

Uttishthata Groupzine

Contents of this Issue:

- ✓ Swami Vivekananda on Himself: Discipleship
– Divine Experiences through Sri Ramakrishna.
- ✓ Education for Character – by Swami Ranganathananda.
- ✓ Glory of the Gita – Bhagavad-Gita for Executives.
- ✓ Character formation: Divine Message of the Veda
– benefits of character.
- ✓ Inspirational letter from Swami Shivananda.
- ✓ Teachings of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi on how to
gain positively during sufferings.
- ✓ Visual presentation of the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna
– Longing and Yearning.
- ✓ Wisdom from the scriptures.
- ✓ Chataka and water – advice of Swami Vivekananda on
how to build character.

Be and Make

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 ॥

Let noble thoughts reach us from every direction - RigVed

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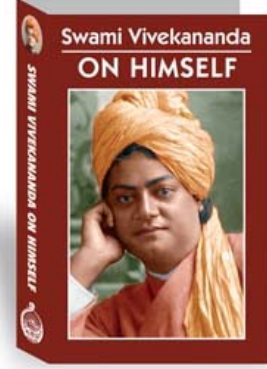
Discipleship: Divine Experiences

[Question: [Where did you see him \(Sri Ramakrishna\) next?](#)]

At Rajmohan's house. The third visit was at Dakshineswar again. During that visit he went into Samadhi and began to praise me as if I were God.

He said to me, "O Narayana, you have assumed this body for my sake. I asked the Divine Mother, "Mother, unless I enjoy the company of some genuine devotees completely free from 'woman and gold', how shall I live on earth?" Then he said to me, "You came to me at night, woke me up, and said, 'Here I am!'" But I did not know anything of this. I was sound asleep in our Calcutta house.

I did not realize then that the temple garden of Dakshineswar was so far from Calcutta, since on the previous occasion I had gone there in a carriage. The road seemed to me so long as to be almost endless. However, I reached the garden somehow and went straight to Sri Ramakrishna's room. I found him sitting alone on the small bedstead. He was glad to see me, and calling me affectionately to his side, made me sit beside him on the bed. But the next moment I found him overcome with a sort of emotion. Muttering something to himself, with his eyes fixed on me, he slowly drew near me. I thought he might do something queer as on the previous occasion. But in the twinkling of an eye he placed his right foot on my body. The touch at once gave rise to a novel experience within me. With my eyes open I saw that the walls, and everything in the room, whirled rapidly and vanished into naught, and the whole universe together with my individuality was about to merge in an all-encompassing mysterious void! I was terribly frightened and thought that I was facing death, for the loss of individuality meant nothing short of that. Unable to control myself I cried out, "What is it that you are doing to me! I have my parents at home!" He laughed aloud at this and stroking my chest said, "All right, let it rest now. Everything will come in time!" The wonder of it was that no sooner had he said this than that strange experience of mine vanished. I was myself again and found everything within and without the room as it had been before. All this happened in less time than it takes me to narrate it, but it revolutionized my mind. Amazed, I wondered what it could possibly be. It came and went at the mere wish of this amazing man! I began to question whether it was mesmerism or hypnotism. But that was not likely, for these acted only on weak minds, and I prided myself on having just the reverse. I had not as yet surrendered myself to the stronger personality of the man. Rather I had taken him to be a monomaniac. So to what might this sudden transformation of mine be due? I could not come to any conclusion. It was an enigma, I thought, which I had better not attempt to solve. I was determined, however, to be on my guard and not to give him another chance to exert a similar influence over me. The next moment I thought, how can a man who shatters to pieces a resolute and strong mind like mine be dismissed as a lunatic? Yet that



was just the conclusion at which one would arrive from his effusiveness on our first meeting—unless he were an Incarnation of God, which was indeed a far cry. So I was in a dilemma about the real nature of my experience as well as about the truth of this wonderful man, who was obviously as pure and simple as a child. My rationalistic mind received an unpleasant rebuff at this failure in judging the true state of things. But I was determined to fathom the mystery somehow. Thoughts like these occupied my mind during the whole of that day. But he became quite another man after that incident, and as on the previous occasion, treated me with great kindness and cordiality. His behaviour towards me was like that of a man who meets an old friend or relative after long separation. He seemed not to be satisfied with entertaining and taking all possible care of me. This remarkably loving treatment drew me all the more to him. At last, finding that the day was coming to a close, I asked leave to go. He seemed very dejected at this and gave me permission only after I had promised to come again at my earliest convenience.

