved in the training of nursing students since 2010. Her academic journey and clinical expertise in psychiatric nursing contribute meaningfully to nursing education and mental health.

Yogic Consciousness

Radhakrishna Panikkar

Many Scientists have the opinion that study of Consciousness is the last frontier of Science and Psychology. Consciousness studies involve investigation into the 'Altered Mental state' of a 'Super-conscious' human being as well. A yogi, for example, is said to be in a 'Super-Conscious mental state'. It is claimed that such 'super humans' can enhance the mental state of ordinary people by training them in Yoga and Meditation and motivating them to adopt a spiritual lifestyle. Expansion of Consciousness in Man can be perceived by considering a V-shaped open cone. All negative mental state such as Anger, Fear, Lust, Depression etc. lie at the bottom level of this model. By regular practice of Yoga, Meditation and Prayers, such mental defects can be eliminated, and this results in the expansion of Consciousness. Thus, a practitioner attains noble mental qualities such as Love, Empathy etc. Further expansion of Consciousness elevates the mind to the upper part of the 'Cone Model' and the adept becomes 'Super-Conscious'. When this state is attained, the practitioner (Yogi) is said to be in 'Altered Mental state'. Such a yogi can influence individuals and society as well. His approach to problems in the society is 'Spiritual' by helping people to reach their 'Inner self ' (Psyche) where happiness and sustainable joy prevails. This method cuts across divisions in the society. Some yogis have subjected themselves to scientific scrutiny and scientists found evidence of super conscious mental state in them!

Radhakrishna Panikkar is an international educator with a postgraduate degree in science. He has worked in various countries across Africa, teaching US students in subjects like the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and both AB and BC Calculus through online platforms. He has also taught fundamental Trigonometry and Pre-Calculus to US and Canadian students, along with being a test trainer in Math for US students. In addition to his academic work, Radhakrishna has made significant contributions to the field of literature and translation. He translated four English books into Malayalam, including Many Lives, Many Masters by Dr. Brian Weiss. He has also authored and self-published four books, one of which, Convergence: Ultra Science and Vedic Spirituality, is available on Amazon. His work in scientific philosophy was recognized when he received the P Kesavan Nair Memorial Award in 2023. Radhakrishna is active on social media, having conducted 18 interviews on scientific spirituality, which can be found on his YouTube channel, ESP Paranormal.

The Interplay of Emotions and Cognition in Belief Formation

Remya C

Cognitive independence of belief formation was a widely accepted theory wherein most people claimed to use rationality as their prime method for forming beliefs, wherein they relied largely on tools like empirical observation and universal logic. The wide acclaim for this view was because the beliefs so formed were perceived as more rational and hence reliable. This paper dwells into exploring the emotional investment in rationality as well as the role of emotions in belief formation. Contemporary studies reveal that rational beliefs are not just cognitive constructs but have an emotional dimension to them. They are seen as deeply intertwined and there is considerable evidence today to prove that both are required for the formation of belief states. Significant among them is the neuroscientific evidence uncovering the neural basis of belief, revealing a complex interplay of brain regions, which includes the systems involved in processing emotions as well. The paper attempts to bring forth the complex interrelation between these two towards the formation of beliefs which in turn shape our reality.

Remya. C is a PhD Research Scholar in the Department of Philosophy in Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, Kerala. She completed her under-graduation and post-graduation in Philosophy from University of Delhi following which she served as Guest Lecturer in Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi for a brief period. After completing her MPhil in Philosophy from Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, she enrolled for PhD in the same institution. During this period, she served as Teaching Assistant in the Department for a short period. She also functions as the General Secretary of the Global Forum for Young Philosophers. Her primary research areas include Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Language, Cognitive Science and Analytic Philosophy. She has presented various papers in National and International Conferences held in India and has published articles in reputed journals and edited volumes.

Boundaries of the Self: A Critical Analysis of the Extended Mind Theory

Shameera Beevi

The extended mind theory, proposed by Andy Clark and David Chalmers, challenges traditional notions of cognition, arguing that cognitive processes are not con-

fined within the brain but extend into the external environment through tools, technologies, and interactions. This paper critically examines the foundations of the theory, its implications, and its limitations. While the theory provides a novel perspective on human cognition in an increasingly interconnected world, it raises questions about agency, reliability, and ethical concerns. The paper concludes by offering solutions and exploring future possibilities in understanding cognitive boundaries in light of technological advancements.

