

# *Victory in Life*



*by Swami Jyotirmayananda*

***T***he tenth day of Navaratri Puja is considered throughout all of India to be the greatest of the sacred days. It is known as Vijaya-dashami, the victorious tenth, and it celebrates the final victory of the Divine Goddess over the demons.

**T**HE SUBTLE MYSTIC implication behind the stories of the Goddess is that the Divine Power is intrinsic in everyone. It is represented by the Devi in Her numerous manifestations. The demoniac power is extrinsic—born of ignorance. It is represented by the demons.

The task before an aspirant is to awaken the Divine Power within by adoring the Devi. Then with Her Grace and persistent self-effort, to destroy the varied expressions of demoniac power and attain Self-realization.

When that goal is attained, an aspirant has attained victory. Until then, one is constantly fighting from life to life—fighting to have peace, fighting to have joy that is enduring and eternal. From life to life, everyone continues to fight, and this battle culminates only in the great victory of Self-realization.

You can refer to that victorious attainment in different ways: it is *Nirvana* of the Buddhists, *Moksha*, Liberation or Self-realization to the Vedantins, communion with God or the attainment of the Kingdom of Heaven to the Christians. But no matter which name is given to it, the goal is the same. You can call water “*agua*” in Spanish or “*jal*” in Sanskrit; it makes no difference—both quench thirst in the same way.

Much in the same manner, the goal of spiritual movement is the same, though different scriptures describe it in various ways. That goal is the Eternal Home for every soul.

Reaching that Home is the victory, and life must be lived in order to attain it. In this process, you must first have a clear image of what will happen if you became victorious over all inimical forces. Such a clear image can be found in the lives of Saints And Sages.

Saintliness is the attainment of victory. If you have attained true victory in your life, your mind will become absolutely relaxed. You will see the whole world as an unfolding Divine Plan. You will

not be burdened with problems, worries or tension. Your heart will become like a window opening itself to eternity.

Even when you are placed in the most adverse circumstances, your mind will not stoop to negative feelings. Even though you may be provoked or even hurt by others, your mind will not develop any sense of grudge or harbor negative sentiments, knowing that it is Divinity Who pulls all the strings of the world-process.

If someone screams or uses harsh words, who manipulates his tongue? It is the Divinity within him. This is a subtle mystical truth in the world. If the mind were to be lifted to that state of Enlightenment where ego no longer rules, the mind becomes absolutely relaxed. That is the goal, that is saintliness. You become a Saint here in this very life.

**I**F THAT GOAL is not kept before your mind, you are wandering astray. A person, while traveling to a certain destination, may find some distraction along the way and consequently forget about their original goal. Similarly, the vast majority of people, caught by the illusions of the world, have forgotten the goal of their existence: that attainment of supreme relaxation, supreme peace, freedom from sorrow—a mind that cannot be agitated by anger, hatred, greed or violence.

The very movement towards perfection gives joy and thrill to your life. It brings eagerness in your mind because you know life has a purpose behind it. If you live in a purposeless manner, your life is empty.

**W**HEN YOU understand that your goal is Self-realization, you will begin to develop those qualities that promote Self-realization—peace, contentment, goodness and Cosmic Love. If you are unable to develop them to the fullest extent, it does not

matter; what matters most is the awareness of your defects, your willingness to overcome them, and your sustained effort in that direction.

This is very important to understand. People generally develop a strange image of perfection—expecting it to come overnight. And sometimes people even delude themselves into thinking that they themselves have already become perfect. Having seen that six months have passed and not one angry thought has entered your mind, you begin to think that now you have conquered anger, and so you have become a Saint. That is a great mistake.

A Saint once said, “O God, let me not have a virtue that is going to make me conceited. Let me rather have a vice that makes me humble.” The meaning behind this assertion is not to glorify vice, but to understand the need of humility, self-analysis and sincerity. Even though you may commit many mistakes and take many faltering steps, as long as you know you are faltering and have the aspiration to overcome it, you will eventually succeed. Your aspiration and your effort will lead you to great spiritual advancement. That effort is the light, the effulgence, the luster of your personality, and it leads you to that Divine goal of saintliness.