One day in the temple-garden at Dakshineswar Sri Ramakrishna touched me over the heart, and first of all I began to see that the houses—rooms, doors, windows, verandas—the trees, the sun, the moon—all were flying off, shattering to pieces as it were—reduced to atoms and molecules—and ultimately became merged in the Akasha. Gradually again, the Akasha also vanished, and after that, my consciousness of the ego with it; what happened next I do not recollect. I was at first frightened. Coming back from that state, again I began to see the houses, doors, windows, verandas, and other things. On another occasion, I had exactly the same realisation by the side of a lake in America. ...A derangement of the brain! How can you call it so, when it comes neither as the result of delirium from any disease, nor of intoxication from drinking, nor as an illusion produced by various sorts of queer breathing exercises—but when it comes to a normal man in full possession of his health and wits? Then again, this experience is in perfect harmony with the Vedas. It also coincides with the words of realisation of the inspired Rishis and Acharyas of old. Do you take me, at last, to be a crack-brained man? . . . Know that this knowledge of Oneness is what the Shastras speak of as realisation of Brahman, by knowing which one gets rid of fear, and the shackles of birth and death break for ever. Having once realised that Supreme Bliss, one is no more overwhelmed by the pleasure and pain of this world. . . . That Supreme Bliss fully exists in all, from Brahma down to the blade of grass. You are also that undivided Brahman. Being again and again entangled in the intricate maze of delusion and hard hit by sorrows and afflictions, the eye will turn of itself to one's own real nature, the Inner Self. It is owing to the presence of this desire for bliss in the heart, that man, getting hard shocks one after another, turns his eye inwards—to his own Self. A time is sure to come to everyone, without exception, when he will do so—to one it may be in this life, to another, after thousands of incarnations.

Seeing that the Master gave no thought to himself on account of me, I did not hesitate on occasion to use harsh words about his blind love for me. I used to warn him, saying that if he constantly thought of me, he would become like me, even as King Bharata of the old legend, who so doted upon his pet deer that even at the time of death he was unable to think of anything else, and as a result, was born as a deer in his next life. At these words, the Master, so simple was he, became very nervous, and said, "What you say is quite true. What is to become of me, for I cannot bear to be separated from you?" Dejected, he went to the Kali temple. In a few minutes he returned smiling and said, "You rogue, I shall not listen to you any more. Mother says that I love you because I see the Lord in you, and the day I no longer do so, I shall not be able to bear even the sight of you." With this short but emphatic statement he dismissed once for all everything that I had ever said to him on the subject.

Education for Character

By Swami Ranganathananda



Wherefrom can we get that education for character?

The ancient sages of India asked this question. Let us start searching within. You know, physical nature has got a depth dimension. Early Western science dealt with the surface of nature. But science later went deeper into nature. Take, for example, energy. Science first gave humanity only combustion energy; but that was very little. So science went deeper into nature and found out electricity, much more powerful and subtle. But science wasn't quite satisfied. 'Let me go deeper into nature', it said, and discovered nuclear energy. So this penetration into physical nature is what Western science has done. The sages of the Upanishads did the same regarding the human being, human nature, over four thousand years ago.