Shameera Beevi is a passionate and dedicated philosophy teacher with a distinctive academic background. Despite graduating with a degree in Biotechnology, her insatiable curiosity and love for deeper intellectual pursuits guided her toward a postgraduate degree in Philosophy. With a unique combination of scientific knowledge and philosophical insight, Shameera is committed to inspiring critical thinking and a sense of wonder in her students. Her teaching approach emphasizes the integration of these diverse perspectives, encouraging learners to explore the intersection of science and philosophy. Through her work, she continues to explore the profound depths of philosophical thought while nurturing the minds of the next generation. Shameera is driven by the joy of teaching and the transformative power of ideas, making her journey as an educator both meaningful and impactful.

Sacred Groves and Its Influence in Khasi Cultural Belief

Skhemborlang Kurbah

A belief system encompasses the principle, values, and convictions that shape individuals understanding of the world and guide their behaviours and decision. These systems are influenced by cultural, religious, philosophical, and personal experiences, forming a framework through which people interpret reality and assign meaning in their lives. In this paper also the focus will be on how people believe that their 'belief' is so powerful and can shape their life into believing its effect. This I'm doing from the Khasi perspective on how nature and their spirits can really affect the life of the people living there. Khasi culture focuses on the reverence of the ancestor, divine and nature. This makes the belief system of the Khasi people as the one that sustained the natural beauty and act as a foster environmental stewardship and sustainable practices. The main focuses that I want to present is that 'the spirits react based upon our action'. This can be seen in the majestic work of the sacred grove in Meghalaya how they inflict punishment to those who disregards the sacredness of the forest that has been consecrated.

Skhemborlang Kurbah is a PhD research scholar in the Department of Philosophy in North-Eastern Hills University, Shillong, Meghalaya.

Prayer, Spirituality, and Healing in Garo Tribal Beliefs: A Study of Traditional Practices and Mental Well-being

Tengrik Marak

This study investigates the intricate connections between prayer, spirituality, and healing within the traditional practices of the Garo tribal community, with a particular focus on Songsarek beliefs. Central to these practices are Kamals, the spiritual healers, and the invocation of Mite (deities), which play pivotal roles in maintaining physical and mental well-being. The research explores how the Garos incorporate rituals, sacred spaces, and spiritual practices into their daily lives, highlighting the psychological and cultural dimensions of these traditions. By analyzing the Garo community's traditional healing methods, this study examines their significance in fostering mental well-being. It identifies how Songsarek spirituality, through rituals led by Kamals, addresses psychological challenges and promotes holistic health. The study draws parallels between indigenous healing systems and contemporary mental health frameworks, offering insights into the integration of traditional knowledge with modern therapeutic practices. The findings reveal that Songsarek beliefs and the spiritual guidance of Kamals not only preserve cultural identity but also provide effective strategies for addressing mental health concerns. By situating the Garo practices within broader discussions of mental well-being, this study underscores the importance of indigenous spirituality in enriching contemporary psychological insights, bridging the gap between ancient wisdom and modern science.

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Fierce Protectors of the Dharma: Exploring the Iconographies and Oral Narratives of Dorje Drolo and Palden Lhamo in Tibetan Buddhism

