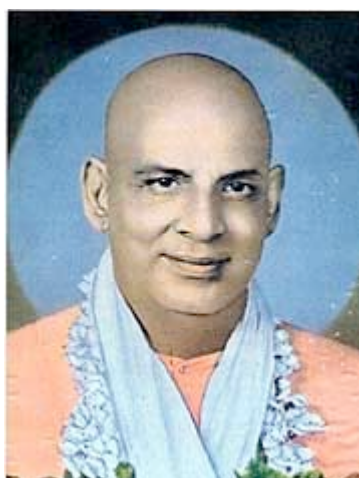


INSPIRING THOUGHTS



Sri Swami Sivananda
Founder of
The Divine Life Society



SERVE, LOVE, GIVE,
PURIFY, MEDITATE,
REALIZE
So Says
Sri Swami Sivananda

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Some of these pieces included seem to be Anonymous and the authors of some others are not known. Some are from the famous and greatly beloved and admired national poetess of America Helen Steiner Rice. Some others may be from Amada Bradley. The poem “IF” is from Rudyard Kipling, the British author.

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YOU ARE UNIQUE IN THE EYES OF GOD

Blessed Atman! The key to blessedness lies in being aware of blessedness. If your awareness is turned in different directions, towards what you do not have, or what you think or imagine you do not have, then this wrongly directed pattern of thought will make you unaware of the many things that you have.

Each one is distinct and unique in the eyes of the Creator; there is none like that particular being, there is no second. So each one is precious and specially valuable to the Creator. In the eyes of God, therefore, each one is something special. This should always be remembered. No one can replace you in the role that you fulfil in God's creation at any given place and at any given point in time. You are most necessary and indispensable for that particular set-up, in that particular time-space context. And therefore rejoice and be grateful to the Lord that He has given you a role to perform.

Whether you perform your role perfectly and in a meaningful manner or not is irrelevant, because God expects each one to do what One is capable of, at any point, at any time. God does not expect an ant to haul a great timber as the elephant does in the forest. Nor does God expect the elephant to fly gracefully in the air as do swallows and doves. He expects birds to fly and He loves them for what they do. He expects elephants to fulfil their role, giving dignity to the forest and doing incredible jobs of strength. And He expects man to live as man. And each one in his own place, in his own sphere, can fulfil a task and gladden the heart of the Maker and contribute something to His plan on earth.

And this is the truth. And to be aware of the truth is to be worry-free, anxiety-free. To be aware of the truth is to be grateful to God: "You have made me unique, You have given me a role, and You have prompted me and brought to me all helpful factors to fulfil my role and play my part. For that I ever give thanks"

No one is dispensable. No one is useless. No one is lesser in the eyes of God or in the eyes of those who try to avoid human judgement and human standards of criticism, who accept God's creation as it is, because God created it. For them, whatever God thought fit to make, in any manner whatsoever, is perfect; there is nothing wrong in it, and it is acceptable. For them, whatever emanates from God partakes of His divinity and perfection, and therefore in God's own plan, and in God's own way, is fully complete.

In this way, if we accept this truth that to God we are unique, and so we are to all those who are trying to look with the impartiality of God's vision, then in the presence of God and of those who are devotees of God, we must feel at home, we have arrived; we may no longer feel distressed in heart. One should rejoice in serene calmness of spirit: "I have arrived, I am at home, I am in the presence of God and I am totally accepted."

Things are as they should be. The Lord is in heaven and all is well on earth. This is the faith, the firm belief of those who have faith in the infinite love of God, who have trust in the infinite goodness of God and who are sure that in God's heart they have a special and unique place. This is

ever kept reserved for them and no one can take it away from them, because God's infinite heart is large enough to hold the entire cosmos and everything within it.

Thus knowing, we should have great comfort in our heart, great satisfaction and contentment. And that is the secret of inner joy, the key to blessedness and the pathway to peace, serenity and inner calm, where there is no fretting, agitation or restlessness.

The peace of God pervades the entire earth; the peace of God pervades everywhere, without and within. The peace of God is the one great truth underlying all things, ever-present, ever-accessible and available, ever-full and inexhaustible.

Try to live in the light of this truth, and the heart and mind will be at ease. Never compare and contrast, because there is no comparing and contrasting amongst unique things. Every little fledgling hatched from an egg is unique to its parents; so is each being unique in itself, for God is the parent of all. Hence, sages and saints and men of wisdom look upon all with equal vision.