Let us go deep into the human being, they said to themselves, and find out what truths, what energies, lie hidden there. You have, first, on the surface, your body, the genetic system, with its muscular and other components. When they penetrated a little deeper, they encountered nervous energy, which is more subtle and more immense than muscular energy. A little deeper penetration revealed psychic energy, which is more subtle and immense than nerve energy; penetrating deeper still, the sages discovered the Divine spark of the nature of Pure Consciousness, the infinite energy of the Atman, the Self. Thus our sages penetrated into the depth dimension of this human being and then, as given in the Chandogya Upanishad (6.12.3), proclaimed the great truth: "*Tat Tvam Asi - That Thou Art.*"

In his commentary on the Katha Upanishad (3.10-11), Sankaracarya expounds a profound truth, that energies in every human being are organized on an ascending scale, from the outer to the inner dimension of subtlety, immensity, and inwardness - *sukshma mahan-tasca, pratyagatma-bhutasca*.

Every human being is essentially the Atman, ever pure, ever free, ever luminous, and non-dual. Consciousness has no plural, it is always a singular. What a profound truth! Just as space has no plural; you cannot divide space, space is space, always a singular. You can't divide it. If you put up four walls and make a room, you think you have divided space. But space continues to be all-pervading; it is inside, outside, in the center and everywhere. Similarly, pure consciousness, Chaitanya, or Chit Swarupa or Chit Sakti, is one and non-dual. They called it Brahman or Atman. Out of that the whole universe has come. In that the universe abides, and unto that the whole universe returns. It is that infinite Brahman or Atman that is in you, in me, and in all. If a little of that Divine energy is manifested in your life, you achieve high character. Not much is needed, but only a little of that spiritual energy resource can make for human fulfillment, individual and collective. That spiritual energy is very much lacking in India today.

All values derive from that spiritual dimension - and every human being has the organic capacity to manifest it. This constitutes the science of spirituality. Suppose a man brings to you a thousand rupees bribe, how would you react? If you believe only in the genetic system, you will straightaway take it. If you depend only on your intellectual system, again, you will take it - these two have no power to resist that temptation or any other temptations like immoral and illegal lust and greed. But if you have a little spiritual growth, you will get the strength to say straightaway: No, I don't care; I am here to serve

the people. That spiritual strength has to come from many of our people. We have to regain it now. That is the impact of spirituality on life. It is the inborn privilege of every human being to manifest that Divine within. So **Swami Vivekananda defines religion**, not as ceremonies or rituals, magic or superstition, but as *"the manifestation of the divinity already within man."* In every one of us, there is a divine spark. There is a depth dimension to the human personality. Look at the eyes of a new-born baby. You find a depth in the eyes. You must find out what that depth dimension is. Look at a doll baby's eyes. There is no depth, only the surface dimension is there. A living baby's eyes reveal a tremendous depth dimension. It is the greatness of sages of India that they could dive deep into the depth of human nature to discover the divine in the heart of all. So, in the teachings of the Gita, you find Sri Krishna telling Arjuna: "I am the Self dwelling in the heart of all beings - *Ahamatma gudakesa sarvabhutasaya-stitah.*" I am in the heart of all beings so you and I are one. We are not separate. The body makes one feel separate from each other; the genetic system makes you feel separate, and that sense of separateness makes for selfishness, self-centeredness, and exploitation. The feeling of oneness, on the other hand, makes for love, compassion, and service. Character originates here. To realize our spiritual oneness is the way to develop high character. This same truth is given to humanity in the famous utterance, already quoted, of the Chandogya Upanisad (6.12.3).

A father, sage Aruni, shares his experience of the Self with his son Svetaketu; it is a very interesting teaching, very scientific, step-by-step.

The Upanishad introduces the dialogue with the story of the philosopher father, Aruni, sending his son, Svetaketu, at the age of twelve, to the house of a guru for his education. He lived twelve years in the guru's house for his education after which he was returning home. The father's question to his son on his welcome home, and the son's further education by the father, have great relevance to the much needed re-shaping of education in our own time.

The Upanishad continues: Going to the teacher's house at the age of twelve years, Svetaketu came back home when he was twenty-four years old, having studied all what his teacher had taught; finding his son conceited, arrogant, and regarding himself as very learned, his father addressed him thus:

"O Svetaketu, I see you conceited, arrogant, and proud of your learning; but, O amiable one, did you ask from your teacher for that teaching about the One behind the many through which what is unheard becomes heard, what is un-thought of becomes thought of, what is un-known becomes known?"