Tenzin Nyima Bhutia

Dorje Drolo, one of the eight manifestations of Guru Padmasambhava, is characterized by a fierce yet compassionate demeanour, often depicted with a dark complexion, three eyes, and a vajra in one hand. His imagery frequently includes a phurba and the striking representation of riding a tigress, symbolizing his power to subdue negative forces and protect practitioners on their spiritual journeys. The oral narratives surrounding Dorje Drolo emphasize his transformative encounters with local deities during the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet, illustrating his dual nature as both a wrathful protector and a compassionate guide. In contrast, Palden Lhamo, known as Shri Devi, is portrayed with a red complexion and fierce attributes, often riding a mule or horse. Her iconography features a sword and skull cup, representing her role in defending the Dharma against threats. The narratives associated with Palden Lhamo highlight her unwavering commitment to safeguarding Buddhist teachings and practitioners, emphasizing her fierce devotion and protective qualities. By analyzing the differences in iconographic representation alongside their oral traditions, this research elucidates how these figures embody complementary aspects of Tibetan Buddhist practice. This study investigates the distinct iconographies of Dorje Drolo and Palden Lhamo, two pivotal figures in Tibetan Buddhism, while examining how their associated oral narratives enhance our understanding of their roles within the tradition. The study underscores the importance of understanding both visual representations and narrative contexts to appreciate the multifaceted roles of Dorje Drolo and Palden Lhamo as fierce protectors of the Dharma. Ultimately, this exploration contributes to a deeper comprehension of Tibetan spiritual heritage and the dynamic interplay between iconography and oral storytelling in shaping religious identity.

Tenzin Nyima Bhutia is a PhD scholar of English at Sikkim University, Gangtok with her research focussed on exploring narratives of Folk beliefs surrounding the study of Sculptures, Scriptures and Scrolls in Buddhism. She is currently working as an Assistant Professor at Sikkim Manipal University- Centre for Distance Online Education, Majhitar, Sikkim. She holds a Bachelor's, Master's and M. Phil degree in English and Comparative Literature from Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India. With a profound passion for research, her work focuses on the intriguing realms of rites, rituals, cus-

toms, and traditions, as well as the rich drapery of folklores and oral narratives within Tibetan Buddhism, specifically in the Eastern Himalayan regions of India. Her academic pursuits reflect a deep commitment to preserving and understanding the cultural heritage of this unique region and literature in Buddhism. Ms07tnb@gmail.com

Can Consciousness Continue after Death

Dr. Thomaskutty Mathew

How do some people turn 'addicts' to alcohol or tobacco or drugs or so? We see that addiction continues unchecked in spite of warning that comes up from one's own 'conscience'. Sometimes we notice how some individuals get perturbed by what is called 'compunctions of conscience'. What exactly is this? What if you Separate the soul from the body?!! Is there any proof that consciousness can actually exist outside the physical body? Most people believe our memories are stored in the brain, and for every good reason. Cautious researchers investigating reincarnation cases do not challenge it head on. Jesus Christ opted for Mary, as the mother, from the lineage of David, and might have grown partially in that culture and the so called 'racial memory'. Ian Stevenson has pointed out that observations of paranormal phenomena, including reincarnation cases, "require a radical revision in present concepts of the relation between mind and body." He goes on to suggest that our minds could "consist of some nonphysical substance" and conjectures that "minds are not brains but users of brains." Dr. Jim Tucker, puts it this way in Life before Life.;!l "Even though our everyday experience may tell us that our consciousness begins with our birth and ends with our death, a reasonable alternative is that our brains serve as vehicles for consciousness during our lifetimes, and that consciousness existed before our births and can continue after our deaths until it finds another vehicle in a new body."

Dr. Thomaskutty Mathew (Ex. KSEB) is having Ph.D in HR and D.Sc. in Sustainable Development in addition to B.Tech., M.B.A. and five PG Diplomas. He has got more than 50 years of professional experience and as a Senior Research Guide having guided many Ph.Ds. Presented many papers at National and International level and received many awards. Wife-Prof. Lilly Chacko.

Are Emotions That Bad?

Dr Tigi Abraham

This paper is an attempt to counter the popular understanding about the value and role of emotions in human life. Often dismissed as irrational forces that

sometimes-blind judgment, emotions have been subjected to critique in various philosophical traditions, from the Stoics' call for apatheia to Kant's prioritization of reason. However, there are enough trends in contemporary philosophy and psychology that can challenge this dichotomy, recognizing emotions as integral to moral reasoning, social connection, and personal flourishing. Drawing inspiration from different philosophers, this presentation tries to show that emotions are not that philosophically and practically "bad." Their value depends on their alignment with rational reflection and ethical ends. By addressing common objections to emotions—such as their susceptibility to manipulation and volatility—the paper tries to reposition emotions as essential, albeit complex, contributors to the human experience.

