

Uttishthata Groupzine

Contents of this Issue:

Swami Vivekananda on Himself: Boyhood Days (2)

Human Excellence: Lecture by Swami Ranganathananda

Glory of the Gita: Bhagawad Gita for Executives

Parable of Jack-Fruit: Visual Presentation of Teaching of
Sri Ramakrishna

Overcoming Negative Ideas: by Swami Bodhamayananda

Human Excellence

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

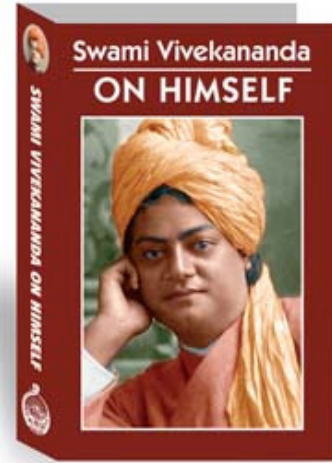
Volume # 1
Issue # 7

Monthly e-Newsletter of Uttishthata Yahoo! Group
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/uttishthata>

Jan & Feb 2007

BOYHOOD DAYS (2)

When I was a little boy at school, I had a fight with another schoolfellow about some sweetmeats, and he being the stronger boy snatched them from my hand. I remember the feeling I had; I thought that boy was the most wicked boy ever born, and that as soon as I grew strong enough I would punish him; there was no punishment sufficient for his wickedness. We have both grown up now, and we are fast friends. This world is full of babies to whom eating and drinking, and all these little cakes are everything. They will dream of these cakes, and their idea of future life is where these cakes will be plentiful.



What I saw and felt when going through the forest [on the way to Raipur] (in the year 1877, when Vivekananda (then Naren) was about fourteen years old, his father went to Raipur in the Central Provinces (Madhya Pradesh). He arranged that his family should follow him later on led by Naren. It was a journey partly by bullock cart via Allahabad and Jabalpur through dense forests and over unfrequented roads, for the railways were in those days constructed only up to Nagpur.) has for ever remained firmly imprinted in my memory, particularly a certain event of one day. We had to travel by the foot of the Vindhya mountains that day. The peaks of the ranges on both sides of the road rose very high in the sky; various kinds of trees and creepers bending under the weight of fruits and flowers produced wonderful beauty on the mountainsides. Birds of various colours, flying from tree to tree, filled the quarters with sweet notes. I saw all these and felt an extraordinary peace in my mind. The slow-moving bullock-carts arrived at a place where two mountain peaks, coming forward as though in love, locked themselves in an embrace over the narrow forest path. Observing carefully below the meeting-points I saw that there was a very big cleft from the crest to the foot of the mountain on one side of the path; and filling that cleft, there was hanging in it an enormous honeycomb, the result of the bees' labour for ages. Filled with wonder, as I was pondering over the beginning and the end of that kingdom of bees, my mind became so much absorbed in the thought of the infinite power of God, the controller of the three worlds, that I completely lost my consciousness of the external world for some time. I do not remember how long I was lying in the bullock-cart in that condition. When I regained normal consciousness, I found that we had crossed that place and come far away. As I was alone in the cart, no one could know anything about it.

We cannot deny that there is much misery in the world; to go out and help others is, therefore, the best thing we can do, although in the long run, we shall find that helping others is only helping ourselves. As a boy I had some white mice. They were kept in a little box in which there were little wheels, and when the mice tried to cross the wheels, the wheels turned and turned, and the mice never got anywhere. So it is with the world and our helping it. The only help is that we get moral exercise.

When my teacher came to our house, I brought my English and Bengali books to him, and showing him the particular books and the portions in them that were to be learnt as lessons for the day, I laid myself down or sat quietly. The teacher repeated twice or thrice the spelling, pronunciation, meaning etc., of the words of those portions of those books, as if he was himself learning the lesson, and went away. That was sufficient for me to learn them.

A little arithmetic, some Sanskrit grammar, a little of language and accounts—these are taught in the primary school. A little book on ethics, taught by an old man, we learnt by heart, and I remember one of the lessons:

"For the good of a village, a man ought to give up his family; for the good of a country, he ought to give up his village; for the good of humanity, he may give up his country; for the good of the world, everything."

Such verses are there in the books. We get them by heart, and they are explained by teacher and pupil.

This was the first verse that I was taught in my life, the first day I went to school:

"He indeed is a learned man who looks upon all women as his mother, who looks upon every man's property as so much dust, and looks upon every being as his own soul."

Even while I was a student at Calcutta, I was of a religious temperament. I was critical even at that time of my life; mere words would not satisfy me.

