

# Uttishthata Groupzine

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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

uttiṣṭhata 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 ॥

Let noble thoughts reach us from every direction - RigVed

# Uttishthata Groupzine

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"Man-making is my mission in life.... The older I grow the more everything seems to me to lie in manliness. This is my New Gospel. .... My ideal indeed can be put into a few words, and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life."

Man is the highest being that exists.  
Choose the highest ideal and live your life up to that.  
The greatest sin is to think yourself weak.  
Teach the Godhood of man.



SWAMI VIVEKANANDA (1863-1902)

## Courage

There are two sorts of courage. One is the courage of facing the cannon. And the other is the courage of spiritual conviction. An Emperor who invaded India was told by his teacher to go and see some of the sages there. After a long search for one, he found a very old man sitting on a block of stone. The Emperor talked with him a little and became very impressed by his wisdom. He asked the sage to go to his country with him. "No," said the sage, "I am quite satisfied with my forest here." Said the Emperor, "I will give you money, position, wealth. I am the Emperor of the world." "No," replied the man. "I don't care for those things." The Emperor replied, "If you do not go, I will kill you." The man smiled serenely and said, "That is the most foolish thing you have ever said, Emperor. You cannot kill me. Me the sun cannot dry, fire cannot burn, sword cannot kill, for I am the birthless, the deathless, the ever-living omnipotent, omnipresent Spirit." This is spiritual boldness, while the other is the courage of a lion or a tiger.

In the midst of all miseries and all the Self come out, faint and imperceptible though it be at first. You will gain courage, and at last like a lion you will roar out, "I am It! I am It!" "I am neither a man, nor a woman, nor a god, nor a demon; no, nor any of the animals, plants, or trees. I am neither poor nor rich, neither learned nor ignorant. All these things are very little compared with what I am: for I am It! I am It! Behold the sun and the moon and the stars: I am the light that is shining in them! I am the beauty of the fire! I am the power in the universe! For, I am It! I am It!"

Say to your soul in regard to vanities, weakness, etc., "This does not befit thee. This does not befit thee."

First of all, try to understand this: Does man make laws, or do laws make man? Does man make money, or does money make man? Does man make name and fame, or name

and fame make man? Be a man first, my friend, and you will see how all those things and the rest will follow of themselves after YOU. [Selections from CW of Sw. Vivekananda]

## Moral Courage

How many people have the real faith that they can **attain success in life by being perfectly virtuous**? How many people have the real faith that they can face evil or even **change the minds of wicked people simply by the power of virtue**? Many people seem to believe that they would not be able to earn more money or succeed in life, should they become 'too good'. Though a large number of them talk about Dharma and Karma, they do not often hesitate to tell lies, to betray their friends, or to be dishonest. There are self-righteous people who want to fight evil in society; however, they do it not by increasing their own virtue but by following a tit-for-tat policy or by resorting to various low-down tricks. In other words, **what we most frequently meet with is not moral courage but moral cowardice.**

## Religious courage

Millions of people seem to believe in God but most of them derive their strength **not from God but from their own instincts, desires, fancies, and from their dependence on other people or wealth.** If they depended wholly on God, they wouldn't be selfish, immoral, jealous and quarrelsome as many of them are, nor would they blame God for all their misfortunes as many of them do. Very often belief in God is seen to coexist with disbelief, and many people seem to have greater faith in stars, planets, ghosts and the Devil than in God.

Real religious courage comes not from mere belief in the existence of God or from reading books but from a pure heart illumined by the wisdom of God. It is the result of the practice of chastity and other virtues and the opening of the heart to divine Light and Power through intense prayer or unceasing worship. Through this opening the individual will unite itself with the divine Will; it is this union that is known as total dependence on God.

## Courage to be

When the ego is threatened with non-being, there are **three** courses of action open to it. It can assert itself, its own being; this is 'courage to be'. Or the ego can take refuge in the Deity; this is religious courage. Instead of taking refuge in the Deity, the ego may seek refuge in a group or society; this is collectivization of the ego.... But the ego does not generally follow any of these courses immediately. Instead, **it reacts.** The most common form of reaction is anxiety. If we feel a constant feeling of anxiety, we should know that our egos are facing the threat of non-being. [Vedanta and the Courage to be, *Prabuddha Bharata*, May 1986.]

