

Ms. S. Sherin Fathma | Dr. R. Saradha



# ANCIENT LIGHT TO MODERN MIND



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# *Ancient Light to Modern Mind*

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## *Preface*

In a world driven by constant innovation, rapid communication, and unprecedented change, there remains an enduring human quest: the search for wisdom that transcends time. This quest finds its most profound expressions in philosophy—particularly the ancient philosophies of India, which continue to illuminate the path toward a balanced, ethical, and meaningful life.

This volume, *Philosophy for the Future: Ancient Wisdom in Modern Times*, emerges from the Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR)-sponsored seminar hosted by the Department of English, Rathinam College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, in commemoration of Indian Philosophers' Day. The book brings together diverse voices from across the country who examine, interpret, and apply Indian philosophical traditions—from Vedanta, Buddhism, and Jainism to folk spirituality, mythology, and literary reinterpretations.

Each chapter in this collection reflects a sincere engagement with the timeless insights of Indian thinkers, and seeks to contextualize these ideas within the challenges of the present—mental health, ecological crisis, identity, education, and ethical living. What unites the contributors is a shared belief that ancient philosophy is not merely a historical subject but a living resource with the power to renew society.

This book is not only a scholarly contribution but a tribute to our intellectual ancestors. We hope it serves as a steppingstone for future research and deeper reflection among students, educators, and the general public.

## *Acknowledgement*

“The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence.” from the words of Rabindranath Tagore. The book would not have been possible without many fine individuals and organizations. However, before we pay our gratitude towards them, we would like to thank the almighty for giving us the courage and right spirit to compile this work.

While it is impossible to name each one our sincere gratitude to Rathinam College of Arts and Science. I extended my sincere gratitude to Our leaders Chairman Dr. Madan A. Sendhil, Our Director Seema Sendhil, Our CEO & Secretary Dr. R. Manickam, and Our Principal Dr. S. Balasubramanian, Our Vice Principal Dr. S. N. Suresh and Dean Research & Development Dr K. P. V Sabareesh and sincere most gratitude is extended to our seniors, friends and colleagues from higher education institutions within and outside. Our sincere thanks to all the authors for their valuable research chapters, which truly reflect the relevance of ancient Indian philosophical traditions in today’s world. We appreciate their dedication, commitment, and scholarly engagement.

We sincerely thank all the distinguished resource persons – Dr. D. Prabha, Dr. S. Subramanian, Dr. V. Neelakandan, and Dr. S. Ram Manahor Pari – for their insightful contributions and academic engagement that enriched the book chapters that followed. We acknowledge the Wordsswiggle publishers and various online platforms.

This book will also remain incomplete without thanking colleagues of our institutions. We sincerely thank our family members for their affection and well-wishers for their blessings.

Lastly, but most importantly, we thank our readers for reading the book. We hope you find it helpful and recommend it to others.”

Ms. S. Sherin Fathma

Dr. R. Saradha



Dr. R. Saradha, MA., M. Phil., Ph.D., currently serves as the Head and Assistant Professor in the department of English at Rathinam College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore. With over 14 years of enriching teaching experience, she has cultivated an exceptional depth of knowledge in the field of literature. Known for her dynamic and enthusiastic approach, Dr. Saradha brings both passion and energy to her academic pursuits.

Her intellectual contributions extend beyond the classroom, having authored a number of articles published in reputable UGC care-listed journals, highlighting her scholarly expertise.

## Table of Contents

1. T.S Eliot'S the Wasteland Explicits the Modern Life Through the Themes of Ancient Mythology and Philosophy\_\_\_\_\_1
2. Women's Real Life Vs Inner Feeling in Shobha De's Second Thoughts\_\_\_\_\_17
3. Role of the Ancient in Modern Life: A Reflection on Ancient Chants for Modern Living by Aatmanika Ram\_\_\_\_\_28
4. Philosophy for the Future: Ancient Wisdom in Modern Time A Study of Buddhist Thought in Hermann Hesse's Siddhartha for Modern Living\_\_\_\_\_36
5. Carl Jung's Psychology and the East: Differing Notions of Yoga, Meditation, and the Symbolic Life in the East and the West. \_\_\_\_\_44
6. Philosophy for the Future: Ancient Wisdom in Modern Times Analysis of Traditional Knowledge in Modern Education\_\_\_\_\_59
7. Echoes of Dharma: Reclaiming Moral Values from Ancient Texts for the Modern Generation\_\_\_\_\_67
8. Exploring The Dialectic of Tradition and Modernity in Sudha Murty's 'How I Taught My Grandmother to Read'. \_\_\_\_\_75
9. Eco-Wisdom in The Vedas: Ancient Indian Perspectives on Environmental Conservation\_\_\_\_\_87
10. Old Words, New Wisdom: Drawing Moral Strength from Classical Texts\_\_\_\_\_108
11. Blind Love, Broken Sons: A Comparative Study of Parental Attachment and Mental Health in The Mahabharata and The Kite Runner\_\_\_\_\_115
12. Importance Of Yoga and Meditation in Today's World\_\_\_\_\_123