Tigi Abraham CST is a member of the Khrist Jyoti Province of the Little Flower Congregation. He holds an M.A. in Philosophy and English Literature, along with an M.Ph. in Philosophy from JD, Pune. He earned his Doctorate in Philosophy from the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, specializing in Religious Epistemology. Tigi Abraham CST is currently a resident lecturer in Philosophy at Jnana Nikethan Institute of Philosophy. He also serves as a visiting professor at several philosophical institutes. His academic contributions include published articles and an edited work.

Desire, Renunciation and Mental Health

Yadunath R Varma

The backbone of this paper is based on the axiom: 'Mental Peace is a sure symptom of Mental Health'. Most people live by a common notion; "If things happen according to the way I want them to happen, I am at peace; Else I am not". If for some reason, a person thinks "I don't want things to happen as I want them to happen", still there is a 'want.' Again, if someone thinks "I don't know what I want", still there is a desire to 'want'. If someone thinks "I don't want anything", he still wants something; and that is 'I'; the identity he thinks is his. Upon this realization, he decides to go a step ahead to renounce his identity by his will. He thought he renounced his identity only to realize the next moment that he was aware of the 'act of renunciation'. It means the 'I' persisted as he was aware. No 'I' means no desire. No desire means mental peace, hence mental health. Blessed and healthy are those who are unaware that they are renunciants or are on that path. True renunciation is unaware of itself.

Yadunath R Varma is a Self-Realization Advocate, Spiritual Seeker and Initiator of 'Project Amar.' Yadunath R Varma has been a dedicated Siva-Panchakshari Mantra Saadhaka since 2014, focusing on deepening his spiritual practice. On 28th August 2015, while pursuing doctoral research at IIT Indore, he was blessed by three wander-

ing Sadhus on the road, marking a significant spiritual moment in his life. Shortly after, on 6th September 2015, he experienced a profound spiritual awakening, including Kundalini activation, Advaita realization, and Out-of-the-Body Travel. This led him to make the pivotal decision in April 2017 to drop his PhD research and fully commit to his spiritual journey and self-realization. In June 2018, Yadunath founded the 'Self-realization Initiative,' a platform dedicated to promoting awareness of self-realization and its transformative potential in daily life. Building upon this foundation, in October 2024, he launched 'Project Amar,' a subset of the Self-realization Initiative, with the mission to spread three key truths: the Self is real, Self-realization is real, and the Self is immortal. Yadunath possesses deep knowledge of spiritual practices and self-realization techniques, with a strong focus on guiding others toward inner transformation and awakening. He is an influential leader dedicated to spreading spiritual truths and fostering global awareness of self-realization. yadunathrvarma.isrkochi@gmail.com, 9895087604

Integrating Mindfulness in English Language Education: Enhancing Emotional Resilience and Cognitive Performance

Ahinasha NS, Dr. Mini M Abraham

Mindfulness, as an evidence-based practice rooted in focused attention and present-moment awareness, has shown significant potential in enhancing emotional and cognitive capacities. In the context of English language education, where learners often encounter anxiety, cognitive overload, and emotional stress, mindfulness offers a transformative framework for addressing these challenges. This paper explores the integration of mindfulness practices into English language classrooms, emphasizing their role in fostering emotional resilience, improving focus, and enhancing cognitive functioning. Through a critical review of literature and pedagogical theories, this paper proposes mindfulness-based strategies, such as guided breathing exercises for anxiety reduction, mindful listening for enhanced comprehension, and reflective journaling for self-expression and vocabulary building. These practices address the dual domains of affective and cognitive learning, offering a holistic approach to English language teaching. Furthermore, the study highlights the broader implications of mindfulness in cultivating empathy, collaborative skills, and mental well-being within the classroom. While the benefits are substantial, challenges such as limited teacher training and resistance to non-traditional pedagogical approaches are also discussed. This paper contributes to the growing discourse on innovative practices in language education, advocating for mindfulness as a pivotal tool to create emotionally supportive and cogni-

tively stimulating learning environments. The findings are particularly relevant for educators and policymakers seeking to bridge the gap between mental well-being and academic achievement in English language education.

Ahinasha NS. is a research scholar in English at Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakara, Ernakulam, under Mahatma Gandhi University. Specializing in English Language Teaching (ELT), Her research focuses on innovative methodologies and interdisciplinary approaches to language education. With a keen interest in integrating technology into pedagogy, she has presented papers at international conferences and is actively engaged in contributing to the field of ELT through academic publications.