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One day, Pope Julius II was watching Michaelangelo, one of the greatest sculptors of all time, slaving over a bloc of marble. Pope Julius asked him, "Why do you hit so hard?"

Michaelangelo answered, "Can't you see the angel imprisoned in this block of stone? **I am trying to free him.**"

## Courageous leaders for courageous followers

One of the essential qualities of a leader is that he is courageous. It doesn't mean that he is not afraid, but that he is ready to take risks, go out of his familiar and safe surroundings and walk an extra mile along the road less travelled.

Men of courage have made a difference in this world. Any significant progress in society, in family, in politics, in religious life or in business is the result of the courageous decision of a courageous person.

We don't become courageous by occupying a leadership position; rather we are courageous to occupy that position.

**1. Courageous people are those who have won the battle over their inner lives.** We all have a lot of fears, mainly our inner fears, tensions and anxieties. We are afraid of our perceptions and thoughts, our inhibitions and imaginations. We are afraid to make a decision and make a commitment. We need to win this war within ourselves if we want to become a courageous leader.

When we have won our inner battles we will begin to courageously do things that we were once afraid of doing. To win this most important battle first of all we must discover who we are, identify the weapons we have, prepare ourselves with more talents and use them effectively. Self-mastery is the path to all other victories.

**2. Courageous leaders don't run away from problems.** Problems are there everywhere for everyone. A courageous leader stands up to these problems and faces them. He faces the mountain and climbs it steadily with strong steps and conquers it courageously. Courage is not the absence of fear but the willingness to push on in the face of it. It is our ability to confront the fear, the pain, the uncertainty and the danger.

**3. Courageous leaders make their followers also courageous.** Courage is contagious. People will follow not a coward but a courageous hero who will bravely lead them to higher goals and greater delights.

**4. Courageous leaders inspire commitment in others.** They make things right and commit themselves fiercely to a cause that they believe in. They are ready to stand for what is right, what is new and inspire others to do the same.

**5. Courageous leaders are free and they find opportunities to grow everywhere.** Fear enslaves us and prevents us from growing up. We often look for safe places, and are afraid to take risks and challenges but growth comes only when we courageously walk the road less travelled.

**6. Courageous leaders are honourable.** People admire them for their robust will power and courageous deeds.

**7. Courage empowers the leader to do greater wonders.** Remember the story of little David who courageously defeated the mighty Goliath. Courage is the key to wonderful living, great performance and high satisfaction.

8. **Courage makes us more courageous.** When we face the music, go out and do something risky we become more courageous. We are afraid of people, situations, places events and experiences. The only way to overcome this fear is by meeting the monster face to face. Do what you are afraid of doing and you will never be afraid of doing it again.

9. **Courage doesn't consist in doing great things that normally people are afraid of doing.** But it takes more courage to refrain from gossip, to stand up for what is right, to defend justice, to speak for the voiceless, to live honestly, to accept failures, to give up credits for the sake of others, to refuse to do wrong and to live according to our convictions.

[We are courageous >>](#)

when we appreciate the good works and ideas of others,  
when we speak well of others,  
when we don't criticise the management and colleagues,  
when we are punctual and dedicated in our work,  
when we don't blame others for our failures and defeats,  
when we sincerely do our duties and preserve the properties of our company, and  
when we genuinely care and share.

[Courage is most clearly expressed in forgiveness.](#)

In the first half of 1981 there were two assassination attempts one after the other on Pope John Paul II and President Ronald Reagan. Both could have died but were fortunately saved. Reagan showed much courage and even cracked a joke on his way to the operation theatre. The Pope immediately forgave his assassin, Mehmet Ali Agca. In an editorial, Rajmohan Gandhi commented: "Reagan showed how human he was, the Pope showed how divine he was."

