

## Who's Better?

*By Swami Suryadevananda*

Two people were strolling along the bank of a river, having just attended a spiritual discourse, and discussed what they had learnt. It was already a hot day and their discussion added to the temperature as it grew into a heated debate.

Since both were the scholarly type, they knew it would not be possible to come to any conclusion debating. Gone was learning and debate, the matter now was competition. One suggested they try to jump across the river which was about 10 feet wide to see who could jump farthest. This was a wonderful idea, as it was a hot day made hotter by arguing.



They appointed a passing villager the judge and both agreed to accept his verdict. The first person jumped with a loud yell but fell into the river at about the 6 foot mark. The second took a long running start and he too fell into the water just a little further at 6.5 feet. He instantly raised his hands in victory, forgetting that a judge was appointed by both of them.

The first person asked the simple villager for his verdict at the protest of the second who had already claimed victory. The simple villager was shaking his head at their hopelessness and said that they both lost sorely. He said it did not matter if one jumped 6 inches ahead of the other, as both fell into the water and were equally wet. What difference did six inches make if the outcome was the same?

The two scholars were a little dazed at the stern lesson taught to them by a simple villager, who, seeing their hopelessness, silently walked away.

*Thoughts:* It makes no difference where one is in learning, spiritual practice, affluence or status. As long as it does not make one a better person who can think, feel, communicate and act in light of the existing unity - it is all futile. If one is a true seeker, all the learning or affluence will never be an issue at all, as he learns to discover his oneness with all – and comes to realize that the game of one-up-man-ship is movement in the opposite directions. Empty vessels make the most noise.

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