

# Uttishthata Groupzine

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## Human Excellence

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

uttishthata jāgrata prāpya varānnibodhata!

Arise, awake, and learn by approaching the excellent ones.

*Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached.*

- Swami Vivekananda

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ॥

ā no bhadrāḥ kratavo yantu viśvataḥ ॥

Let noble thoughts reach us from every direction - RigVed

# Uttishthata Groupzine

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## The Attitude towards the Self

While the out and out materialist looks upon man as a body, a combination of cells, and the psychologist as an integrated body-mind, the spiritually illumined regards man in his essential nature as a soul having the mind and body as its coverings or instruments. Material life is, therefore, concerned primarily with the well-being of the body. Mental life is occupied with the welfare of both the body and the mind. Spiritual life, on the other hand, takes into account all the three factors, the soul, the mind and the body, and aims at the harmonious development of the body and the mind so that the soul may be able to unfold its potential divinity spontaneously. The instruments of the mind and the body must be made healthy and vigorous so that the soul may function through them freely and joyfully. That is why we find the ancient Vedic Rishis praying:

ॐ आप्यायन्तु ममाङ्गानि वाक् प्राणश्चक्षुः श्रोत्रमथो बलमिन्द्रियाणि च सर्वाणि ।

सर्वं ब्रह्मोपनिषदं माऽहं ब्रह्म निराकुर्यां मा मा ब्रह्म निराकरोदनिरकरणमस्त्वनिराकरणं मेऽस्तु ।

तदात्मनि निरते य उपनिषत्सु धर्मास्ते मयि सन्तु ते मयि सन्तु ॥ ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

OM āpyāyantu mamāṅgāni vāk prāṇaśchakṣuḥ śrotramatho balamindriyāṇi ca sarvāṇi ।

sarvaṁ brahmaupaniṣadam mā'haṁ brahma nirākuryāṁ mā mā brahma nirākaro danirakaraṇamastvanirākaraṇaṁ me'stu ।

tadātmani nirate ya upaniṣatsu dharmāste mayi santu te mayi santu । ।

OM śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ । ।

“OM, May my limbs, speech, breath, eye, ear and also my strength and all my senses become refreshed and vigorous. Everything is the Brahman proclaimed in the Upanishads. May I never deny Brahman. May Brahman never reject me. May there be no denial at all. May there be no denial at least from me. May I be devoted to the Atman, be endowed with all the virtues extolled in the Upanishads.”

– Swami Yatishwarananda, Adventures in Spiritual Life

## The National Significance of Swami Vivekananda's Life and Work

- Sister Nivedita

Continued from previous issue...

(Written in *The Hindu*, July 27, 1902, few days after Swami Vivekananda's MahaSamadhi)

What was it that the West heard in him, leading so many to hail and cherish his name as that of one of the great religious teachers of the world? He made no personal claim. He told no personal story. One whom he knew and trusted long had never heard that he held any position of distinction amongst his Gurubhais. He made no attempt to popularise with strangers any single form or creed, whether of God or Guru. Rather, through him the mighty torrent of Hinduism poured forth its cooling waters upon the intellectual and spiritual worlds, fresh from its secret sources in Himalayan snows. A witness to the vast religions culture of Indian homes and holy men, he could never cease to be. Yet he quoted nothing but the Upanishads. He taught nothing but the Vedanta. And men trembled, for they heard the voice for the first time of the religious teacher who feared not Truth.



Do we not all know the song that tells of Shiva as He passes along the roadside, "Some say He is mad. Some say He is devil. Some say-don't you know? - He is the Lord Himself!" Even so India is familiar with the thought that every great personality is the meeting-place and reconciliation of opposing ideals. To his disciples, Vivekananda will ever remain the archetype of the Sannyasin. Burning renunciation was chief of all the inspirations that spoke to us through him. "Let me die a true Sannyasin as my Master did," he exclaimed once, passionately, "needless of money, of women, and of fame! And of these the most insidious is the love of fame!" Yet the self-same destiny that filled him with this burning thirst of intense Vairagyam embodied in him also the ideal householder, —full of yearning to protect and save, eager to learn and teach the use of materials, reaching out towards the re-organisation and re-ordering of life. In this respect, indeed, he belonged to the race of Benedict and Bernard, of Robert de Citcaux and Loyola.