13. The Application of Ancient Ideas and Myth (Goddess Devi) in Modern Novel *Leave It to Me* by Bharati Mukherjee\_\_\_\_\_131
14. Integrating Artificial Intelligence into Indian Education: Prospects and Possibilities\_\_\_\_\_145
15. The Future Philosophy as Mentioned in Saiva Siddhanta\_\_\_\_\_158
16. Reclaiming Traditional Knowledge in Modern Education: Pedagogical Insights from R. K. Narayan's *The Mahabharata*\_\_\_\_\_165
17. Dire Consequences of Adharma in Devdutt Pattanaik's *Shyam: An Illustrated Retelling of the Bhagavata*\_\_\_\_\_176

*Chapter - 11*

***Blind Love, Broken Sons: A Comparative Study of Parental Attachment and Mental Health in The Mahabharata and The Kite Runner***

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**Abstract**

In a time of psychological change and developing mental health issues, revisiting the ancient wisdom related to Indian mythology and philosophy has significant therapeutic benefits. Ancient wisdom traditions offer timeless concepts that approach the fundamental problems and moral dilemmas of contemporary life, especially those derived from Indian philosophy, spiritual literature, and myth. Concepts such as dharma (good living), karma (cause and consequence) and

ahimsa (non-violence) are not just historical ideas; they serve as essential foundations for living a balanced, purposeful life. Emotional intelligence, self-control, resilience, and morality are all concepts addressed in the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, and epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Yoga and Ayurveda, two traditional Indian medicinal customs, promote harmony between the individual and the universe and support natural approaches to both physical and mental well-being. This study compares the psychological aspects of Khaled Hosseini's contemporary novel *The Kite Runner* and one of India's greatest epics, *The Mahabharata*, highlighting significant similarities in how they treat moral conflict, trauma, guilt, and redemption.

**Keywords:** *Blind Parental Love, Dharma and Ethics, Mental Health, Psychological Consequences, Emotional Resilience, Ancient Indian Philosophy.*

## **Introduction**

Literature from all eras and cultures acts as an opening into the human mind, capturing ethical issues, internal struggles and endless searches for identity and forgiveness. The Mahabharata, one of the greatest epics of ancient India and Khaled Hosseini's contemporary novel *The Kite Runner*, though separated by centuries and geographies, share profound thematic resonances. One of the greatest epics in worldwide literature, the Mahabharata has been attributed to Sage Vyasa, also called

Vedavyasa. In addition to writing the Mahabharata, a massive epic with over 100,000 lines, he is also renowned for have collected the Vedas, written important Puranas, and written intellectual works like the Brahma Sutras (Hiltebeitel, 2001). In his dual roles as narrator and protagonist in the Mahabharata, father of Pandu and Dhritarashtra - Vyasa skillfully combines moral ambiguity, challenging human emotions and divine purpose to develop an epic that is permanent and transcends space and time. Vyasa analyzes timeless principles like dharma (duty), karma (action and consequence), inner conflict and the moral challenges which have become a part of humanity through figures like Arjuna, Krishna and Dhritarashtra. His writings continue to be a key component of both Hindu tradition and global literary and philosophical discussions (Matilal, 2002).

Khaled Hosseini is an Afghan-American author, born in Kabul, Afghanistan in 1965. After moving to writing, Hosseini achieved widespread recognition for his first book, *The Kite Runner* (2003), which quickly debuted as a best-seller all over the world. His writing is characterized by its cultural authenticity, deep emotional understanding and powerful depiction of human resilience in the face of personal and political disturbance (Hosseini, 2003).