I used to see all my life a wonderful point of light between my eyebrows, as soon as I shut my eyes in order to go to sleep, and I used to observe attentively its various changes. So that it might be convenient to see it, I used to lie on my bed in the way people bow down touching the ground with their foreheads. The extraordinary point kept changing its colours and increasing in size, became gradually converted into the form of a ball, and bursting at last, covered my body from head to foot with white liquid light. As soon as that happened, I lost consciousness and fell asleep. I believed that all people went to sleep that way. I was long under that impression. When I grew up and began to practise meditation, that point of light used to come before me as soon as I closed my eyes, and then I concentrated my mind on it. In those days I daily practised meditation with a few friends according to the instruction of Maharshi Devendranath. We talked among ourselves about the nature of visions and experiences that each of us had. At that time I came to know from what they said that they never had the vision of such a light and that none of them went to sleep in that way.

Human Excellence

-A Lecture by Swami Ranganathananda, continued...



There was a Rose show in Hyderabad a few days ago. About 5000 people participated. We have a Japanese Sadhu in our centre. Very nice Sadhu we call him 'Satyalokananda'. 'Partha Maharaj'. Now, they see things from their point of view, we see things from our point of view. What does not jar in our minds jars on his mind. Englishmen, Japanese, American, they are free people. So they see things quite differently from what we see. For example, apart from this story I am telling another story, which I mentioned in my lecture on Human Values in management.

One Japanese came to Bombay. He went round, and he found everybody wearing a wristwatch, including rickshaw-puller all have wristwatch. He comes from Japan and he told his Indian friend, - "We in Japan produce for export, because we have to strengthen our economy. We don't consume all that we produce. We have to export. So all our watches we export. In my house there is only one clock, all have to go by that one clock. In India every body has a watch. Every body, even the poorest have a watch". That is the first part of the remark. The second part is the most beautiful part, and he says, - "they all have watches and nobody is punctual. It is only for show, status, show". We can't understand that at all. See how free people will remark! How they react to human situation! A wonderful remark it is! For show a watch! It is for punctuality. I must go to my office in time - that is the purpose of this watch. We never used it for that. We are always late to office except there in the emergency. Then every body was in time, because 'Danda' alone can make us work. That shows we are slaves. If we are free people, we don't want any pressure from any body, we know our value. We have sense of dignity and worth - that spirit has to come in all departments of life.

So coming to the rose show, it has a profound message to all of us in India today. How to get out of this feudal outlook? And develop a free democratic outlook! That is the lesson coming from that incident. This Japanese friend, sadhu went to the rose show. He found one gardener has created a beautiful arrangement of roses there. But the prize was given to the master of the gardener. She had done nothing, but she was a big officer's wife. So all the prize goes to her. The man who did it, nobody respects. "In Japan it can never happen Swamiji", he told me - "the one who did it, will get the prize. But in feudal India one who managed it above will get all the honor. He gets only labor, nothing else. That is India! Where is excellence here? Where is Human excellence here? I may sit on a whole big throne, but there is no excellence in me. My foot is made of clay! That is the type of human beings we are! Living in high style, high possession! All the good work is done by somebody, I take all the name for myself. Even in scientific research, the juniors do good work; sometimes the seniors take all the result for himself. That is our country! In that country the most important subject today is human excellence. Both with respect to work and the other respect to human relations.

That is a profound theory, a profound philosophy of action. The Gita has given it, Swamiji has given it. And what we need today is, to think in these ways. How to combine power with that spiritual humanistic motivation? This is constant idea in the Chinese

philosophy. This word, - ‘**Rajarshayo viduhu**’ appears also in Chinese thought, what you call in Tao’s thought. Exact rendering you can get there. Where they will say, to every one, not merely to kings or big ministers etc., to every one – can you combine kingliness outside saintliness within? - That combination must come. Be saintly within, be kingly without. Without you are handling power, within you are humanistic, you are spiritual. Therefore you combine these two. That is what we need to create human excellence all round in our country.

I sent that book and he wrote me a nice letter, - “Thank you for your book. I have read it, I have gained from it”, he wrote. Later on he was our Ambassador High Commissioner in Canada. From there his department wrote to me, - we want to translate into French your article on – Essence of Indian Culture, for circulation to French people in Canada. I gave my permission. That was my second relationship with him some years later. So I gave this example only to tell you, - how many of us when we are trying to create highly developed nation, where millions of people who have been next-door neighbors to brutes! That is Vivekananda’s language! Millions of people whom have kept as next-door neighbors to brutes! We want to bring them up to the highest level of human development. That philosophy is the philosophy of the Gita.