It may be said that just as in Francis of Assisi, the yellow robe of the Indian Sannyasin gleams for a moment in the history of the Catholic Church, so in Vivekananda, the great saint, abbots of Western monasticism are born anew in the East.

Similarly, he was at once a sublime expression of super-conscious religion and one of the greatest patriots ever born. He lived at a moment of national disintegration, and he was fearless of the new. He lived when men were abandoning their inheritance, and he was an ardent worshipper of the old. In him the national destiny fulfilled itself, that a new wave of consciousness should be inaugurated always in the leaders of the Faith. In such a man, it may be that, we possess the whole Veda of the future. We must remember, however, that the moment has not come for gauging the religious significance of Vivekananda, Religion is living seed, and his sowing is but over. The time of his harvest is not yet.

But death actually gives the Patriot to his country. When the master has passed away from the midst of his disciples, when the murmurs of his critics are all hushed at the burning-ghat, then the great voice that spoke of Freedom rings out unchallenged and whole nations answer as one man. Here was a mind that had had unique opportunities of

observing the people of many countries intimately. East and West he had seen and been received by the high and low alike. His brilliant intellect had never failed to gauge what it saw, "America will solve the problems of the Shudra, but through what awful turmoil!" he said many times. On a second visit, however, he felt tempted to change his mind, seeing the greed of wealth and the lust of oppression in the West, and comparing these with the calm dignity and ethical stability of the old Asiatic solutions formulated by China many centuries ago. His great acumen was yoked to a marvellous humanity. Never had we dreamt of such a gospel of hope for the Negro as that with which he rounded on an American gentleman who spoke of the African races with contempt. And when, in the Southern States he was occasionally taken for "a coloured man", and turned away from some door as such (a mistake that was always atoned for as soon as discovered by the lavish hospitality of the most responsible families of the place), he was never known to deny the imputation. "Would it not have been refusing my brother?", he said simply when he was asked the reason of this silence.

To him each race had its own greatness, and shone in the light of that central quality. There was no Europe without the Turk, no Egypt without the development of the people of the soil. England had grasped the secret of obedience with self-respect. To speak of any patriotism in the same breath with Japan's was sacrilege.

What then was the prophecy that Vivekananda left to his own people? With what national significance has he filled that Gerrua mantle that he dropped behind him in his passing? Is it for us perhaps to lift the yellow rags upon our flagpole, and carry them forward as our banner?

Assuredly. For here was a man who never dreamt of failure. Here was a man who spoke of naught but strength. Supremely free from sentimentality, supremely defiant of all authority (are not missionary slanders still ringing in our ears? Are not some of them to be accepted with fresh accessions of pride?), he refused to meet any foreigner save as the master. "The Swami's great genius lies in his dignity," said an Englishman who knew him well, "it is nothing short of royal!" He had grasped the great fact that the East must come to the West, not as a sycophant, not as a servant, but as Guru and teacher, and never did he lower the flag of his personal ascendancy. "Let Europeans lead us in Religion!" he would say, with a scorn too deep to be anything but merry. "I have never spoken of revenge," he said once. "I have always spoken of strength. Do we dream of revenging ourselves on this drop of sea-spray? But it is a great thing to a mosquito!"

To be continued in the next issue...

*The world is the great gymnasium where we come to make ourselves strong.*

*Feel like Christ and you will be a Christ; feel like Buddha and you will be a Buddha. It is feeling that is the life, the strength, the vitality, without which no amount of intellectual activity can reach God.*

# The Social Thought of Swami Vivekananda

by Swami Atmajnanananda

Continued from previous issue...

In the following few pages/issues, we will examine the views of Swami Vivekananda on such questions as privilege, caste, education, uplifting the masses, and women's rights. We will also look at the various circumstances and events of his life which helped awaken his latent love for humanity: the influence of his family; the teachings of his beloved master, Sri Ramakrishna; his own first-hand experience of poverty; and his years of wandering through India.