"Of what nature, O revered one, is that teaching?" asked Svetaketu.

"Just as, O amiable one, through knowing a single clod of clay, all that is made of clay will become known - all forms or modifications are merely names proceeding from words, and the knowledge that all is clay is alone true, such, indeed, O amiable one, is that teaching."

"Surely, my revered teachers did not know this; for, if they had known, why should they not have told this to me. May your revered self alone tell about this to me."

"Be it so, verily, O amiable one." said the father.

After expounding the subject to his son through many illustrations and arguments, the Upanishad continues to narrate that father's teaching:

"Please bring a fruit of the yonder banyan tree."

"Here it is, O revered one."

"Please break it."

"It is broken, O revered one."

"What do you find here?"

"These atom-like grains, O revered one."

"Please break one of these."

"It is broken, O revered one."

"What do you find here?"

"Nothing whatsoever, O revered one."

To him the father said: "O amiable one, you do not see what is, verily, this sub-atom-like subtle part of the seed, yet, it is, verily, by this very sub-atom-like (subtle essence) that this large banyan tree exists. *Sraddhatsva Somya* – "have faith, O amiable one!."

The above passages can easily be applied to a modern student's approach to the comprehension of the "field" concept in modern nuclear physics. The field is that from which nuclear particles arise and into which they disappear. It is subtle and beyond sensory verification, and being nothing, it is also everything.

Finally expounding what another Upanishad, The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, characterises as *Satyasya satyam; prana vai satyam; tesam esa satyam* – "the Truth of truth, the cosmic energies are truth; this (Atman) is the Truth of those energies." The father says to his son: *Sa ya eso anima, etadatmyam idam sarvam, tat satyam, sa atma, tat tvam asi, Svetaketo iti* – "That which is this subtle sub-atom-like essence, all this (manifested universe) has got. That as the Atman or the Self. That is the Truth. That is the Atman and you are That, O Svetaketu."

So, this *Tat Tvam Asi* is a great spiritual teaching discovered by the sages of India. Einstein gave his formula for nuclear energy: $E=mc^2$; it is a wonderful formula about physical nature. Similarly in Vedanta, you get this great formula about human nature - *Tat Tvam Asi* - You Are That, that infinite Brahman from whom the whole universe has come. And Brahman, which is pure consciousness, cannot be divided. It is indivisible - *Akhanda*, and *Satcidananda*; being, consciousness, and bliss. It is there in you and in me and in all beings. So, when I go inward, I come in touch with my ever-present spiritual nature and the spiritual energy from that dimension I must manifest in my life, conduct, and inter-human relations. It is only then that I shall be able to develop citizenship qualities, social responsibilities, concern for others, efficiency of work and the spirit of service. Even a little of it's manifestation will make for high character.

To be continued...

The Vedas say the whole world is a mixture of independence and dependence, of freedom and slavery, but through it all shines the soul independent, immortal, pure, perfect, holy. For if it is independent, it cannot perish, as death is but a change, and depends upon conditions; if independent, it must be perfect, for imperfection is again but a condition, and therefore dependent. And this immortal and perfect soul must be the same in the highest God as well as in the humblest man, the difference between them being only in the degree in which this soul manifests itself. - VIVEKANANDA

Glory of the Gita: Bhagavad Gita for Executives CHAPTER SECOND: SAMKHYA YOGA
Translation and Exposition by Dr. Manohar Abhay, an ardent devotee of the Gita.



Men of Endurance:

Because, O Best Among Men, only the men of endurance can realise the immortality of the Self who are equanimous in pleasure and pain and who do not become impatient by senses and their objects. (2-15)

Lesson: The men of endurance who understand the Immortality of the Indwelling-Self (who have achieved Self-realization) do not become impatient by the cravings of senses and their alluring objects.