Therefore, rejoice that you are special to God in His infinite love. Rejoice that you have your own special place and role to perform in this creation of God. And rejoice that His love is immediately available to you, for He is not a remote reality, but He is the indwelling Reality, nearer to you than anything else on earth. And rejoice that within you is the peace of God as your own Self. You are God's peace and you have a duty to perform, that is, to spread this peace which you are to one and all. Live to spread this peace!

—Swami Chidananda

KEY TO BLISS

1. Serve. Love. Give. Meditate. Realise.
2. Be Good. Do Good.
3. Enquire 'Who am I?' Know the Self and be free.
4. Detach. Attach. D.I.N. (Do It Now)
5. Adapt, Adjust and Accommodate.
6. Bear insult. Bear injury. Highest Sadhana.
7. Simplify. Purify. Intensify.
8. Seek, Find, Enter and Rest.
9. Devote, Dedicate and Dissolve.
10. Examine, Analyse and Know.
11. Enquire, Discover and Recover.
12. Cooperate, Collaborate and Coordinate.
13. Devotion, Dedication and Discipline.
14. Discrimination, Dispassion and Determination.
15. Aspiration, Renunciation and Meditation.
16. Service, Sacrifice and Sublimation.
17. Solitude, Seclusion and Silence.
18. Purification. Concentration. Reflection. Meditation.

- 19. Illumination, Identification, Absorption and Salvation.
- 20. Energise. Galvanise. Vitalise.
- 21. Excel in service. Expand in love. Advance in knowledge.
- 22. Pray. Aspire. Inspire.

Select, O aspirants, any one of these keys, open the chambers of thy heart and enter the abode of Bliss and rest peacefully for ever. May Lord bless you.

THE SERENITY PRAYER

God grant me
the serenity
to accept the things
I cannot change
courage to change
the things I can,
and the wisdom
to know the difference.

—Reinhold Niebuhr

DESIDERATA

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore, be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be and whatever your labours and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy.

(Found in Old Saint Paul's Church, Baltimore; Dated 1692)

**“Happiness is not having
what you want, but wanting
what you have.”**

ANYWAY

People are unreasonable, illogical and self-centred. Love them anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives. Do good anyway.

If you are successful, you win false friends and true enemies. Succeed anyway.

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable. Be honest and frank anyway.

People favour underdogs but follow only top dogs. Fight for some underdogs anyway.

What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway.

People really need help but may attack you if you help them. Help people anyway.

Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth.

Give the world the best you've got anyway.

DON'T QUIT

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low, and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have'to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit-
Rest, if you must, but don't quit.
Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As everyone of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up though the pace seems slow —
You may succeed with another blow.
Success is failure turned inside out —
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far;
So, stick to the fight when you're hardest hit —
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit.

OTHERS

Lord, help me live from day to day
In such a self-forgetful way,
That even when I kneel to pray,
My prayer shall be for "Others".

Help me in all the work I do
To ever be sincere and true,
And know, that all I do for You
Must needs be done for "Others".

And when my work on earth is done,
And my new work in Heavens begun
May I forget the crown I've won,
While thinking still of "Others".

"Others." Lord, yes, "Others!"
Let this my motto be.
Help me to live for others
That I may live for Thee.

FOOTPRINTS

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand: one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times of his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it. “Lord, You said that once I decided to follow You, You’d walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don’t understand why when I needed You most You would leave me.”

The Lord replied, “My son, My precious child, I love you and would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.”

WHY GOD MADE FRIENDS

God made the world with a heartful of love,
Then He looked down from Heaven above,
And saw that we all need a helping hand,
Someone to share with, who’ll understand.

He made special people to see us through
The glad times and the sad times, too;
A person on whom we can always depend,
Someone we can call a friend.

God made friends so we’ll carry a part
Of His perfect love in all our hearts

—*Jill Wolf*

**Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as you can.**

—*John Wesley*

I SAID A PRAYER FOR *YOU* TODAY

I said a prayer for you today
And know God must have heard;
I felt the answer in my heart
Although He spoke not a word.

I didn't ask for wealth or fame
(I knew you wouldn't mind);
I asked for priceless treasures rare
Of a more lasting kind.

I prayed that He'd be near to you
At the start of each new day,
To grant you health and blessings fair,
And friends to share your way.

I asked for happiness for you
In all things great and small,
But that you'd know His loving care
I prayed the most of all.

JUST FOR TODAY, LORD

I will live through the next 12 hours and not try to tackle all of life's problems at once. I will improve my mind.

