

*Beyond the hues
and shades*

understand and go past your mind games

Premise

From time immemorial, there have always been beautiful souls, a handful though, who walked amongst us in flesh and blood, and whose lives have been the guiding pathways, for not only those who lived during their time, but also to the generations that followed. Such was the power that emanated from the love and compassion, that they carried, through their pure wisdom.

The above sentences perfectly resonate with my life, for I owe my life, the nurtured part of it, that shaped my character and my principles during the formative years & beyond, to the most erudite and yet altruistic, the most balanced and yet unabashedly bold person that I have ever come across, the one who burnt himself like a candle, to spread the light through the darkest nooks & corners of this world, the one who could have otherwise lived his life like a king, enjoying the tempting pleasures that the materialistic western world offers, but instead chose to live in a monastery, at the banks of one of the distributaries of the holy Ganges, the Hooghly river, until his last breath.

He is none other than the ochre-cladded sage, the proud son of this soil, **Swami Vivekananda**! And the monastery he lived until his last breath is the sacred Shri Ramakrishna Math¹, situated in Belur, Kolkata.

emanate – to come from or out of

resonate – to match, to echo

erudite – learned and highly knowledgeable

altruistic – unselfish

unabashedly – without bothering about any criticism

ochre-cladded – wearing clothes that are yellowish orange in colour

Those who sincerely adopt that pathways, live their life in the most beautiful way, exuding positive vibes, performing their duties impeccably, and as an expression of gratitude towards those beautiful souls, they painstakingly light the pathways of fellow human beings, in order to dispel the darkness from their lives too. Thus, this process goes on.

Furtherance of this process is very vital for one good reason: often remind us about the long-forgotten human nature in order to sustain peace & harmony among human beings across the globe, who are otherwise plagued by various mental illnesses, the deadliest among that being the ignorance about the games that our own mind plays against us, thereby spreading hatred! **That's the core purpose of this book.**

Apart from being my maiden venture, as part of my efforts to “light the pathways” of fellow humans, this book is also one of the means of expressing gratitude towards my “guiding lamp, idol and inspiration,” Swami Vivekananda, in the most humble manner.

As regards the worth of this book, I'm reminded here, of a very beautiful quote, which once appeared in The Times of India newspaper, under **Sacredspace**:

“If anyone or anything, a person or a book, can contribute to free us from the resentments towards others or the bitterness towards life which poison our feelings, thoughts, and health, that person has rendered us a great service...that book has proved its worth.”

These words were from Paul Brunton, a 19th century British Philosopher.

impeccably – without any fault; perfectly

painstakingly – with lot of care, concern, and effort

dispel – to remove or drive away

plague – to cause pain or worry

resentments – anger or bitterness

So, with utmost humility, I'm presenting this book with just one expectation: this book proves its worth!

To be honest, the moment the idea flashed into my mind, of writing a book on "understanding our true nature, our strengths & weaknesses, in order to handle our mind," the most compelling and resounding subject of this day and age, it felt like a herculean task. But I prided myself saying, 'You are very intelligent so this task should be nothing for you.'

That thought reminded me of a very beautiful anecdote.

Once there lived a sage, in his hermitage situated on top of a hill. He used to give lectures to the people living in the surrounding valley. To listen to his lectures, a lot of people visited his hermitage every day.

One day, a young man visited him to seek his wisdom. When he reached the hermitage, the sage was busy with his daily chores. So, when he approached the sage and informed him about the purpose of his visit, the sage told him, 'So, you've come here to seek wisdom. Obtaining wisdom is the easiest of all the things in this world and yet there's hardly a few who could succeed in that. Do you think you'll succeed?'

'Of course sir!' replied the young man, emphatically.

'Well, in that case would you mind going and sitting quietly on the nearby bench till I could finish my chores? And don't utter a word about whatever you see here,' said the sage.

The young man went and sat on a bench that was lying nearby. The sage once again became busy in his chores. After about an hour, the young man felt a bit irritated because the sage continued with his work without even looking at him for once.

But since he had come for a good purpose, he controlled his anxiety and kept observing the sage.

One more hour passed by.

The young man became restless but didn't utter a word, as per the instructions given to him.

Presently, the sage went to a nearby well and started drawing water. As he pulled the bucket up, the young man could see the water draining from the bottom of the bucket, because it had a lot of holes underneath. Before he could pour the water into a nearby drum, the entire bucket got emptied.

The sage once again threw the bucket into the well and started drawing water. Again same thing happened.