Men of Wisdom:

The unreal (physical body) has no existence and the Real (the Self) is ceaseless. The men of wisdom know the essence (the real nature) of both. (2-16)

Lesson: The men of wisdom know the reality of mortal and immortal elements.

The Imperishable:

That alone be considered Imperishable by which this entire universe is pervaded. None is capable to ruin this Imperishable (Everlasting / Immutable). (2-17)

All the forms (bodies) are said to belong to this Imperishable, Immeasurable and Eternal, the Self-within. Therefore, fight, O Descendent of Bharat Dynasty! (2-18)

Lesson: The Self-within is a fraction of the Supreme-Self by which the entire universe is pervaded. He alone is everlasting, imperishable and eternal. All His forms (Bodies of the embodied-Self) are perishable.

The real nature of the Soul:

One who considers that he is the slayer of this (the Self), and the other who presumes that It (the Self) is dead, both are ignorant because none can slay the Self, nor It is slain. (2-19)

This one (the Self) is neither born, nor does It die at any moment. It does not come into being or cease to exist. It is unborn, eternal, everlasting and primeval. It does not perish when the body is perished. (2-20)

Lesson: The Self is beyond the limits of time, birth and death. It is imperishable. None can slay It, nor is It slain.

Mystery of Death:

O Partha, whosoever considers this Self everlasting, eternal, unborn and imperishable, knows who slays whom and (who) causes death to some one. (2-21)

Just as a man wears new clothes by discarding the worn-out one, similarly the Self gets new bodies after casting away the old one. (2-22)

Lesson: He who understands the characteristics of the Indwelling-Self knows the mystery of death. The death is like casting off the worn out clothes to get the new one.

Characteristics of the Indwelling-Self:

Neither the weapons can cleave It (the Self), nor can fire burn; water cannot drench It, nor can air dry. (2-23)

This (the Indwelling-Self) cannot be broken or burnt or dried-up. Eternal indeed, It is everlasting, all- pervading, immovable, stable and primeval. (2-24)

(This Self is neither the subject of sense organs, nor of mind). This is said to be unmanifest, unthinkable and unchangeable. Therefore, (after) knowing It's (this) nature, you should not grieve. (2-25)

(And) even if you consider It as being perpetually born and dying, O Mighty Armed, you should not grieve like this. (2-26)

Lesson: The Self is beyond the effects of the five primary elements. One should not grieve when It departs from the body, as It is unchangeable, indestructible and beyond the comprehension of the sense organs, including the mind.

Character Formation: Divine Message of the Veda

मृत्योः पदं योपयन्तो यदैत द्राधीय आयुः प्रतरं दधानाः

आप्यायमानाः प्रजया धनेन शुद्धाः पुता भवत यज्ञियासः । ऋग्वेद् १०-१८-२

mṛtyoḥ padam yopayanto yadaita drādhīya āyuh prataram dadhānāḥ|

āpyāyamānāḥ prajayā dhanena śuddhāḥ putā bhavata yajñiyāsaḥ| (*Rigved* 10/18/2)

Meaning: Those who adopt good moral conduct in place of wicked conduct, achieve excellent life and longevity. They obtain physical and mental purity while being blessed with money and children.

Message: Human life is an invaluable gift from God. Man has received the facilities not granted to any other life-form. He has been granted a family, medical-care, industry, housing, vehicles and entertainment and the power to talk, laugh, read, write and think. Do other animals enjoy all these? Why all this special grace of God on man only?

Every animal born in this world, meets death after some time. No one knows when he will die. God has given the facility to man only to push death on one side and achieve immortality. He should not lead the life of a mortal, but live determinedly like an immortal.

By studying the history and the characters of excellent men, it becomes clear that some qualities are extremely essential for man's progress. These qualities by themselves are the test of man. Man will become excellent with immortality of name in proportion to the qualities possessed by him. The lives of all great men of the world are replete with these qualities. No man will achieve immortality of name without the help of these qualities. The grandeur of these qualities has been mentioned in many places in many ways in the holy *Gita*. These qualities are called दैवी सम्पदा 'Daivee Sampada'. Man can become immortal in this world only by adopting these virtues in his life.