I will learn something useful. I will learn something that requires effort, thought, and concentration.

I will be agreeable. I will look my best, speak in a well-modulated voice, be courteous and considerate. I will not find fault with friend, relative, or colleague. I will not try to change or improve anyone but myself.

I will have a programme. I might not follow it exactly, but I will have it. I will save myself from two enemies—hurry and indecision.

I will do a good turn and keep it a secret. If anyone finds out, it won't count. I will do two things I don't want to do, just for the exercise.

I will believe in myself. I will give my best to the world and feel confident that the world will give its best to me.

IF

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too,
If you can wait and not be tired of waiting,
Or being lied about don't deal in lies;
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
Yet don't look too good nor talk too wise;

If you can dream and not make dreams your master.
If you can think and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster,
And treat those two imposters just the same,
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken,
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,
And stoop and build'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings,
And risk it on one turn of pitch and toss,
And lose and start again at your beginnings,
And never breathe a word about your loss,
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew,
To serve your turn long after they have gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you,
Except the will which says to them, "Hold on";

If you can mix with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or, walk with kings, nor lose the common touch;
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With 60 seconds' worth of distance run,
Then yours is the world and everything that's in it,
And what's more—you'll be a Man, My son!

—*Rudyard Kipling*

In the lamp of heart;
Put the oil of dispassion,
Insert the wick of devotion,
And kindle the light of knowledge,
By constant meditation;
The darkness of ignorance will be
Dispelled and you will be fully illumined.
—Swami Sivananda

THE PEACE PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE

Adorable Presence !

Thou Who art within and without, above and below and all around, Thou Who art interpenetrating the very cells of our beings, Thou Who art the Eye of our eyes, the Ear of our ears, the Heart of our hearts, the Mind of our minds, the Breath of our breaths, the Life of our lives and the Soul of our souls, Bless us, Dear God, to be aware of Thy Presence, now and here. This is all that we ask of Thee.

May all of us be aware of Thy Presence in the East and the West, in the North and the South! May Peace and Goodwill abide among individuals as well as communities and nations! This is our earnest Prayer.

—Swami Omkar

THE DIFFERENCE

I got up early one morning
And rushed right into the day;
I had so much to accomplish
That I didn't have time to pray.
Problems just tumbled about me,
And heavier came each task;
"Why doesn't God help me?"
I wondered.
He answered, "You didn't ask."
I wanted to see joy and beauty,
But the day toiled on gray and bleak;
I wondered why God didn't show me.
He said, "But you didn't seek."
I tried to come into God's presence;
I used all my keys in the lock.

God gently and lovingly chided,
“My child, you didn’t knock.”
I woke up early this morning,
And paused before entering the day;
I had so much to accomplish
That I had to take time to pray.

A WINNER’S CREED

If you think you are beaten, you are;
If you think you dare not, you don’t,
If you’d like to win, but think you can’t,
It’s almost a cinch you won’t.
If you think you’ll lose, you’re lost,
For out in the world we find
Success begins with a person’s faith;
It’s all in the state of mind.
Life’s battles don’t always go
To the stronger or faster hand;
They go to the one who trusts in God
And always thinks “I can.”

If wealth is lost, nothing is lost; If health is lost, something is lost; If character is lost, everything is lost.

LIFE’S LESSONS

After a while you learn the difference between holding a hand and chaining a soul.

You learn that love isn’t leaning but lending support.

You begin to accept your defeats with the grace of an adult, not the grief of a child.

You decide to build your roads on today, for tomorrow’s ground is too uncertain.

You help someone plant a garden instead of waiting for someone to bring you flowers.

You learn that God has given you the strength to endure and that you really do have worth.

Let us learn
To walk together,
Talk together,
Work together,
Love together,
And live together.

WHAT THEY LIVE

If a child lives with criticism,
 He learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility,
 He learns to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule,
 He learns to be shy.
If a child lives with shame,
 He learns to feel guilty.
If a child lives with tolerance,
 He learns to be patient.
If a child lives with encouragement,
 He learns confidence.
If a child lives with praise,
 He learns to appreciate.
If a child lives with fairness,
 He learns justice.
If a child lives with security,
 He learns to have faith.
If a child lives with approval,
 He learns to like himself.
If a child lives with acceptance
 and friendship, he learns
 to find love in the world.