When the sage was about to repeat the process, the young man's patience went out the window. He yelled at the sage, 'Are you a fool or have you lost your vision? Can't you see the bucket is full of holes at the bottom? And you are using such a useless bucket to draw water from the well. You don't have this basic sense that you'll never succeed in your vain pursuit. How can a fool like you give me wisdom!? I wasted my precious time.'

At this, the sage replied smilingly, 'That was a test for you my boy. I wanted to see how much qualified you are, to receive my wisdom. All I told you, was to sit quietly and not utter a word about whatever you see here. But you could not succeed. Your mind did not allow you to keep quiet when it witnessed something that didn't match with its "limited intelligence!" Your mind has more holes than this bucket and so how can it hold the wisdom that I impart to you? It will drain faster than this water from the bucket!'

anecdote – a short story, usually filled with fun & moral

emphatically – in a forceful manner

supplication – the act of asking or praying in a humble way

I was in no way different from that young man. All I had in my mind was that limited intelligence and with that, I was getting ready to scribble something. Then, as I started writing, I realised that it didn't have any "life" in it. It was sounding more like a "copy & paste" of whatever stuff I had accumulated in my brain. But that's not what I wanted to give my fellow-readers.

I wanted to give them the real stuff and not junk.

Like Vivekananda said, *'Books are nothing but the vomitings of other people.'*

That's when I fell to my knees in supplication to my master and said, 'I'll just render my hands, please be the power behind them and instil life into this book.' And then the magic began unfolding! And my hands literally started dancing to his tunes!!

So now you know who the true author of this book is! 'Thank heavens!' I could hear a sigh of relief from you all!

I'm not saying this just to sound humble, because when I started writing, only I know how the chapters got filled with beautiful messages, anecdotes, and references, like a breeze.

One small request: please try to keep all your preconceived notions, based on whatever you've read about the mind, through any other books, aside, while you read this book. In other words, please come with a clean slate, so that the spirit of Vivekananda can write something splendidly beautiful on that.

From now on, wherever I quote my master in this book, I'll be addressing him as "Vivekananda," without the prefix Swami, so we can relate to him as 'one among us,' because he was, is and forever will be one among us.

Vivekananda famously declared, *"...and when I'm gone, my spirit will work with you."*

He knew it before! What a clairvoyance!!

So, all that you'll be reading in this book that will clarify your doubts and also make you feel "Wow," it was all his spirit that worked with me.

And obviously, all that you might feel as a crap, needless to mention, those were directly from my egoistic mind. Please bear with me for that. After all, I'm still a "work in-progress" guy, when it comes to dealing with my mind.

Thanks for your understanding.

clairvoyance – the power to see future or things that others cannot see
élan – in style, and at ease

Math¹ – should not be pronounced as Math as in Mathematics; the actual pronunciation is mutt, ending with a mild 'h' sound.

NOTE – One of the best things that I acquired in my life, among many other qualities, by reading Vivekananda's books, his letters, and lectures, is my vocabulary. The kind of mastery he had on English language was far beyond comparison. And he had used it with such élan, making us wonder 'was he an Indian or a British?!'

do I need to write a book that would make people read it, and also follow it, even if it is to a certain extent?"

How does anyone get qualified to guide others in any activity? For e.g., If a person has to teach swimming, the simple qualification that he needs, is to know how to swim in all currents of water. Period. He doesn't have to be famous, he doesn't have to be a movie star, etc., etc.

When it comes to choosing a person as a reference on how to handle this mind of ours that troubles us 24x7, we look for everything else except for the most crucial thing – has this person been through the turmoil that I go through?

Is he or she sitting on a higher pedestal, safeguarding himself or herself, giving sermons to all? Because, once you reach a certain stage in life which is pretty much guarded, socially, and economically, it is very easy to assume a post of a teacher and say whatever you want to say, that too in an intimidating manner so that people would listen to you, mainly out of fear.

But the person who intends to guide others on how to dispel the darkness in their life, should have first done it in his/ her own life in the midst of all the noise and turbulence, and should feel the urge to share the experiences with fellow humans, not as a learned expert, but as a compassionate human being, a co-traveller.

prejudice – showing partiality

palpable – obvious

despondency – depressive state, without any enthusiasm or joy

pandemic – an illness that affects people from across the globe

pedestal – stage or platform

sermons – lectures

turmoil – struggles

intimidating – threatening or scaring

turbulence – confusion