

Divine Life in Poem

Swami Suryadevananda

Listen

The adventure of life
Is a journey of perfection
Not by gathering or rejecting
But in letting go amidst it all

The sculptor chisels away
What does not belong
To reveal the heart's view
For the eyes of one and all

With hammer and chisel
Working away at excess
Revealing with every stroke
The beauty held within

Each stroke masterfully hit
At the spot of excess
With the right amount of energy
To reveal what excess hides

Tools change to finer
As the lines blur between
That which needs removal
And what waits to be revealed

The stakes are gradually raised
With the rough work complete
More than what is required
Can ruin everything done

Complacency or carelessness
Carry a steep price tag
As every stroke is a precise answer
To the stones' dark cold stare

The stone's silent guidance
Is heard by the heart's ears
Telling what must happen next
Till the work is done

The stone carves itself
Through the eyes and hands
Of the willing sculptor
Taking no credit at all

A wonder of all wonders
Is the straight and narrow path
The journey of the soul
Must be by the soul itself

Whole being must be attentive
To the inner silent guidance
That which is bound alone knows
What must be done for freedom

Listen to the silent song
Of the soul's instructions
Cooperate with willingness
Victory will soon be thine

Such is real humility
And majesty of the soul
Silent witness and true friend
Ever eager to take you home

The Task on Hand

Neither long nor too difficult
The path ahead to be traversed
If you have the key of sincerity
In its ring of single-pointedness

Each step is the only step
As each unfolds perfection
Gaze not at the distant horizon
But instead at every opportunity

Each moment must you decide
If to do or not to do is wise
And if to do, the best way
As the journey is transformation

Each moment requires response
But fresh, without the past's voice
Each moment will truly be a present
To be unwrapped later as bright future

Do what needs to be done
To the very best of your ability
Without motive or personal thought
Such doing will loosen the ego

Seek the company of virtue
Be content with inner goodness
These are real wealth, best friends
Light on the path and protection

Swami Sivananda has extolled
Highest teachings in simple terms
Timeless and invaluable to all
Follow these and you will succeed

Serve

To loosen thought of 'I' first
You must serve selflessly
Seeing others as your very self
'I' first will loosen in importance

Be thankful for opportunity to serve
It is a way out of self-importance
Never doubt the efficacy of service
As purifier of the dross of selfishness

Serve all, the sick and the poor
Serve with love, full of feeling
Feel that you are serving God
God in all and God as all

Serve with all your being
Take joy in selfless service
Motive is the ambassador of ego
Service weakens ego's immunity

When you get joy in doing
For others what would give you joy
You see yourself in others
And others in your own self

The gulf of separation diminishes
And takes the problems with it too
As the Upanishad says—fear
Is caused by the idea of otherness

There can never be any anguish
Or fear in dealing with one's self
So treat others as your own self
And rest peaceful and be happy

Such is the glory of selfless service
Doing what needs to be done
Without agency or expectation
Without confusion and turmoil

Service is training the mind
To function without confusion
By taking delight in service
To others as the self alone

In a field without boundaries
One can tend to the soil anyplace
Without the earlier restriction
Work there is work here too

Love

There are many kinds of love
The love of one and another
As family, friends or relationships
Colleagues or those acquainted with

If there is truly what is called love
How come disappointments happen
Expectations always precede hurt
True love gives and does not expect

Service levels the field of life
Making it much easier to love
By dimming the idea of otherness
And the feeling of separation with all

Service is the key to cosmic love
All-embracing love—unconditional
Stemming from an expanded heart
That sees all verily as its very self

The fragrance of a rose is not action
It is an expression of the rose itself
Love too is not something we do
But an expression of oneness with all

In loving there is always another
With a fine line in between
But being love does not require
Or depend on otherness at all

Do unto others as you would
Have done to your own self
Is the wisest of wisdom teachings
And the secret of unfolding love

Give

There are different kinds of giving
Differing with people and occasions
Some planned, others spontaneous
Different ways there are to give

Giving is not always true giving
Hands give but not the heart
Sometimes the mind holds on
With hopes and expectations

In quite another way too
When the best is given to all
Free of hopes and expectations
Giving becomes getting

What is given is littleness
Of being tied to personality
Through the act of giving
And received is inner expansion

Give, give, give in plenty to all
Share what you have with others
With everyone—not just those you know
So divisions are given away too

Use giving to eradicate selfishness
Give till greed too is given away
Give till egoism and pride
Find no room within to reside

Return kindness for insult, injury
Receive forbearance in exchange
Give tolerance and forgiveness
And receive a heart of gold

In giving is really getting
If giving is free and pure
Give that which is the best
And feel better still within

Purify

The greatest protection is purity
If comprehensive, without exception
In thought, feeling, word and deed
In all aspects of being and existence

Purity means clean; free from dirt or filth
Dirt and filth are things out of place
Embarking on the journey of perfection
Virtues are the seeds of inner cleanliness

Purity has many dimensions
Physical, mental and of the heart
In each of these kindly do make sure
All is clean, ready for any inspection

