

Quest for God – a Poem by Swami Vivekananda

O'ver hill and dale and mountain range,
In temple, church, and mosque,
In Vedas, Bible, Al Koran
I had searched for Thee in vain.

Like a child in the wildest forest lost
I have cried and cried alone,
"Where art Thou gone, my God, my love?
The echo answered, "gone."

And days and nights and years then passed
A fire was in the brain,
I knew not when day changed in night
The heart seemed rent in twain.
I laid me down on Ganges's shore,
Exposed to sun and rain;
With burning tears I laid the dust
And wailed with waters' roar.

I called on all the holy names
Of every clime and creed.
"Show me the way, in mercy, ye
Great ones who have reached the goal."

Years then passed in bitter cry,
Each moment seemed an age,
Till one day midst my cries and groans
Some one seemed calling me.

A gentle soft and soothing voice
That said 'my son' 'my son',
That seemed to thrill in unison
With all the chords of my soul.

I stood on my feet and tried to find
The place the voice came from;
I searched and searched and turned to see
Round me, before, behind,
Again, again it seemed to speak
The voice divine to me.
In rapture all my soul was hushed,
Entranced, enthralled in bliss.

A flash illumined all my soul;
The heart of my heart opened wide.
O joy, O bliss, what do I find!

My love, my love you are here
And you are here, my love, my all!

And I was searching thee -
From all eternity you were there
Enthroned in majesty!
From that day forth, wherever I roam,
I feel Him standing by
O'er hill and dale, high mount and vale,
Far far away and high.

The moon's soft light, the stars so bright,
The glorious orb of day,
He shines in them; His beauty - might -
Reflected lights are they.
The majestic morn, the melting eve,
The boundless billowing sea,
In nature's beauty, songs of birds,
I see through them - it is He.

When dire calamity seizes me,
The heart seems weak and faint,
All nature seems to crush me down,
With laws that never bend.
Meseems I hear Thee whispering sweet
My love, "I am near", "I am near".
My heart gets strong. With thee, my love,
A thousand deaths no fear.
Thou speakest in the mother's lay
Thou shuts the baby's eye,
When innocent children laugh and play,
I see Thee standing by.

When holy friendship shakes the hand,
He stands between them too;
He pours the nectar in mother's kiss
And the baby's sweet "mama".
Thou wert my God with prophets old,
All creeds do come from Thee,
The Vedas, Bible, and Koran bold
Sing Thee in Harmony.

"Thou art," Thou art" the Soul of souls
In the rushing stream of life.
"Om tat sat om." Thou art my God,
My love, I am thine, I am thine.

*From a letter written by Vivekananda on September 4, 1893 to Prof. J.H. Wright of Boston
who introduced the Swami at the Parliament of Religions*