Dr. Mini M Abraham is an Assistant Professor and Research Guide, as well as the former Head of the department of English at Bharata Mata College, Kochi, Kerala. She has done her doctoral research in English Language Teaching, specializing in Listening Skills of undergraduate students. She is a member of Algorithmic Governance Research Network, Oslomet University, Norway. She has over 25 years of teaching experience at the UG and PG levels. She has been the IQAC coordinator, a journal reviewer and editor and has published papers in UGC-CARE listed journals. She has done a short stint as Lecturer in English in the College of Technology in Oman. Her current research interests include culture studies, Film Studies, AI and Algorithmic governance and alternative second language pedagogies.

The Role of Emotion in Moral Decision-Making: A Comparative Analysis of Immanuel Kant and Antonio Damasio

Dr Joby John

Moral decision-making has been traditionally debated between rationalist and emotion-based approaches. Immanuel Kant's deontological ethics asserts that morality should be grounded in reason and duty, independent of emotions, to ensure universal moral principles. In contrast, Antonio Damasio's neuroscientific research, particularly through the case of Phineas Gage, demonstrates that emotions play a fundamental role in ethical reasoning. This paper explores the relationship between rational principles and emotional processes in moral judgment, analyzing key brain regions such as the prefrontal cortex, amygdala, and anterior cingulate cortex. Neuroscientific findings suggest that damage to these areas impairs moral reasoning, leading to ethical indifference, impulsivity, and antisocial behavior. By comparing Kant's rationalist moral framework with Damasio's somatic marker hypothesis, this study highlights the necessity of integrating both reason

and emotion for sound moral decision-making. The findings bridge philosophy and neuroscience, offering a more comprehensive understanding of human morality.

Will to Believe and Wellbeing: A Pragmatic Approach

Dr Libin Joseph

The doctrine of 'Will Believe' and its connection to wellbeing can be explored through a pragmatic lens, drawing on philosophical traditions such as pragmatism in general and its pioneering advocate William James. In his essay "The Will to Believe" and in the book Pragmatism, James introduces his doctrine of 'Will Believe.' He argues that in certain situations, it is not only permissible but also rational to believe in something, even in the absence of conclusive evidence, if the belief promotes positive and practical outcomes in one's life. This contrasts with the more rigorous evidentialist approach, which holds that one should only believe in things for which there is sufficient evidence. In this pragmatic approach, beliefs are judged by their practical advantages. Positive beliefs can provide a sense of purpose, resilience, and hope, which are integral to psychological and emotional wellbeing. In fact, the pragmatic perspective doesn't insist on blind belief. A balance between skepticism and hopeful belief is a crucial factor in maintaining both rational thinking and emotional health. While empirical evidence is important, the value of beliefs in shaping one's life experience, coping mechanisms, and overall mental and emotional health cannot be underestimated. By embracing a flexible and purpose-driven approach to belief, individuals can enhance their wellbeing and better navigate the challenges that life presents.

Libin Joseph Libin Joseph is a member of the Little Flower Congregation (CST Fathers). He is a lecturer at Jnana Niketan Institute of Philosophy and Religion (Little Flower Seminary), Aluva. He holds a Doctorate in Philosophy from Pontifical Holy Cross University, Rome. He has contributed articles to peer-reviewed journals and lectures in philosophy at various institutes. His major research areas include History of Philosophy, Philosophical Anthropology, Philosophy of Science, and Pragmatism.

Practicality of AI Assisted Mindful Meditation in Enhancing Mental Health

Meera Maheswari PS, Ahada Kabeer

This study explores the practicality of AI-assisted mindful meditation in enhancing mental health, with a focus on its potential to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. It examines how AI technologies can support personalized, accessible, and effective meditation practices, contributing to emotional well-being and resilience. By reviewing existing research and conducting content analysis of user feedback, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of AI-driven mindfulness interventions and their impact on mental health. Preliminary findings suggest promising results, though further validation is needed to confirm long-term efficacy. The study emphasizes the importance of integrating AI-assisted mindfulness tools into therapeutic practices, promoting quality care, and improving clinical outcomes for mental health professionals.