Above all, we will try to show the perfect consistency between Swamiji's social views and his spiritual realizations, between his actions and his beliefs; for rarely has such a blend of head and heart, spiritual genius and sympathy for mankind, ever been seen in the world.

## PRIVILEGE

Convinced as he was of the divinity of each soul and, consequently, of the dignity of each individual, Swami Vivekananda waged a steady battle against all types of privilege and exploitation. In his eyes, all distinctions whereby one might distinguish one person from another, such as caste, creed, race, or gender, were based, not on the true nature of the individual, but on external superimpositions. From the highest point of view, all are pure spirit and, as such, share an essential identity. Thus, all attempts to exercise exclusive rights at the expense of others were seen by him to be both an affront to the human dignity of man and a contradiction of the spiritual fact of unity.

In a lecture delivered in London, entitled "Vedanta and Privilege", Swamiji spoke out against the phenomenon of privilege at all levels of society:

. . . the idea of privilege is the bane of human life. Two forces, as it were, are constantly at work, one making caste, and the other breaking caste; in other words, the one making for privilege, and the other breaking down privilege. And whenever privilege is broken down, more and more light and progress come to a race. This struggle we see all around us.

Of course, there is first the brutal idea of privilege, that of the strong over the weak. There is the privilege of wealth. If a man has more money than another, he wants a little privilege over those who have less. There is the still subtler and more powerful privilege of intellect; because one man knows more than others, he claims more privilege. And last of all, and the worst, because the most tyrannical, is the privilege of spirituality.

If some persons think they know more of spirituality, of God, they claim a superior privilege over everyone else. They say, "Come down and worship us, ye common herds; we are the messengers of God, and you have to worship us." None can be Vedantists, and at the same time admit of privilege for anyone. The same power is in every man, the one manifesting more, the other less; the same potentiality is in everyone. Where is the claim to privilege? (CW, I.423)

To be continued in the next issue...

## An Incident from Mahabharata

- Success is for the Righteous

Duryodhana in the Mahabharata is the very embodiment of greed and envy. Yudhishtira, on the contrary, is righteous and noble. The grabbing tendency of the former deprived the latter of the rightful share of the empire. And so there was a war between the two cousins of the opposite traits. While Yudhishtira was getting ready for the fight, after having failed in every attempt to avoid the war, Duryodhana made no efforts for a peaceful coexistence and was out for a blood shed. The former had the consent and blessings of all the righteous elders, but the latter had the unwilling support of the elders. Almost every pious gentleman had warned Duryodhana against defeat and dire consequences if war was waged with Pandavas. While the peace loving Pandavas had the protective blessings showered on them spontaneously from all the sages, saints and the Devas. Duryodhana had to beg for blessings from his own mother Gandhari.

With the specific desire that he should be crowned with success and Pandavas should perish in the impending war, Duryodhana tried to take advantage of his filial relationship to force an assurance of victory from the unfailing efficacy of his mother's voice. Her blessings can't be false. And as a mother she can't but bless her own son. A lady of severe austerity she was devoted to her husband. She thereby had developed certain rare powers to bless or curse most efficaciously. What she utters would come true. Relying on her powers and affection for the son, Duryodhana proceeded to her chamber and fell prostrate at her feet seeking an assurance of success. He said, "The war against Pandavas is declared. The armies on either side are arrayed. Soon the first shaft of assertion is going to be darted. I beseech you for the blessings so that my enemies shall have destruction and I will have the crown. Let me not loose a single pin-point of land in my Kingdom. I must be the unrivalled monarch of the entire Kuru Empire. Ma, bless me, bless me with success. Bless me with the fulfilment of my desires."