Ours is the country of great men. From the time of Lord *Ramachandra* (or *Sri Ram*), up to today, world-famous men have been born here. But it will be of no use to create only great men.

It is both improper and impossible that people who can be counted on finger-tips become great by imbibing divinity and the rest live the life of hell. The level of our ordinary, very ordinary people also should be excellent.

Our bodily requirements, like other animals, are ordinary and can be easily fulfilled. But we utilise our extra capacity for indulging in our desires, for luxurious living, for hoarding and for satisfying our ego. We stray from aims of this life and like a dying man just pull on with the burden of our lives.

By proper diet, proper daily routine, exercise, austerity etc we should keep the body clean and the mind pure and live यज्ञिय 'yagyiya'-life (i.e. live for others' welfare). In that case we can 'live over a hundred years by doing good deeds, enjoy the happiness of excellent wealth and children and enjoy the bliss of immortality of the soul.'



An inspiring letter written by Swami Shivananda
(Mahapurush Maharaj)

I surrender to Sri Ramakrishna

Holy Baidyanath Dham
14 July 1918

Dear Mr. _____

I received your letter here. I don't remember having received any letter from you earlier. You see, I hardly ever write anyone. I don't have that habit.

You are fortunate that you have found refuge in Sri Ramakrishna. He is merciful. He takes care of those who surrender to him. He is the prophet of the age. He removes all that is evil in the age. He is the Lord of the present time and also its leader.

You have nothing to worry about. Call on him with all your heart and soul. Pray, pray with tears in the eyes.

Cry like a child and say to him: 'Lord you have assumed a human form to save the world. How much you have suffered for the sake of human beings! I am an insignificant person. I do not know how to pray, how to please you. I am ignorant, without devotion, without faith, without love. Please give me faith, love, knowledge, devotion and purity. Give me these out of your own grace. Make my life a success.'

Practise this for some time. He will then be pleased with you. If he is pleased, you will then be able to concentrate your mind while meditating. Love will then well up within you. You will feel happy, and you will be encouraged and cheerful. He is a living God, always alert.

Pray to him with an open mind. He will answer your prayers.

What else shall I write? My sincere good wishes to you. May the Lord fulfil all your desires!

Yours
Shivananda

Don't be afraid. Human birth is full of suffering and one has to endure everything patiently, taking the name of God. None, not even God in human form, can escape the sufferings of the body and mind. Even Avatars, saints, and sages have to undergo the ordeal of suffering, for they take upon themselves the burden of sins of omission and commission of ordinary human beings and thereby sacrifice themselves for the good of humanity.

People complain about their griefs and sorrows and how they pray to God but find no relief from pain. But grief itself is a gift from God. It is the symbol of His compassion. ... Tell me, who is there in the world who has not had to bear sorrow? Vrinda once said to Krishna: 'Who said you are merciful? As Rama you filled Sita's life with sorrow; as Krishna you fill Radha's life with sorrow. In Kamsa's prison your parents weep for you night and day. Yet we call upon you, because he who takes your name has no fear of death.'

- Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi



Longing and yearning

M: “Under what conditions does one see God?”

MASTER: “Cry to the Lord with an intensely yearning heart and you will certainly see Him. People shed a whole jug of tears for wife and children. They swim in tears for money. But who weeps for God? Cry to Him with a real cry.”

The Master sang:

*Cry to your Mother Syama , with a real cry, O mind!
And how can She hold Herself from you?
How can Syama stay away?
How can your Mother Kali hold Herself away?
O mind, if you are in earnest, bring Her an offering
Of bel-leaves and hibiscus flowers;
Lay at Her feet your offering
And with it mingle the fragrant sandal-paste of Love.*

Continuing, he said: “Longing is like the rosy dawn. After the dawn out comes the sun. Longing is followed by the vision of God.