Treat every day as if it were the last
Put the inner and outer in good order
As if a stranger would come inspect
At any time, without announcement

Dismantle the rear-view mirror
Of life's car if journeying to perfection
As purity guides your every move
What need is there for rear glances

If you embrace purity completely
You unsubscribe from stress's magazine
As for any situation you are faced with
There is but one pure response

This purity is the perfect response
Not perfect to personal aims or purpose
But perfect to the all and everything
As the universe's representative

Purity is also refinement
The melting away of all impurity
Life is the cauldron for this boil
Situations the fire for cooking

To be pure is to be free
Of all imperfections and flaws
Within must reside virtue abundant
Without is a stage for demonstrations

Still there is another meaning
Pure is free from foreign material
To the soul's journey of perfection
Foreign means likes and dislikes too

Purify your heart every moment
Is the way to transform your nature
Pure actions rising from pure nature
Will reap a golden harvest of destiny

Eradicate evil qualities that lurk
In the dark corners of the mind
By examining always ruthlessly
Hidden motives for the mind's prompting

Be an inspector of your own mind
Totally impartial, quick to correct
Never side with the mind in leniency
Uphold the law of cosmic unity

Cultivate in the field of the mind
Divine virtues as truthfulness, love
Purity, humility, nobility too
And a good measure of magnanimity

Eradicate vices in the same way
Lust, anger, greed and pride
Egoism too must be all removed
While planting seeds of divine virtues

Each day is replete with opportunity
To till the field of the mind
As you sow, so you shall reap
Is a timeless teaching for humanity

Meditate

Learn to be eternally vigilant
Looking always fresh at everything
Outside and also habits of the mind
As you decide the perfect response

Purity in action is the perfect response
Doing what is best every moment
Without interference of the past
Or future's selfish anticipation

Make life a continual meditation
Do what needs to be done, letting go
Embrace continually the present
Walk life's shore without footprints

To meditate also means to consider
To ponder deeply in clarity
Consider everything well in life
Act in light of the lamp of purity

By correct action lighten the load
The mind carries in its heavy pack
These are distractions in meditation
Sacred communion with the Lord

Live expertly every moment of time
So actions reshape understanding
Let only good be your expression
Good will be your only experience

Let goodness within steer the boat
It will take you across any stormy sea
Waves may rise high in all tempests
Calm waters and shore will soon arrive

Living wisely thus calms the mind
As thought is not needed at the helm
The chatter of thought will quieten
Awaiting command for use at will

Then seated in holy meditation
You will not be at war within
The mind will take to meditation
Finding a new sense of usefulness

With mind concentrated and cooperative
Dive deep within in inquiry
'Who am I?' begins the search
Answered by direct realization

Thought parks itself like a car
When not in use in meditation
Awareness like a submersible
Turns upon itself in meditation

Never expect or anticipate
For any outcome from meditation
Seek to realize union with God
Love for practice will be fuel

Thus meditating you will gain insight
Gradually, all in its own time
Coming to realize the unity of all
You'll know how to live in this light

Living expertly lightens the mind
Lightened mind meditates naturally
Both feed on each other in reaction
The fire will lead to realization

Meditate in the early morning hours
Sleep has refreshed you for the task
To waste the best part of the day
Is to throw the fruit and eat the peel

Meditate at night before going to sleep
Introspect and analyze your day
Give credit to God for all good done
Seek help to improve other areas

Realize

To realize is to make real
What now is a concept of unity
To discover, to know without doubt
By direct realization of the truth

The earlier steps take most effort
Be not in a hurry, persevere steadily
The base of the mountain is always wide
The summit steeper but needs fewer steps

Live a life of wise inner discipline
It is the key to gates of will-power
Be regular and moderate in habit
Remembering the goal of perfection

Shortcuts always fall very short
And cut sharply in every place
Anticipation stirs the mind activity
Making meditation a difficulty

The path does not have clear steps
Life's carpet unrolls as you tread
Concern with perfection at every step
The destination will take care of itself

Hear now about four golden words
That are enough instruction for life
Containing the essence of all teachings
Golden precepts of Swami Sivananda

Be Good, Do Good

Be good, do good is a formula
Enough for Self-realization
All teachings of saints and prophets
Are contained in these four words

Be kind to all and you will get
Kindness in exchange as a gift
Small price for such a precious gift
Goodness is its very own reward

Speak soft, loving and sweet words
Of consolation and not of censure
Never utter harsh or angry words
As they invite anger to reside within

Be compassionate and considerate
And you will gain these as virtues
Selfless service is the key to compassion
But it has to be cultivated actively

By being good, you only do good
The same is always true in reverse
You can do good as a show
But be quite different in truth

We now arrive at the single word
Of greatest importance on the path
Sincerity, sincerity, sincerity
Honesty in intention without pretense

Ponder dear friend on sincerity
This is the light on the path
This is the guide, best friend
It is the very best protection

Serve - Love - Give - Purify - Meditate - Realize - Be Good - Do Good

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