Mother Gandhari is in dilemma. It is her own son begging her for the protection and assurance of prosperity. She, as a mother, no doubt loves the son. But as a pious and righteous lady she does not approve of his unrighteous aggrandizement of power and property. She knows, he will not win the war since he is not virtuous and is being propelled by avarices, envy and ill will. Yet she can't spurn him on account of her love due to a son. If she assures him of success, she is only telling a lie, which she can't utter at any cost. Nor can she keep quiet when there is her own son lying prostrate at her feet seeking blessings. Gandhari, the pious lady of affection and wisdom therefore lifted the son and said in a non-committal tone: "यथो धर्मः तथो कृष्णः यथो कृष्णः तथो जयः यथो धर्मः तथो जयः | yatho dharmah tatho kr̥ṣṇah yatho kr̥ṣṇah tatho jayah yatho dharmah tatho jayah | Where there is Dharma, there you find Krishna. Where there is Krishna there you will find victory. Where Dharma is, there victory is."

Duryodhana could not speak further. Nor could Gandhari say a word more. They parted. Thus from the episode, it is evident that Dharma and Sri Krishna are inseparable. Dharma is ever victorious, so is Krishna since he is the very embodiment of Dharma.

## How to Develop Faith, Strength, and Confidence

**T**each yourself, teach everyone his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come, when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity. [CW 3:193]

In New York I used to observe the Irish colonists come—downtrodden, haggard-looking, destitute of all possessions at home, penniless, and wooden-headed—with their only belongings, a stick and a bundle of rags hanging at the end of it, fright in their steps, alarm in their eyes. A different spectacle in six months—the man walks upright, his attire is changed! In his eyes and steps there is no more sign of fright. What is the cause? Our Vedanta says that that Irishman was kept surrounded by contempt in his own country—the whole of nature was telling him with one voice, ‘Pat, you have no more hope, you’re born a slave and will remain so.’ Having been thus told from his birth, Pat believed in it and hypnotized himself that he was very low, and the Brahman in him shrank away. While no sooner had he landed in America than he heard the shout going up on all sides, ‘Pat, you are a man as we are. It is man who has done all, a man like you and me can do everything; have courage!’ Pat raised his head and saw that it was so, the Brahman within woke up. Nature herself spoke, as it were, ‘Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached.’ [CW 4:483]

The ideal of faith in ourselves is of the greatest help to us. If faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practiced, I am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have would have vanished. Throughout the history of mankind, if any motive power has been more potent than another in the lives of all great men and women, it is that of faith in themselves. Born with the consciousness that they were to be great, they became great. Let a man go down as low as possible; there must come a time when out of sheer desperation he will take an upward curve and will learn to have faith in himself. But it is better for us that we should know it from the very first. Why should we have all these bitter experiences in order to gain faith in ourselves? We can see that all the difference between man and man is owing to the existence or non-existence of faith in himself. Faith in ourselves will do everything. I have experienced it in my own life, and am still doing so; and as I grow older that faith is becoming stronger and stronger. He is an atheist who does not believe in himself. The old religion said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God. The new religion says that he is the atheist who does not believe in himself. But it is not selfish faith, because the Vedanta, again, is the doctrine of oneness. It means faith in all, because you are all. [CW 3:301]

*Condemn none: if you can stretch out a helping hand, do so. If you cannot, fold your hands, bless your brothers, and let them go their own way.*

*You cannot believe in God until you believe in yourself.*

— Collection of thoughts from Swami Vivekananda

## Human Excellence – Swami Ranganathananda

All our Education, all our religion are ultimately meant to instil in us this desire for Human Excellence. There are two departments where Human Excellence finds expression. One is in the work we do. Second is in our Human Relations. In this both departments we have to express this idea of Human Excellence. First in the field of work and we have to go a long way, before we achieve Human Excellence in our work. Because somehow or other we have not been very good at work. Our whole philosophy of life has been stressing more on leisure than on work. So that we don't put our whole soul into the work, bring the concentration of mind to work efficiently. We are sometimes absent minded, when we work. Therefore work excellence has not yet come to many people in India.

We are not good workers, compared to many other peoples. This must be only a recent development, just a few centuries. Earlier period, there must have been tremendous workers, excellent work being turned out, that is why we have got a rich culture. But in these few centuries, we have become weak, physically, mentally and in our relationship with other human away. It develops a certain lazy-cozy attitude. That had come upon us during the last several centuries. Out of that we are waking ourselves up in the modern period. Great teachers have come to wake us up from that sleepy attitude.