[Leaders who lack courage aren't leaders.](#)

[When we are courageous all our difficulties vanish and all obstacles melt away. We are born to be leaders. Become a courageous leader then.](#)

Joshy Thomas

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- ✓ Every man should take up his own ideal and endeavor to accomplish it. That is a surer way of progress than taking up other men's ideals, which he can never hope to accomplish.
- ✓ Fear is a sign of weakness. A man must go about his duties without taking notice of the sneers and the ridicule of the world.
- ✓ Work as if you were a stranger in this land, a sojourner; work incessantly, but do not bind yourselves; bondage is terrible. This world is not our habitation; it is only one of the many stages through which we are passing. [Quotes from CW of Swami Vivekananda]

## Human Excellence

- Lecture by Swami Ranganathananda

That is the nature of the work that is taught in the Gita. The philosophy of Yoga is, the philosophy of work is, the utmost efficiency in excellence by which, by your productive labour, you enrich society. And by the same labour you grow spiritually, realize the truth that is hidden within you. So that every worker becomes a combination of Raja and Rishi in one. That is the Gita's teaching. What is the meaning of Raja? For all of us Raja means a crowned head, that is Raja, a crowned head. But these are bad days for all crowned heads. All crowned heads are falling down. It was said when Faruk was ousted by Nasir in Egypt, he went to Italy as a refugee. There he made a remark – “these are bad days for Rajas and crowned heads. All will go except five, five will remain” he says. Which are the five? – The King or the Queen of England and the four crowned heads in the playing cards. They will remain. All the rest will go, he said. So you can see afterwards Iran has gone, many others have gone. So it is not that meaning. The word Raja – **Rajate Virajate** – those who handle power. That is all it means. The American President is a Raja in that sense, compared to all the petty Rajas we have in India, what energy he is holding! What power, though he does not wear a crown at all! And he has to go after five years! So that the word Raja must be understood in that wider sense. Those who handle power, and in every society almost every one handles power with respect to somebody else. The father and mother handle power within that family circle. In that office that little clerk handles power, probably more power than the secretary sometimes. What ever the secretary does, he can cancel, he has that power. As you say in southern languages, God granted a boon the priest with heritage. Priest is more powerful than God. That is the saying.

So, power is a big subject in all free societies. How to handle power? In India, we have now got political power, administrative power. We have not discussed the subject – How to handle power in this democracy? But in England you will find, men like Bertrand Russell have written books on this subject of power – political power, intellectual power, economic power, etc. How to handle it in the proper way? Here in the Gita, you have a profound philosophy of how to handle power. That philosophy says – that power in the hands of the clerk is to be humanized, must be used for the good of the Man. That power in the hands of a constable on the roadside is meant to protect the people. That Kshatriya power is to protect the people. You sleep soundly at night, why? The police is there guarding you. That is the power. Some growth must come within that constable. One day I was passing by a road, I saw a constable moving with his lathi, small lathi. A poor fellow was going with a cycle. He just gave a good beating to that fellow saying – ‘Go, get away from here’. Now, is that the way to deal with that citizen? That man is a citizen of India. This man has a little power in his hands! That power does very bad expression on that particular person! What is wrong with this policeman? He has power; he doesn't know how to use it! Similarly the clerk in the office and many others in many situations.

So Krishna adds one more value to power. That is the second word – **Rishi**. Raja and Rishi in one. Now, whenever we use the word ‘Rishi’, like the word ‘Raja’, we have got peculiar ideas in our heads. First of all, he must have a long beard, then only a man can be a Rishi – in our minds these are the pictures. Forget all this. A man like Krishna is not going to mystify these beautiful ideas. He is a great Kshatriya himself, he is teaching another Kshatriya. He gives a profound manly message. What does Rishihood means

then? Rishi means one who has grown spiritually a little, by which he can become human. He can humanize that power. So Rishi and Raja must go together. A Rishi has no power. A Raja has no spiritual growth. We have both types in India. But Krishna wants a new type. You will have power and you will soften it by humanistic impulse injected into it. Then you get high-class excellence in life, in work, in every department of human activity. So **Rajanashcha te Rishayashcha**. The clerk in the office is a Rishi if he has grown a little spiritually. There are various stages of Rishihood. Just like there are various stages of Mahatmahood. Gandhiji was a Mahatma; you can also be a Mahatma, at least one per cent, two per cent!