Meera Maheswari PS, a MSc Counselling Psychology student at Loyola College of Social Sciences, is a dedicated and skilled professional with diverse experiences. She has interned at District Child Protection Unit Thiruvananthapuram Kerala. She has certificate in Art-Based Psychosocial Care, Specific Learning Disabilities Evaluation, Life Skill Training, Street Theatre Workshop, Workshop on CBT, and Early Identification and Intervention on Mentally Challenged. She actively participated in the Manomedham Psych Expo and also set up exhibits at Psychopark and conducted street theatre for awareness. She conducted an Action Research on "Identifying Psychological Needs Among Haritha Karma Sena Members and Planning Appropriate Intervention."

Ahada Kabeer, a M.Sc. Counselling Psychology student at Loyola College of Social Sciences, has a B.Sc. in Psychology from University of Kerala Thiruvananthapuram. She is a dedicated and skilled professional with a range of experiences. She has interned at the District Child Protection Unit in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. She holds certifications in Art-Based Psychosocial Care, Specific Learning Disabilities Evaluation, Life Skill Training, Street Theatre Workshop, CBT, and Early Identification and Intervention for Mentally Challenged individuals. She actively participated in the Manomedham Psych Expo, contributed to setting up exhibits at Psychopark, and conducted street theatre for awareness. Additionally, she carried out an action research project titled "Identifying Psychological Needs Among Haritha Karma Sena Members and Planning Appropriate Intervention."

Dr Pramod SK is a Post Doc Assistant professor in the Department of counselling psychology at Loyola College of Social Science, Trivandrum. Email: pramod@loyolacollegekerala.edu.in His areas of expertise includes Behavioral Science, Research, Counselling & Psychotherapy and Cyber psychology.

The Significance of the Body: Spinoza's Insights and the Psychology of Emotions

Rajeev Joseph Palakkacherry

Descartes famously prioritized the mind, positioning it as the primary source of human identity and understanding. However, Spinoza's conception of passions introduces a paradigm shift, reframing the discussion to emphasize the integrated importance of both body and mind. This paper examines the enduring relevance of Spinoza's Ethics for contemporary perspectives on the psychology of emotion. Unlike Descartes, who upheld the mind's supremacy, Spinoza challenges this dualistic framework by presenting a holistic view in which body and mind are inseparably connected as attributes of a single substance. For Spinoza, the central philosophical task is to develop an ethics of knowing—an endeavour that begins with recognizing this unity. He posits that progress in understanding and self-realization is achieved by enhancing the body's capacity to be influenced by external forces and to exert influence in turn. This interplay between body and mind forms the foundation of Spinoza's theory of passions, which seeks to dismantle the Cartesian divide and establish a more dynamic relationship between emotion, cognition, and physical existence. By reconfiguring the role of the passions, Spinoza offers a profound contribution to the study of human emotions, one that continues to shape contemporary thought in significant ways.

Rajeev Joseph Palakkacherry is a Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Changanacherry, Kerala, India. He is pursuing a Ph.D. in philosophy, focusing on environmental philosophy at Dharmaram Vidhya Kshetram, Bangalore, India. Rajeev Joseph is deeply committed to environmental advocacy, serving as an Environmentalist and a dedicated practitioner of Laudato Si'. He has devoted his life to grassroots work within parishes, spearheading sustainable development initiatives for the betterment of the local communities and surrounding villages. His innovative project, the Carbon Neutral Parish and Village has garnered recognition and praise from the CBCI, Office for Environment and Climate Change. As an Ecopsychologist with a master's degree in psychology, he applies his knowledge to bridge the gap between psychology and ecology. He motivates people through ecotherapy sessions. At the same time, as an Environmental Journalist, he practises his expertise to address pressing ecological issues. Furthermore, his creative pursuits have led to the production of the acclaimed feature film "The Mud," which eloquently explores the intricate relationship between humanity and the Earth, earning him three prestigious international awards.