When I see people working – I have been watching people working half-hearted work, there is no energy in that work! But if it is self-interest, there is plenty of energy! To earn money, to achieve something for oneself, we do so energetically. But if it is public purpose all our energy goes away! All our interest also dries up. So I have seen people working in a halfhearted way, never doing the work thoroughly. The result is, you cannot trust each other. If you send a radio for repair, you will get a big bill. But the radio on return will not work at all! So many such slipshod type of work we do. What is the reason for doing such things?

First of all, we don't have that enough self-respect and faith in oneself. Swamiji spoke very highly about this quality – Have faith in yourself. Atma Shrddha – 'I can, I can' - that attitude. That brings out, the best out of us and a sense of honour and self-respect. It is this that stimulates me to work excellent. Wherever there is no sense of honour, no sense of personal worth and dignity, my work becomes sloppy, slipshod. Now, these are the qualities that our people must acquire to become excellent in life and work. It is a steady growth. It does not come merely by sitting and praying to some God or Goddess. In our work, we have to show, this capacity to express our whole soul in that work. There is a soulful work that alone can become excellent. A mere movement of hands and feet do not make for the best of work.

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## MOTHER SPEAKS

The mind keeps well when engaged in work. And yet Japa, meditation, prayer also are specially needed. You must at least sit down once in the morning and again in the evening. That acts as a rudder to a boat. When one sits in meditation in the evening, one gets a chance to think of what one has done — good or bad — during the whole day. Next one should compare the states of one's mind in the preceding day and the present. ... Unless you meditate in the mornings and evenings along with work, how can you know what you are actually doing?

- Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi

## Glory of The Gita: Bhagavad Gita for Executives

*“The Gita is a bouquet composed of the beautiful flowers of spiritual truths collected from the Upanishads”, said Swami Vivekananda. Each Shloka of the Gita has a divine message which opens vast windows of cosmic knowledge, bringing the reader closer to Self-Realization .*

*Presented here are five shlokas , translated by Dr Manohar Abhay, an ardent devotee of the Gita. The exposition shall make you familiar with the title and the lesson learnt from each shloka.*

### Chapter First: **Principal Subject: Vishad Yoga (Arjuna’s Grief)**

#### **Role of Intellectuals (1-2)**

**Meaning:** Sanjaya said: Then having seen the army of the Pandavas drawn up in battle array, King Duryodhana approached his teacher (Drona) and spoke these words:

**Lesson:** [Contact and consult intellectuals when you face a challenging situation.](#)

#### **Policy of Divisiveness (1-3)**

**Meaning:** Behold, O Teacher, this mighty army of the sons of Pandu, arrayed for battle by your very wise disciple, the son of Drupad (Dhrstadyumna).

**Lesson:** [With the policy of divisiveness even wise persons can be provoked to commit injustice.](#)

#### **Virtues of Opponents (1-4, 5, 6)**

**Meaning:** Here are great warriors like Yuyudhana, Virat and the Maharathi (great chariot rider) Drupad who are mighty archers equal in battle to Bhima and Arjuna; also are mighty warriors like Dhrishtaketu, Chekitana and the valiant king of Kashi Purujit, Kuntibhoj and Saibya, the choicest among men; the valiant Yudhamanyu and brave Uttamaujas; the son of Subhadra (Abhimanyu) and (also) the sons of Draupadi, all are indeed great warriors (Maharathis).