There is an interesting scriptural story about King Janaka, a great ruler of a vast kingdom. Internally he had developed detachment, and had attained Enlightenment. One day the gods from the heavens wanted to test his Enlightenment, so they set his kingdom on fire while he was seated in his royal court. The messengers came and said, “Fire is blazing throughout the kingdom. The treasure that we amassed with great effort has been totally destroyed. Your royal gardens and all the royal palaces are all on fire!” King Janaka, instead of being agitated, said, “Even if the whole kingdom burns down, the Self in me is the same. I am unaffected.”

This illustrates the goal that one must strive for: to possess a mind that understands that the world is based on a Divine purpose, and therefore does not allow thoughts of grief or restlessness to

enter. This is the goal before every individual. If you attain that goal you have attained victory. Even if you have not attained that goal but are striving towards it, you are gaining victory. Even a tiny step that you take towards a higher goal enables you to make more steps. Success leads to success, gradually. Therefore, great patience is needed.

## Steps to Victory

There are some important points to understand in this movement towards perfection:

**F**IRSTLY, and most importantly, adapt and adjust. You need to understand that the world is a relative plane. Nowhere in the world will you find conditions completely congenial to your expectation. The world will always have some defect.

You may have a wonderful home and a most wonderful garden, but you may not have good neighbors, you may not have *satsanga*. Or, you may have wonderful *satsanga*, but you may not have the gardens or some of the other things you want. There will always be some defect in the world, because Divinity within you does not want you to become absolutely relaxed with the world. If you did feel relaxed in this way, you would not be motivated to strive for perfection.

The world cannot provide absolute perfection, because it is not perfect in itself. You pass through the world as a traveler, and exist in the world in a transitory way. Therefore, it is important that when things are not congenial to the expectations of your mind, you learn to adapt and adjust.

A story is told about the rivers and the ocean. Once the ocean god asked the rivers, “You bring me big trees as you pour yourselves into me during the rains. Why is it that you do not bring me those wonderful canes that grow by your banks?” The rivers said, “These canes are very clever. During the floodwaters they simply bow down, and when the flood is over they straighten themselves up

again. But these huge trees are conceited. They always remain stretched up and straight, and therefore, break faster. That is why my flood force is able to root out the big trees, but unable to touch those canes.”

Similarly, as an aspirant in this world you must adapt and adjust to varying conditions so that when there is adversity you can bend a little without breaking. Then when the adversity is over, you can straighten yourself again, and move forward.

**T**HE NEXT IMPORTANT point in the movement towards perfection is to be able to bear insult and injury. Pride is not an important thing in life. Preserving pride is preserving emptiness. In this world it is not always possible to be understood by others, nor should you seek to be understood. It is better to try to understand others than to try to be understood by them. Learn to bear insult and injury, knowing that deep within everyone is the Divine Self.

If you were to look deep within the hearts of people who act crudely, you would begin to understand that there are many causes that bring about that crudeness in the human personality. You would then have a sense of compassion rather than a sense of revenge. You would have a more internalized vision—“Why am I to judge others when I myself have so many defects?” And with this internalized vision you would develop the art of bearing insult and injury with patience.

**T**HE NEXT POINT is *satsanga*, good association. *Satsanga* implies constantly placing yourself in an atmosphere where you are reminded of your goal, your ideal. As you fill your mind with Divine thoughts, you will begin to harmonize your life. Harmonization should be done systematically. That is, every day of your life practice a little meditation, a little study of the scriptures (any scripture that you like), a little prayer or repetition of mantra. Also your energies have to be utilized towards selfless service. Your actions should not be confined only to the

projects of your ego, but rather there must be a broader perspective in life. Ask yourself, “Am I of use to humanity? In what manner can I help people selflessly?”

Learn to grow beyond the illusory boundaries of family, and serve all with generosity and compassion. In your present existence you belong to just one certain family. Yet, in your past existences, you had many different families. When you attain Enlightenment, all becomes your very Self. Therefore, the selfless attitude of being of service to all must develop.

**T**HESE ARE some of the guidelines that can lead you towards the victory that is spoken of in all scriptures—a victory that is most wondrous. You should learn how to appreciate that victory, even though you may not yet experience it. Day by day you must learn to remember what your goal is. That goal is union with God, the attainment of Infinite Bliss through eternal communion with the Divine Self.

May the Goddess grant you strength and insight to follow that path leading to perfection!

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