IF I CAN

If I can throw a single ray of light,
Across the darkened pathway of another;
If I can aid some soul to clearer sight
Of light and duty and thus bless my brother;
If I can wipe from any human cheek a tear
I shall not have, then, lived in vain while here.

If I can guide some erring to truth
Inspire within his heart a sense of duty;
If I can plant within the soul of a rosy plant
A sense of light, a love of truth and beauty;
If I can teach one man that God and Heaven are near;
I shall not have, then, lived in vain while here.
If from my mind I can banish doubt and fear
And keep my life attuned to truth, love and kindness;
If I can scatter light and hope and cheer
And help and remove the curse of mental blindness;
If I can make joy more, more hope, less pain
I shall not have, lived in vain while here.
If by life's road side I can plant a tree
Beneath whose shade some wearied head may rest
Though I may never share its shade or see
Its beauty I shall yet be truly blessed
Though no one knows my name.

PSALM OF LIFE

*Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.*

*Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.*

*Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each tomorrow
Find us farther than today.*

*Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.*

*In the world's broad field battle,
In the bivouac of life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!*

*Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act—act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead.*

*Lives of great men all reminds us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;*

*Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A furlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.*

*Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.*
—Longfellow

PRAYER

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, let me sow pardon;
Where there is doubt, let me sow faith;
Where there is despair, let me sow hope;
Where there is discord, let me sow unity;
Where there is darkness, let me sow light and
Where there is sadness, let me sow joy.

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not seek so much
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying to the little self
That we are born to eternal life.
—*St. Francis of Assisi*

STRENGTH

This is my prayer to thee, my Lord—
strike, strike at the root of penury in my heart.

Give me the strength lightly to bear my joys and sorrows.

Give me the strength to make my love fruitful in service.

Give me the strength never to disown the poor or bend my knees before insolent might.

Give me the strength to raise my mind high above daily trifles.

And give me the strength to surrender my strength to Thy will with love.

—*Tagore*

For all that God, in mercy, sends;
For health and children, home and friends:
For comfort in the time of need
For every kindly word and deed
For happy thoughts and holy talk,
For Guidance in our daily walk—
For everything GIVE THANKS!

DIVINE LIFE

To practise non-violence, truth and Purity is DIVINE LIFE.

To be kind, generous, humble, tolerant is DIVINE LIFE.

To practise virtues and be righteous is DIVINE LIFE.

To serve the poor in selfless, dedicated ways is DIVINE LIFE.

To serve the sick with all-is-God attitude is DIVINE LIFE.

To be merciful, courageous and devotion is DIVINE LIFE.

To sing the Name of God and pray is DIVINE LIFE.

To do Japa and meditation is DIVINE LIFE.

To be an instrument in the hands of God is DIVINE LIFE.

To act rightly and live in God is DIVINE LIFE.

To do unconditional self-surrender to God is DIVINE LIFE.

To restrain the senses and to have God-communion is DIVINE LIFE.

To be one with the Divine Will is DIVINE LIFE.

To be a silent witness of the three states (waking, dreaming and deep sleep) is DIVINE LIFE.

—*Swami Sivananda*

Yes, Prayer has tremendous influence. It can work anything provided you are sincere. It is at once heard and responded to. Do it in the daily struggle of life and realise for yourself its high efficacy. Pray in any way you like. Become as simple as a Child. Have no cunningness or crookedness. Then you will get everything.

—Swami Chidananda

NEW DAY

This is the beginning of a New Day. God has given me this day to use as I will. I can waste it or grow in its light and be of service to others. But what I do with this day is important because I have exchanged a day of my life for it. When tomorrow comes, today will be gone forever. I hope I will not regret the price I paid for it.

JUST FOR A DAY

Oh Lord, if only for a day,
I can be really good,
Be always ready to obey
And do the things I should
Just for a day Oh Lord,
If only for a day
I can take trials or fun or anything that come, and say
Not mine will but Thine be done
Just for a day Oh Lord,
If only for a day
I can do this. Oh then,
When each new morning
Comes, I'll pray
For grace to persevere again
Just for a day.

LIFE

Edgar A. Guest

Life is a gift to be used every day.
Not to be smothered and hidden away,
It isn't a thing to be stored in the chest
Where you gather your keepsakes and treasure your best;
It isn't a joy to be sipped now and then
And promptly put back in a dark place again.
Life is a Gift that the humblest may boast of
And one that the humblest may well make the most of.
Get out and live it each hour of the day
Wear it and use it as much as you may
Don't keep it in niches and corners and grooves,
You'll find that in service 'its beauty improve.