**Lesson:** [Always remember the virtues and the valour of your opponents.](#)

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**उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत । [कठ उपनिषद् - I.iii.14 ]**

uttiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpya varānnibodhata | [kaṭha upaniṣad - I.iii.14 ]

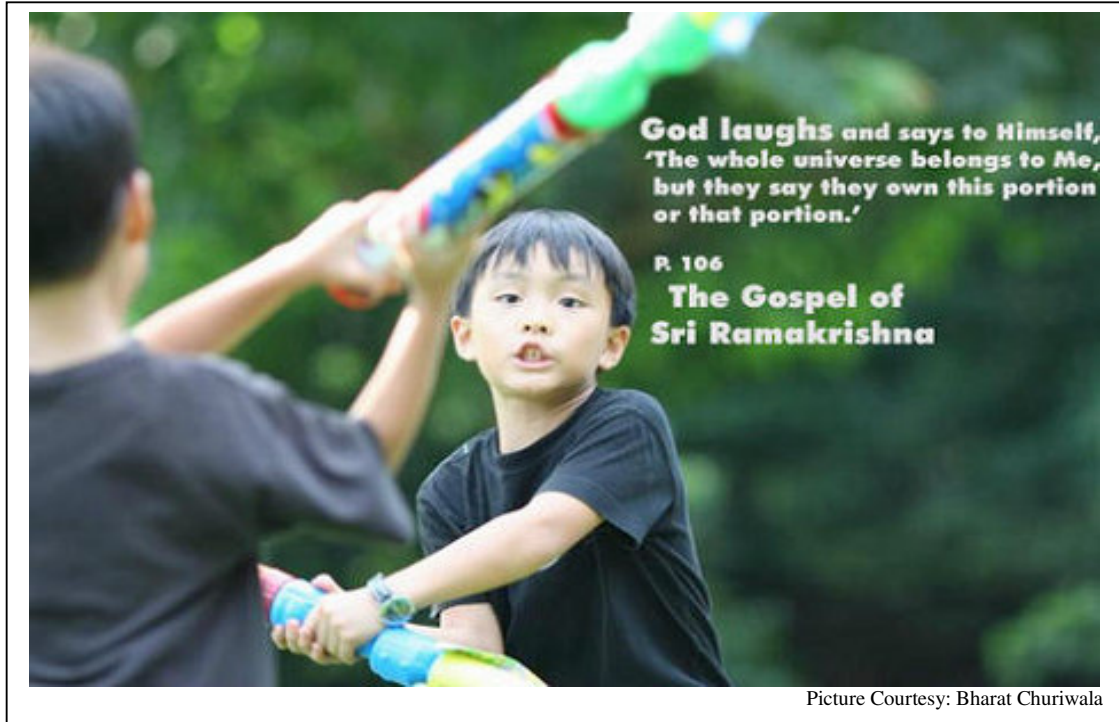
#### **Meaning:**

Arise, awake, and learn by approaching the excellent ones.

#### **Commentary of Shankaracharya:**

You, who are sleeping in ignorance that has no beginning, उत्तिष्ठत, uttiṣṭhata arise, turn towards the knowledge of the Self; जाग्रत, jāgrata awake - put an end to the sleep of ignorance which is terrible by nature, and is the seed of all evil. How to put an end to it? प्राप्य, prāpya approaching; वरान्, varān the adorable ones, the excellent teachers - who know that Self; निबोधत, nibodhata learn - understand the all-pervading Self, thought by them, as ‘I am that’.

*Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached.*- Swami Vivekananda



#### News from Madras:

Swami Vivekananda Birth Centenary Celebrations at Madras (Chennai) – 1963  
Inaugurating the celebrations, Shri Morarji Desai, the then Union Finance Minister of India said, “Swami Vivekananda’s clarion call ‘Arise, Awake’ should ring in the ears of the people especially now when the country was invaded by an unscrupulous neighbour in a deceitful manner”. He said, “Swami Vivekananda who was no ordinary religious teacher, put India on the map of the world and showed to the nations of the world what vitality and strength the country possessed. Religion should occupy a central

place in the thoughts and actions of the people as it alone enabled man to know himself and deserve his life as a human being. Swami Vivekananda gave us patriotism when the word was unknown. He gave us self-respect and courage when they were lacking. He lifted us out of a sense of frustration and wrong fatalism born out of our mistakes. We lost our heritage on account of mistakes. He enabled us to get up again and strive to get back that heritage. The services of Swami Vivekananda will be remembered as long as India retains her freedom and her heritage”.

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|| Hari Om ||