Our teachers like Swami Vivekananda will tell – put your children on the road of that Mahatmaship. That is a long road, but put them on that road. Be a Mahatma, be a Mahatma – what does it mean? Your atman is not within your skin. It has broken through the limitations of skin. It can think of others, love others, expand love and sympathy. That is all with meaning with Mahatma, **‘Maha-Atma’** – whose Atma is not conditioned by his genetic system. He is not imprisoned with this little skin. His Atma feels oneness with millions of people. So, when a clerk is sitting in the office – some villager comes to get some work done, this clerk has expanded beyond that genetic limitation. He can feel for the other person, he can respond in a human way to a human situation. As soon as he does so, he is on the road of becoming a Rishi. Forget all this mystical ideas of being spiritual – he must be in some Samadhi sitting like this – that is all we understand. **In the name of Samadhi, the whole nation has gone to sleep in India. Everybody wants Samadhi.** I ask people, young people come to me – ‘Swamiji, ‘what do you want?’ I ask – ‘what do you want?’ ‘Oh! I want to get samadhi!’ So quickly, **So go to sleep! You will get Samadhi!** One young man came to me once – ‘What do you want?’ ‘I want Samadhi, pranayama and samadhi’. I said, ‘All right. First you read this book’. I gave a book of Swamiji, ‘Lectures from Colombo to Almora’.

There he gives a wonderful message of man making, service, and dedication. After one year I asked him, ‘You said, Samadhi and Pranayama etc.?’ ‘Oh! I don’t care for all this now, I have got something better’, he said. You are right, you have understood correctly. That is all easy to aspire for. Without any base, if you build a super structure, it won’t stay. We built Sainthood without a grounding of manhood. So sainthood becomes a sham sainthood. And plenty of sham sainthoods we have in India. Be a man first, manifest excellence in life and work. So dealing with that constable, that clerk, or the officer of the departments, when I tell them – develop that human touch. Do the work of a clerk but never do it with a clerk’s mind. Do it with citizen’s mind. You are a fellow citizen. That constable dealing with that poor man on that street, he must treat him as a fellow citizen. Then excellence will come to the police work. Today he doesn’t. He treats him as a criminal. No citizen at all for a policeman, all are criminals for him. That is the raw state of the human mind. If that constable is given this little spiritual stimulus, put on the road of being a ‘Rishi’, he develops a citizenship attitude. – They are my fellow citizens. I respect them; I am here to help them. I am here to protect them; this power is given to protect them – when these ideas spread all over India, a tremendous efflorescence of human excellence will develop in this country.

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## The Social Thought of Swami Vivekananda (continued from previous issue)

### THE CONDITION OF WOMEN - by Swami Atmajnanananda

Another great concern of Swamiji's was the condition of women, not as an isolated social issue, but as intimately connected with the well-being of society as a whole. He wrote to Swami Ramakrishnananda, "There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing." (CW, VI. 328)

Swamiji's attitude toward women's rights was very much the same as his attitude toward all social questions: help should be given only in removing the obstacles impeding progress; education should be offered when necessary; then "hands off", in a lecture delivered in India, he said:

Liberty is the first condition of growth. It is wrong, a thousand times wrong, if any of you dares to say, "I will work out the salvation of this woman or child." I am asked again and again what I think of the woman question. Let me answer once for all -- am I a widow that you ask me that nonsense? Am I a woman that you ask me that question again and again? Who are you to solve women's problems? Are you the Lord God that you should rule over every widow and every woman? Hands off! They will solve their own problems. (CW, III. 246)

Swami Vivekananda's great objection to the treatment of women as second-class citizens was based on two fundamental convictions. The first was his firm belief that all distinctions between individuals based on gender were, from the highest point of view, untenable. Swamiji was convinced that everyone was, in reality, non-different from the one universal Self. As he wrote to his brother disciples, "I shall not rest till I root out this distinction of sex. Is there any sex distinction between man and woman -- all is Atman!" (CW, VI. 272-73)

The second reason why Swamiji was so passionate about improving the condition of women goes back to his old quarrel with adhikaravada. According to the exclusive practices of adhikaravada, women of all castes were lumped together with Sudras and thus were denied access to the sacred scriptures and forbidden to enjoy certain other religious privileges, such as taking the vows of sannyasa. Swamiji considered such treatment neither fair nor in accordance with the authoritative writings of Hinduism. When his disciple, Sharat Chandra Chakravarty, referred to the religious restrictions for women, Swamiji replied:

In what scriptures do you find statements that women are not competent for knowledge and devotion? In the period of degradation, when the priests made the other castes incompetent for the study of the Vedas, they deprived the women also of their rights. Otherwise you will find that in the Vedic or Upanishadic age, Maitreyi, Gargi, and other ladies of revered memory have taken the place of Rishis through their skill in discussing about Brahman. . . Since such ideal women were entitled to spiritual knowledge, why shall not the women have the same privilege now? . . . All nations have attained greatness by paying proper respect to women. That country and that nation which do not respect women have never become great, nor will ever be in the future. (CW, VII. 214-15)