That is what Vivekananda gave us in his two great books. ‘Lectures from Colombo to Almora’ and ‘Letters of Vivekananda’. Jawaharlal Nehru wanted all young people to study these books thoroughly, not just reading, thoroughly – imbibe the spirit that is there! Out of which will come a new race of men and women, expressing the highest human excellence. That is goal before us. Let us march in that direction. Let us put our children on that long road of human excellence. That is the thought with which we can close this lecture and leave the hall and continue to cherish these ideas, pass these to others as well. As Swamiji said – ‘Be and make’ that shall be our motto. Be men yourself and help others to be men. What a beautiful message! Be and make. This has been our way, a slavish attitude. A free attitude will come – I shall strive to be a man. I shall help you also to achieve the highest human excellence.

So keep this motto of Swamiji with you “**BE & MAKE—that shall be our motto.**”

Thank you, Namaskar.

*** THE END***

Our duty is to encourage every one in his struggle to live up to his own highest idea, and strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to the Truth.

That man has reached immortality who is disturbed by nothing material.

You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul.

All differences in this world are of degree, and not of kind, because oneness is the secret of everything.

Glory of the Gita – Bhagawad Gita for Executives

Translation and Exposition by Dr. Manohar Abhay

Evil Deeds:

The Sanatan (eternal) Dharma of the family and the community (social order and the family traditions) are destroyed by those who destroy family Dharma (traditions and practices) and produce illegitimate children (mixed-breed). (1-43)

Lesson: Evil deeds, committed by the unwise, destroy the family, community and the entire society.



Wiseman's Quote:

I have heard from learned persons, O Janardana, that those people who destroy the family- Dharma, always dwell in hell. (1-44)

Lesson: Use quotations (sayings) of learned people to make your argument effective.

Greed:

Alas! How surprising it is that for greed of the pleasures of the kingdom we have resolved to commit a great sin, being eager to kill our kinsmen. (1-45)

Lesson: Greed for worldly possessions leads to horrible sins.

Directionless:

It would be far better for me, if the sons of Dhritrastra, armed with weapons kill me in battle while I am unarmed and non-resisting. (1-46)

Lesson: The directionless people become self-defeatist.

Worldly Concerns:

Sanjay said: Having thus spoken in the midst of the battle field and casting aside his bow and arrow, Arjuna, highly distressed and his mind afflicted with grief, set down on the rear seat of the chariot. (1-47)

Lesson: Worldly concerns bring sorrow and grief.

HERE ENDS CHAPTER FIRST

To devote your life to the good of all and to the happiness of all is religion. Whatever you do for your own sake is not religion.

The greatest religion is to be true to your own nature. Have faith in yourselves!

The spirit is the cause of all our thoughts and body-action, and everything, but it is untouched by good or evil, pleasure or pain, heat or cold, and all the dualism of nature, although it lends its light to everything.

All the powers in the universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark.

The Parable of Jack Fruit:



"If you enter the world without first cultivating love for God, you will be entangled more and more. You will be overwhelmed with its danger, its grief, and its sorrows. And the more you think of worldly things, the more you will be attached to them.

"First rub your hands with oil and then break open the jack-fruit; otherwise they will be smeared with its sticky milk. First secure the oil of divine love, and then set your hands to the duties of the world."

How to lead a householder's life

BRAHMO: "Then should they lead a worldly life?"

MASTER: "Yes, they should try to perform their duties in a detached way. Before you break the jack-fruit open, rub your hands with oil, so that the sticky milk will not smear them. The maidservant in a rich man's house performs all her duties, but her mind dwells on her home in the country. This is an example of doing duty in a detached way. You should renounce the world only in mind. But a sannyasi should renounce the world both inwardly and outwardly."

Advice to the worldly-minded

"I ask people to live in the world after the awakening of their spiritual consciousness. After extracting gold through hard labour, a man may keep it under earth or in a box or under water. The gold is not affected.

"I ask people to live in the world in a spirit of detachment. If you break the jack-fruit after rubbing oil on your hands, its sticky juice will not smear them.

"If the 'unripe' mind dwells in the world, the mind gets soiled. One should first attain knowledge and then live in the world."

Advice to householders and Necessity of solitude

“But a man must practise some spiritual discipline in order to be able to lead a detached life in the world. It is necessary for him to spend some time in solitude-be it a year, six months, three months, or even one month. In that solitude he should fix his mind on God and pray with a longing heart for love of God. He should also say to himself: ‘There is nobody in this world who is my own. Those whom I call my own are here only for two days. God alone is my own. He alone is my all in all. Alas, how shall I realize Him?’