In comparison to *The Mahabharata*, which portrays a huge cosmic conflict based on dharma (righteousness), fate and familial loyalty. *The Kite Runner* conveys a closer look of personal guilt, psychological

distress, and the aim of redemption in a politically fractured Afghanistan. Themes that have been personally relevant and central to both books include mental suffering, moral weakness, blind parental love, and the converting power of self-awareness and good behavior. Analyzing characters like Dhritarashtra and Baba; fathers whose sons' moral growth has been affected by their partial love (Sharma, 2016; Singh, 2013). This article aims to reveal how both works highlight universal truths about mental health, ethical mistakes and the fragile yet resilient human spirit.

### **Blind Parental Love in The Mahabharata**

The Mahabharata explains how King Dhritarashtra's blind love for his son Duryodhana creates severe social and familial disintegration. Dhritarashtra, filled with parental attachment and a sense of guilt resulting from his own disability continues to be quiet and indulgent despite being aware of Duryodhana's shortcomings - his jealousy, arrogance and injustice (Hiltebeitel, 2001). His failure to teach or punish his kid is one of the reasons behind the disastrous Kurukshetra war. This parental blindness is not only literal; it is also extremely symbolic, expressing spiritual blindness and lack of ability to distinguish between good and wrong when mental bias obscures judgment. Because of this partiality, Duryodhana's sense of privilege and justice is distorted, which leads to ego and anger.

The Mahabharata, a work of ancient Indian philosophy tells against such unbalanced bonds. The epic highlights that love must be directed by wisdom and justice for the overall wellness of people and society, and it promotes viveka (discernment) and dharma (just responsibility) as tools for emotional balance and moral parenting (Sarma, 2011).

### **Blind Parental Love in The Kite Runner**

Baba's hidden affection for Hassan is revealed in *The Kite Runner* through his demands on Amir, his legal son. Due to his embraced guilt for hiding the fact that Hassan is also his son, Baba treats the two boys differently but with strong affection (Hosseini, 2003). Amir builds insecure and emotionally broken as a result of wanting his father's appreciation. He rejects Hassan because of this deeply connected emotional lack, which leads him to suffer from long-term mental illness and impacts his conscience (Kumar, 2015). Hosseini describes blind parental love through lies and unsaid facts as emotional care rather than a luxury. Baba's inability to be open in emotion leads to identity difficulties for both of his sons. The novel gently conveys people the benefits of open communication, emotional honesty, and the responsibility to promote children's mental health (Singh, 2013).

### **Mental Health and Emotional Consequences**

Both narratives illustrate how absent blind parental love can end up:

Guilt and trauma: Amir's betrayal of Hassan leaves him to feel shame for many years (Kumar, 2015). Duryodhana's blind desire leads him to disaster (Sharma, 2016).

Identity crises: In both stories, the children struggle with their feeling of value as a result of the truths that are kept hidden (Freud, 1957; Erikson, 1968).

Generational impact: Parent's psychological wounds affect not only their children but also upcoming generations, as proved by Sohrab's trauma and the Mahabharata's generational curse (Sarma, 2011).

These works coordinate with modern psychological theories (e.g., Freud's psychoanalysis) that highlight how early emotional bonds shape personality and mental health (Freud, 1957). They also relate to the old Indian ideas of karma, self-control and mental well-being, explaining how ageless knowledge can direct modern emotional recovery (Matilal, 2002; Sharma, 2016).

### **Ancient Wisdom for Modern Healing**

The Mahabharata emphasizes that dharma or ethical duties and awareness, must be balanced with love. According to *The Kite Runner*, psychological wounds must be healed with self-awareness, forgiveness and the bravery to face one's history (Kumar, 2015). Both texts

emphasize the value of honesty, responsibility, and moral behavior in maintaining emotional balance and stopping the decline of mental peace.

## **Conclusion**

The historical epic together, the Mahabharata and the modern novel *The Kite Runner* provides an engaging analysis of the psychological effects of blind parental love. In contrast to the latter, which shows mental wounds caused by ignoring emotions and untold truths, the former gives a dharmic warning against sentimental partiality. Both act as a reminder that healthy relationships, emotional authenticity, and the ability to love with knowledge are all essential components of mental health and wellbeing. As mental health awareness grows in the modern world, these literary works act as timeless manuals, conveying not only narratives but also answers derived from universal human values.

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