Swami Vivekananda was strongly opposed to the restrictions on women taking the vows of renunciation, and he had high hopes for a women's monastic order built around the wonderful life of Holy Mother. In fact, he often spoke of the establishment of a

monastery for women as being of a higher priority than one for men. As he explained to Swami Shivananda:

Without Shakti (Power) there is no regeneration for the world. . . Mother [Holy Mother] has been born to revive that wonderful Shakti in India; and making her the nucleus, once more will Gargis and Maitreyis be born into the world. . . Hence it is her Math that I want first. . . First Mother and Mother's daughters, then Father and Father's sons. . . (CW, VII. 482)

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## Glory of the Gita: Bhagawad Gita for Executives

Translation and Exposition by Dr. Manohar Abhay

Friends and Foes:

There, amongst both the armies, then Partha saw his uncles, grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grand-sons, fathers-in-law as well as friends and well wishers. (1-26)



Lesson: Amidst adversities one can distinguish between friends and foes.

Compassion:

When Kaunteya (Kunti's son Arjuna) saw all his kinsmen standing there, he spoke these words with grief, pity and great compassion. (1-27)

Lesson: Virtuous people have compassion for friends and foes alike.

State of Confusion:

O Krishna, seeing my kinsmen standing here, inclined to fight, my limbs are trembling and my mouth is becoming dry. My entire body is trembling, my hair stand on end, my Gandiva (bow) slips from my hand and my skin burns intensely all over. My head turns, O Kesava, I am unable to stand firmly and I am forgetting myself. (1: 28-30)

Lesson: Confusion demoralizes a person and it creates anxiety and pity.

Unwise Decisions:

And I see bad omens O Krishna. Nor do I see any thing good in killing my kins in battle. (1-31)

Lesson: Unwise decisions are taken in the influx of emotions.

Frustration:

I neither desire victory, O Krishna, nor kingdom, nor pleasures. O Govinda, what we are going to gain from kingdom, pleasures or even with the life itself. (1-32)

Lesson: Influx of emotions leads to frustration.

Worldly Pleasures:

For whose sake we desire kingdom, pleasures, or life, they all are standing in this battle at the risk of their lives and wealth, when teachers, fathers, sons, and grand-fathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law grand-children, brothers-in-law and other relatives are here. (1: 33-34)

Lesson: People want to enjoy worldly pleasures amidst their kins

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### Discrimination and dispassion:



Picture Courtesy: Bharat Churiwala

About half past ten Narendra and his Brahma friends were meditating in the Panchavati. After a while Sri Ramakrishna came to them. M., too, was present.

The Master said to the Brahma devotees: "In meditation one must be absorbed in God. By merely floating on the surface of the water, can you reach the gems lying at the bottom of the sea?"

Then he sang:

*Taking the name of Kali, dive deep down, O mind, into the heart's fathomless depths,  
Where many a precious gem lies hid.*

*But never believe the bed of the ocean bare of gems if in the first few dives you fail;  
With firm resolve and self-control dive deep and make your way to Mother Kali's realm.  
Down in the ocean depths of heavenly Wisdom lie the wondrous pearls of Peace, O mind;  
and you yourself can gather them, if you but have pure love and follow the scriptures'  
rule.*

*Within those ocean depths, as well, six alligators, lurk - lust, anger, and the rest -  
Swimming about in search of prey.*

*Smear yourself with the turmeric of discrimination; the very smell of it will shield you  
from their jaws.*

*Upon the ocean bed lie strewn Unnumbered pearls and precious gems; plunge in, says  
Ramprasad, and gather up handfuls there!*

Narendra and his friends came down from their seats on the raised platform of the Panchavati and stood near the Master. He returned to his room with them. The Master continued: "When you plunge in the water of the ocean, you may be attacked by alligators. But they won't touch you if your body is smeared with turmeric. There are no doubt six alligators - lust, anger, avarice, and so on - within you, in the 'heart's fathomless depths'. But protect yourself with the turmeric of discrimination and renunciation, and they won't touch you."