“One can live in the world after acquiring love of God. It is like breaking the jack-fruit after rubbing your hands with oil; the sticky juice of the fruit will not smear them. The world is like water and the mind like milk. If you put milk in water it will mix with the water. But first keep the milk in a quiet place and let it turn into curd. Then from the curd extract butter. That butter you may keep in water; it will not mix with the water, but will float on it.”

Example of Janaka

Some members of the Brahmo Samaj said to me: ‘Sir, our attitude toward the world is that of King Janaka. Like him, we want to enjoy the world in a detached spirit.’ I said to them: “To live in the world in a detached spirit is very difficult. By merely saying so you cannot be a King Janaka. How much austerity Janaka practised! How long he remained in one posture, with head down and feet up! You don’t have to practise these extreme disciplines. But you need sadhana, you should live in solitude. You may lead the life of a householder after having attained divine knowledge and love in solitude. Milk turns into curd only when it is not disturbed. The curd does not set if the milk is often moved from place to place or is too much disturbed.

“On account of his detachment from the world Janaka was also known as the ‘Videha’, that is, one free from consciousness of the body. Though living in the world, he moved about as a jivanmukta, a free soul living in a body. But for most people freedom from body consciousness is something very far off. Intense spiritual discipline is necessary.”

NEIGHBOUR: “Must one always live in solitude?”

MASTER: “Haven’t you seen the trees on the foot-path along a street? They are fenced around as long as they are very young; otherwise cattle destroy them. But there is no longer any need of fences when their trunks grow thick and strong. Then they won’t break even if an elephant is tied to them. Just so, there will be no need for you to worry and fear if you make your mind as strong as a thick tree-trunk. First of all try to acquire discrimination. Break the jack-fruit open only after you have rubbed your hands with oil; then its sticky milk won’t smear them.

“If you ask me how long you should live in solitude away from your family, I should say that it would be good for you if you could spend even one day in such a manner. Three days at a time are still better. One may live in solitude for twelve days, a month, three months, or a year, according to one’s convenience and ability. One hasn’t much to fear if one leads the life of a householder after attaining knowledge and devotion.

“Before breaking open the jack-fruit you should rub your hands with oil in order to protect them from the sticky juice. Likewise, protect yourself with the oil of devotion; then the world will not cling to you and you will not be affected by it.”

[from The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna]

OVERCOMING NEGATIVE IDEAS

By Swami Bodhamayananda, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, T. Nagar, Chennai-17

INTRODUCTION

After millions of years of evolution on this planet, mankind finds itself at cross roads. Thanks to the explosion of Science and Technology, man finds himself with unprecedented power on the one hand and also a creature in doubt and despair. Information Technology has certainly given lots of benefits to mankind in the form of communications, space travel, medicine and hundreds of other things. If these benefits are used with wisdom they can eradicate many of the evils from the face of this earth. And if the same benefits are abused because of lack of proper training and assimilation of knowledge they can destroy the entire race a hundred times over.

Today, due to lack of an integral education system in the country there is tonnes and tonnes of poison being emanated into the atmosphere and also thrown upon human consciousness in the form of animosities, hatred, jealousies, cynicism and so on, which is indeed a very dangerous phenomenon. There are cries of pain, misery and suffering from all corners of the globe. It is true that there cannot be a better world without better men. Therefore, we need to train the younger generation, our generation, in the lines wisdom of the great masters of yore and make them think and do things differently, that is with strength, positive attitude and wisdom. A new methodology has to be adopted and implemented in order to lead a pure, positive and purposeful life, not only for oneself but also for the welfare of the entire world. The youth have to be motivated, inspired and put on the right track so that they would use their talents, intelligence and knowledge to get rid of the poison at the personal and social level and thereby evolve in life.

The present educational system no doubt has produced many men and women of sterling character, with positive outlook of life, and who are responsible citizens of the country and who have chosen the path of Renunciation and Service and has certainly many good points. With all its merit, it has not been able to stand the test of times and is driving the youth away from the garden of life, positive values and humanness. Hundreds of youth are confused, directionless, depressed, cynical of everything in life, nay, life itself. How true was Swami Vivekananda when he said in a lecture titled 'The Future of India' in 1897, thus: "The education that you are getting now has some good points, but it has tremendous disadvantage which is so great that the good things are all weighed down. In the first place it is not a man-making education, it is merely and entirely negative education. The child is taken to school, and the first thing he learns that his father is a fool, the second thing that his grandfather is a lunatic, the third thing the all his teachers are hypocrites, the fourth that all the sacred books are lies! By the time he is sixteen he is a mass of negation, lifeless and boneless." (Complete works of SV, 3rd vol: P.301-02). In this article we shall try to share with the readers, especially the youth, a few practical hints and exercises that they can practice and thereby overcome the negative tendencies and ideas sprouting in their own mind which is fanned by the blazing fire of peer pressure and unhygienic values in the society. The youth who have dynamism need to be given a positive direction to become masters of themselves and to take charge of the future.