TRUE UNDERSTANDING

Ara John Moresecian

True understanding must prevail
So that our love must never fail.
Thus we should settle our fight
Before we go to sleep at night.
And selfish feelings must be fought.
Or else they'll dictate every thought.
And always we should both discuss
All problems which are serious.
And if our thoughts don't harmonise
We both should try to compromise.
Thus if we don't mean what we say,
Some day our passion will decay.
Thus honesty must be the rule.
Or else our bond will surely cool.

THERE IS SUNSHINE IN A SMILE

Helen Steiner Rice

Life is a mixture of sunshine and rain,
Laughter and pleasure, teardrops and pain,
All days can't be bright, but it's certainly true,
There was never
a cloud the sun didn't shine through—
So just keep on smiling whatever betide you,
Secure in the knowledge God is always beside you,

And you'll find when you smile
your day will be brighter
And all of your burdens will seem so much lighter—
For each time you smile you will find it true
Somebody, Somewhere will Smile Back At You,
And nothing on earth can make life more worthwhile
Than the sunshine and warmth of a Beautiful Smile.

BE A HERO

Swami Sivananda

Be a hero in the battle of life.
March on boldly.
Do not look back.
Be a hero in the strife.
Act, strive, plod, move on.
Be up and doing.
Pursue, persist, persevere.
Aspire, achieve and attain.
Be not afraid of little setbacks.
Stand up again and roar.
Be alert and vigilant.
Climb the peak, or pinnacle.
Act well the part, Beloved Ram!
In the drama of this world.
Earn abundant money.
And spend it in charity.
Neglect not your duties.
Give up your life in a noble cause.
Learn to sacrifice and love.
Wear the laurels of peace.
Yours is Lord's abode.
And everything that is in it.
And what is more.
You will also become the Lord,
My beloved child!

TAKE CARE OF LITTLE THINGS

Swami Sivananda

Little drops of water
Make the mighty ocean.
Little grains of sand
Make this beautiful land.

Little moments
Make the mighty ages.
Little pies and farthings
Make millions and crores.

Little mistakes
Little unkind acts
Will make you a devil.

Little words of love,
Little acts of kindness,
Little good thoughts
Will make you a saint.

MORALS AND IDEALS

Helen Steiner Rice

In this world of casual carelessness its discouraging to try to keep our morals and standards and our ideals high we are ridiculed and laughed at by the smart sophisticate who proclaims in brittle banter that such things are out of date but no life is worth the living unless its built on truth and we lay our life's foundation made of faith and love and praying and remember that ideals are like stars up in the sky you can never really reach them hanging in the heavens high but like the mighty mariner who sailed the storm-tossed sea and used the stars to chart his course with skill and certainty you too can chart your course of life with high ideals and love for high ideals are like the stars that light the sky above you cannot ever reach them but lift your heart up high and your life will be as shinning as the stars in the sky.

AT DAY'S END

John Hall

“Is anybody happier because you passed his way?

The day is almost over and its toiling is through;

Is there anyone to utter now a kindly word to you?

Does anyone remember that you spoke to him today?

Can you say tonight, in parting with the day that's slipping fast,

That you helped a single brother of the many that you passed?

Did you waste the day, or lose it?

Was it well or sorely spent?

Is a single heart rejoicing over what you did or said?

Does the man whose hopes were fading now with courage look ahead?

Did you leave a trail of kindness, or a scar of discontent?

As you close your eyes in slumber, do you think that God will say, you have earned one more tomorrow by the work you did today?”

TRUE NOBILITY

Edgar A. Guest

Who does his task from day to day
And meets whatever comes his way,
Believing God has willed it so,
Has found real greatness here below.
Who guards his post, no matter where,
Believing God must need him there,
Although but lowly toil it be,
Has risen to nobility.
For great and low there's but one test
'Tis that each man shall do his best.
Who works with all the strength he can
Shall never die in debt to man.

THE OYSTER

There once was an Oyster whose story I tell,
Who found that some sand was inside his shell
Just one little grain, but it gave him great pain!
For oysters have feelings, though they all seem so plain.
Now did he berate the workings of fate.
Which had led him to such a deplorable state?
Did he curse out the government—call for an election,
And cry that the sea “should have given protection?”
No! He said to himself as he lay on the shelf,
“Since I cannot remove it, I’ll try to improve it.”
The years rolled along, as the years always do,
And he came to his ultimate destiny—stew!
And the small grain of sand that had bothered him so,
Was a beautiful pearl, all richly aglow!
The tale has a moral, for isn’t it grand.
What an oyster can do with a morsel of sand?
What couldn’t I do if I’d only begin,
With all those things that “get under my skin!”