The Psychology of Art

Sreepadma Panicker

Art is a form of expression that reflects not only the artist's creativity but also their internal emotions, thoughts, and desires—whether they experience the joy or the struggles of life. To truly understand one's emotions, one must acknowledge, process, and find ways to express them, which, though challenging, is achievable. The psychology of art goes beyond deciphering what the artist was thinking during the creative process; it also delves into how our consciousness and ego influence the way we interpret the artwork before us. Every individual has a unique perspective, and psychology helps us become aware of the ways our minds perceive and experience the world. It allows us to appreciate each colour with its inherent beauty. Through the interplay of hues and saturation, we can observe what the artist has physically created on the canvas or any medium. Yet, it is in the depth of each stroke that we uncover the story behind the artwork. Each "mistakes" that are brought on to the work will be the simplest yet perfect last touch to the piece when we see the work as a whole. Art is subjective. Each of our neuron interprets each action drawn of made into something that we have thought and experienced through our reality. Some might find this boring, but just by stepping back and seeing the picture as a whole already makes a big difference. Through psychology, we are involved with the cognitive and emotional processing to create or recreate the imagery that can help the world to see through the minds of the artist as it is our own.

Sreepadma Panicker is a B.Sc. Psychology student at St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam. She is passionate about understanding the human mind. She aspires to address mental health challenges and contribute to research to help others live better lives. She is an artist and hence chose this topic because she wishes to blend her knowledge of psychology and art. Email: fortunetyche123@gmail.com.

Cosmic Interconnectedness in Maram Indigenous Worldview: A Scientific Appropriation

Dr Bindu Thomas

This presentation explores the ways in which the Maram people, an indigenous group residing in the Northeastern part of India, perceive their place in the cosmos

and their relationship with the environment, spirits, and each other. The concept of cosmic interconnectedness within the Maram tribal worldview is a profound and intricate framework that underscores the holistic nature of existence. Central to their cosmological perspective is the belief in an interconnected web of life, where the spiritual and material realms are inextricably linked. This paper examines contemporary appropriations of the Maram worldview, highlighting how modern interpretations and applications of these ancient beliefs are influencing ecological practices, social structures, and cultural expressions. It delves into the interplay between traditional cosmological concepts and contemporary environmentalism, showcasing how Maram cosmology offers valuable insights into sustainable living and ecological balance in today's globalized context. By analysing both traditional narratives and modern adaptations, this study aims to provide an understanding of how the Maram tribal worldview navigates and integrates cosmic interconnectedness. It further discusses the implications of these perspectives for contemporary cosmological thought, emphasizing their relevance in addressing current environmental and cultural challenges. Through this exploration, the paper contributes to a deeper appreciation of indigenous knowledge systems and their potential role in shaping a more harmonious relationship between humanity and the cosmos.

Dr. Bindu Thomas is a distinguished academic leader serving as the Head of the Chemistry Department at Don Bosco College, Maram, Manipur. She earned her Ph.D. in Nanoscience from the Madras University. Alongside her specialization in chemistry, Dr. Thomas holds an M.A. in Education and a Master of Theology from Global Ministries University, California. Dr. Thomas has contributed significantly to the field of chemistry through her research, with several scientific publications in esteemed international journals. Beyond academia, she is a regular contributor to newspapers and magazines across Northeast India, offering insightful perspectives on current affairs and societal issues. An ardent Jesus Youth animator, Dr. Thomas has been a guiding force for youth in Manipur, fostering leadership and spiritual growth at both regional and national levels. She has conducted extensive empirical and theoretical research on the worldviews and belief systems of the Maram tribe in Manipur.

Art and the Theatre of the Soul

Roy Thottam

Rev Roy Thottam is currently the director of Thanmaya Jesuit Media and Arts Centre, Kottayam. He is a distinguished artist and the Director of CARP - Company of Artists for Radiance of Peace, an organization dedicated to promoting peace and harmony through art. With a passion for creativity and community engagement, he regularly conducts art workshops and exhibitions, fostering artistic expression and cultural dialogue. Roy holds a postgraduate degree and a Master of Arts in Fine Art (Painting) from Canterbury Christ Church University, where he honed his craft and deepened his understanding of the visual arts. In addition to his artistic pursuits, he has served as the Editor of Ezhuthu magazine, contributing to the literary and cultural landscape with his editorial expertise and vision.

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