

# Divine Life in Poem

Swami Suryadevananda

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## 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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