“God reveals Himself to a devotee who feels drawn to Him by the combined force of these three attractions: the attraction of worldly possessions for the worldly man, the child’s attraction for its mother, and the husband’s attraction for the chaste wife. If one feels drawn to Him by the combined force of these three attractions, then through it one can attain Him.

“The point is, to love God even as the mother loves her child, the chaste wife her husband, and the worldly man his wealth. Add together these three forces of love, these three powers of attraction, and give it all to God. Then you will certainly see Him.

“It is necessary to pray to Him with a longing heart. The kitten knows only how to call its mother, crying, ‘Mew, mew!’ It remains satisfied wherever its mother puts it. And the mother cat puts the kitten sometimes in the kitchen, sometimes on the floor, and sometimes on the bed. When it suffers it cries only, ‘Mew, mew!’ That’s all it knows. But as soon as the mother hears this cry, wherever she may be; she comes to the kitten.”

Wisdom from the scriptures

शिरः शार्वं स्वर्गात्पततिशिरसस्तत् क्षितिधरं महीधादुत्तुङ्गादवनिमवनेश्चापि जलधिम् ।

अधोऽधो गङ्गेयं पदमुपगता स्तोकमथवा विवेकभ्रष्टानां भवति विनिपातः शतमुखः ॥

The Ganges descended from the heavens upon the head of Shiva, and thence, to the mountains. From the high mountains, she flowed down the plains to finally lapse into the sea. Thus, the Ganges kept drifting downwards from one level to another. Similarly, those who have lost their sagacity plunge downwards in a hundred ways.

Note: *The Ganges became proud that she emerged from Vishnu's feet, and lost her sense of bearing.*

येषां न विद्या न तपो न दानं ज्ञानं न शीलं न गुणो न धर्मः ।

ते मर्त्यलोके भुवि भारभूता मनुष्यरूपेण मृगाश्चरन्ति ॥

Those who are devoid of learning, restraint, charity, knowledge, moral conduct, virtue and righteousness are virtually animals living in the garb of men, and burdening the Earth.

केयूरा न विभूषयन्ति पुरुषं हारा न चन्द्रोज्ज्वला न स्नानं न विलेपनं न कुसुमं नालंकृता मूर्धजाः ।

वाण्येका समलं करोति पुरुषं या संस्कृता धार्यते क्षीयन्ते खलु भूषणानि सततं वाग्भूषणं भूषणम् ॥

Bracelets do not adorn a person. Nor do pearl necklaces shining like the moon, or a cleansing bath; nor anointment of the body, nor flowers, nor decoration for the hair. It is cultured speech alone which embellishes a man. All other ornaments lose their glitter; only the jewel of speech ever remains the jewel of jewels.

Chataka and Water - Swami Vivekananda

Follow truth wherever it may lead you; carry ideas to their utmost logical conclusions. Do not be cowardly and hypocritical. You must have a great devotion to your ideal, devotion not of the moment, but calm, persevering, and steady devotion, like that of a Chataka (a kind of bird) which looks into the sky in the midst of thunder and lightning and would drink no water but from the clouds.

If I do not find bliss in the life of the Spirit, shall I seek satisfaction in the life of the senses? If I cannot get nectar; shall I fall back upon ditch water? The bird called Chataka drinks from the clouds only, ever calling as it soars, "Pure water! Pure water!" And no storms or tempests make it falter on wing or descend to drink from the earth.

Perish in the struggle to be holy; a thousand times welcome death. Be not disheartened. When good nectar is unattainable, it is no reason why we should eat poison. There is no escape. This world is as unknown as the other.

I will tell you something for your guidance in life. Everything that comes from India take as true, until you find cogent reasons for disbelieving it. Everything that comes from Europe take as false, until you find cogent reasons for believing it. Do not be carried away by European fooleries. Think for yourselves. Only one thing is lacking: you are slaves; you follow whatever Europeans do. That is simply an impotent state of mind. Society may take up materials from any quarter but should grow in its own way.

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