ON THIS DAY

Mend a quarrel. Search out a forgotten friend. Dismiss suspicion, and replace it with trust. Write a love letter. Share some treasure. Give a soft answer. Encourage youth. Manifest your loyalty in a word or deed.

Keep a promise. Find the time. Forego a grudge. Forgive an enemy. Listen. Apologise if you were wrong. Examine your demand on others. Think first of someone else. Appreciate, be kind, be gentle. Laugh a little more.

Deserve confidence. Take up arms against malice. Decry complacency. Express your gratitude. Worship your God. Gladden the heart of a child. Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth. Speak your love. Speak it again. Speak it still again. Speak it still once again.

A SOLDIER'S PRAYER

The following verse was written on the back of a cigarette box by an American soldier killed on the field of battle in World War II, and found by a stretcher-bearer. They are as follows:

“Look God I have never spoken to you,
But now I want to say “How do you do?”
You see God, they told me You didn’t exist,
And like a fool, I believed all this.
Last night from a shell-hole I saw Your sky,
I figured right then they told me a lie.
Had I taken the time to see things You made,
I’d have known they weren’t calling a spade a spade.
I wonder God if You’d shake my hand.
Somehow I feel You would understand.
Funny I had to come to this hellish place,
Before I had time to see Your face.
Well I guess there isn’t very much more to say,
But I’m glad, God I met You today.
I guess the ‘Zero Hour’ will soon be here.
But I’m not afraid since I know You are near.
The signal: Well, God, I’ll have to go;
I like You a lots; and I want You to know.
Look, now, this will be a horrible fight;
Who knows? I may come to your home tonight;
Though I wasn’t friendly to You before,
I wonder, God if You’ll wait at Your door.
I wish I had known You all these years.
Well, I have to go now, God; Goodbye;
Strange—since I met You,
I’m not afraid to die

THE MAN IN THE GLASS

When you get what you want in your struggle for self
And the world makes you king for a day,
Just go to a mirror and look at yourself
And see what THAT man has to say.
For it isn’t your father or mother or wife
Whose judgement upon you must pass;
The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life
Is the one staring back from the glass.
Some people may think you a straight-shootin’ chum
And call you a wonderful guy,
But the man in the glass says you’re only a bum

If you can't look him straight in the eye.
He's the fellow to please, never mind all the rest,
For he's with you clear up to the end.
And you've passed your most dangerous difficult test
If the man in the glass is your friend.
You may fool the whole world down the path-way of life
And get pats on your back as you pass,
But your final reward will be heartaches and tears
If you've cheated the man in the glass.

THE GOAL OF LIFE

O man! The Goal of life is God-realisation. God-realisation grants Supreme Joy, Peace and Fearlessness. Most precious is human birth. Utilise this birth to attain God. Life is short. Time is fleeting. Waste not time. Engage in noble deeds. Be up and doing upon the path of Divine Life.

Serve, Love, Give, Purify, Meditate, Realise. Be good; do good. Be kind; be compassionate. Practise non-injury, truth and purity. This is the foundation of Yoga and Vedanta. Adapt, adjust, accommodate. Bear insult; bear injury. Serve all. Love all. Embrace all in the Oneness of the Spirit. This is Divine Life.

Enquire 'Who am I?' Know thy Self and be free. Thou art not this body, not this mind. Thou art Immortal Self. Thou art unborn, eternal, changeless, indestructible, ever-pure, all-perfect Spirit or Atman. Realise this and be free. This is your foremost duty. Do this through selflessness and service, devotion and worship, purification, concentration and meditation. Attain God-realisation. Do it now. Abide in Bliss, Peace and Perfection for ever.

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love!
Salutations and prostrations unto Thee.
Thou art Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient.
Thou art Satchidananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss-Absolute).
Thou art the Indweller of all beings.

Grant us an understanding heart,
Equal vision, balanced mind,
Faith, devotion and wisdom.
Grant us inner spiritual strength
To resist temptations and to control the mind.
Free us from egoism, lust; greed, hatred, anger and jealousy.
Fill our hearts with divine virtues.

Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us ever remember Thee.
Let us ever sing Thy glories.
Let Thy name be ever on our lips.
Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.

—*Swami Sivananda*