“MAN IS HIS OWN FRIEND”

In the 5th verse of the sixth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna teaches Arjuna the truth, ‘Let a man lift himself by his self; let him not degrade himself; for he himself is his friend and he himself is his enemy’. To what extent is this true? The answer is: by developing a positive, constructive, pure and friendly attitude towards oneself and the world. Whatever may be the fact of life, like, loss of a dear one, failure in exams or career, criticisms from colleagues or bombarded by tragic news appearing in the newspapers or television or hundreds of such things which nature can offer to man, a positive mental attitude is more important to solve the problems and to lead a happy and focused life. On many occasions haven’t we been carried away by our own impulses and behave unethically even though we are quite aware of the negative impact of that particular action on our life? That is the time one has become an enemy of oneself. A person becomes a friend to oneself when the negative emotions are managed wisely and given a right royal turn for positive and higher endeavors. One who has developed this important quality of a positive attitude, even though he is surrounded by miseries, trials and tribulations, unhappy situations and so on, will not allow his mind to be colored or overpowered by them. He holds his head high and solves the problems with a joy and radiance on his face and more importantly is fully aware of the potential that is within his own being. Therefore, he is not daunted by the circumstances because he is his own friend. It is said that when a piece of steel is magnetized, it capable of lifting about 12 times its weight. But, when it is demagnetized, it can’t even pick up even a pin. It is the same with the mind. If it is positive, balanced and pure, it can be a master of circumstances and do wonders in the world. The hallmark of great leaders, athletes, scientists, musicians, artists and host of others in the world is the art of overcoming negative ideas and the efforts to keep their thoughts positive, strong and pure. These people constantly feed their mind with positive thoughts on a regular basis. Let us now discuss the practical steps of overcoming negative ideas.

Practical lesson: **THE ANT PHILOSOPHY**

There is an interesting lesson for all those who are infected with the virus called negative ideas and actions. However much they are taught it is very difficult to assimilate the positive ideas and absorb them in their personal life. To drive home the idea there is a highly motivating lesson that a tiny ant teaches all people irrespective of their background. Of course, all animals in nature have a lesson or two to give us. In this case, there are four lessons for us to learn from the doings of the ant and become positive in our thought, word and deed.

Lesson 1: The ant never quits whenever anybody stops them or they come across any hurdles. They climb over it, or find another way but never stop from marching forward. The lesson is ‘never stop from completing the given work or from reaching the goal under any circumstances’ with confidence and positive attitude.

Lesson 2: Do you know that the ants think winter all summer? Quite interesting! Why do they do think like that? The answer is they gather their winter food in the middle of summer and do not complain about the seasonal changes. As one enjoys the sand and sun on the beach, he has to think of rocks in the water before diving into the sea. The lesson is one has to be realistic and also think ahead positively.

Lesson 3: Interestingly the ant thinks of summer all winter. It sounds confusing and strange for us. Wait! During the winter the ant reminds itself that this will not last long

and we'll soon be out of here". And at the first warm day they are out in the open and seeking adventure once again. Well, it may turn cold again; they just dive back into the closet and return another warm day. The lesson to us is 'to stay positive at all times', because there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Lesson 4: Do you know how much an ant can gather during the summer to prepare for the winter? The answer is "All that he possibly can"! The lesson for the person who he is diffident, weak and with low self-esteem is "Do all you can and a little more".

In a nutshell the four-part lesson is:

- 1) Never Give Up
- 2) Look Ahead
- 3) Stay Positive and
- 4) Do all you can and march on.

To be continued....

Visit our Uttishthata Yahoo! Group: Daily Discussion Group

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/uttishthata>

List for Monthly Uttishthata Groupzine: Google Group

<http://groups.google.com/group/uttishthata>

Orkut Community: Forum

<http://www.orkut.com/Community.aspx?cmm=24237725>

To Download Previous Issues of Uttishthata Groupzine

<http://www.uttishthata.org/uttishthata-groupzine/groupzine-download/>

Uttishthata Group's Blog/Web site:

<http://www.uttishthata.org>

To Send your suggestions, contributions, requestes: Moderator

MailTo: [uttishthata \(at\) yahoo \(dot\) co \(dot\) in](mailto:uttishthata@yahoo.co.in)