



*L*iving the
Perfect Life
Here and Now

MOUNTAIN YOGA

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I. Modeling Perfection So We Can Practice It (*Bhāgavad Gītā* 3.21)

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।

स यत्प्रमानं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

yadyadācarati śreṣṭhastattadevetaro janah ।
sa yatpramāṇam kurute lokastadanuvartate ।।

Whatever an exceptional person does, other folks do too. The whole world tries to measure up to the standard that one sets.

II. Renunciation (*Aṣṭāvakra Gītā* 18.2-3)

अर्जयित्वाखिलान् अर्थान् भोगानाम्नोति पुष्कलान् ।

न हि सर्वपरित्याजमन्तरेण सुखी भवेत् ॥

arjayitvākhilān arthān bhogānāpnoti puṣkalān ।
na hi sarvaparityājamantareṇa sukhī bhavet ।।

One gets much enjoyment from the acquisition of all kinds of worldly goods. But it is through nothing other than the renunciation of all of them that one becomes happy.

कर्तव्यदुःखमार्तण्डज्वालादग्धान्तरात्मनः ।

कुतः प्रशमपीयूषधारासारमृते सुखम् ॥

kartavyaduhkhamārtaṇḍajvālādagdhāntarātmanah ।
kutaḥ praśamapīyūṣadhārāsāramṛte sukham ।।

How can there be happiness for one whose heart is scorched by the heat of the sun – the pain of having things that need to be done – without the refreshing shower of the nectar of tranquility?

III. Alike But Different (*Aṣṭāvakra Gītā* 18.18-19)

धीरो लोकविपर्यस्तो वर्तमानोऽपि लोकवत् ।

नो समाधिं न विक्षेपं न लोपं स्वस्य पश्यति ॥

dhīro lokaviparyasto vartamāno'pi lokavat ।
no samādhim na vikṣepaṃ na lopaṃ svasya paśyati ॥

The wise man, even though he may be living like an ordinary person, is completely different. He sees no stillness, no distraction, and no deficiency in himself.

भावाभावविहीनो यस्तृप्तो निर्वासनो बुधः ।

नैव किञ्चित्कृतं तेन लोकदृष्ट्या विकुर्वता ॥ १८-१९ ॥

bhāvābhāvavihīno yastṛpto nirvāsano budhaḥ ।
naiva kiñcitr̥taṃ tena lokadṛṣṭyā vikurvata ॥ 18-19 ॥

The wise man, free from the duality of existence and nonexistence, content and without desire, does nothing even though in the eyes of the world he is an actor.

IV. Wisdom and the Question of Identity

A. From the *Aṣṭāvakra Gītā* 18.9

अयं सोऽहमयं नाहं इति क्षीणा विकल्पना ।

सर्वमात्मेति निश्चित्य तूष्णींभूतस्य योगिनः ॥

ayaṃ so'hamayaṃ nāham iti kṣīṇā vikalpanā ।
sarvamātmeti niścitya tūṣṇīmbhūtasya yoginaḥ ॥

Conceits such as “This is who I am” or “I am not this” are destroyed for the yogi who has become silent, knowing that the self is everything.

B. From the *Bhāgavad Gītā* 6.29, 32

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।

sarvabhūtasthāmātmānaṁ sarvabhūtāni cātmani ।

ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥

Īkṣate yogayuktātmā sarvatra samadarśanaḥ ॥

One who is fully perfected in yoga sees oneself in all beings and all beings in oneself. He sees everything as coming from the same source.

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥
ātmaupamyena sarvatra samaṁ paśyati yo'rjuna ।
sukhaṁ vā yadi vā duḥkhaṁ sa yogī paramo mataḥ ॥

One who sees that everything is equally coming from oneself, whether it is suffering or happiness, is to be considered the supreme yogi.

V. Living Free, In Childlike Simplicity (*Aṣṭāvakra Gītā* 18.7-8)

समस्तं कल्पनामात्रमात्मा मुक्तः सनातनः ।

इति विज्ञाय धीरो हि किमभ्यस्यति बालवत् ॥

samastaṁ kalpanāmātramātmā muktaḥ sanātanaḥ ।
iti vijñāya dhīro hi kimabhyasyati bālavat ॥

Knowing that everything is only imaginary, the self is free and eternal. So it is that the wise man behaves like a child.

आत्मा ब्रह्मेति निश्चित्य भावाभावौ च कल्पितौ ।

निष्कामः किं विजानाति किं ब्रूते च करोति किम् ॥

ātmā brahmeti niścitya bhāvābhāvau ca kalpitau ।
niškāmaḥ kiṁ vijānāti kiṁ brūte ca karoti kim ॥

Having realized that the self is the same as ultimate reality, and that existing things and non-existing things are both imaginary, what does one free of desire have to learn, say, or do?

VI. The Desireless, Effortless, Content Life

A. From *Aṣṭāvakra Gītā* 18.11-13, 21, 23, 28

स्वाराज्ये भैक्षवृत्तौ च लाभालाभे जने वने ।

निर्विकल्पस्वभावस्य न विशेषोऽस्ति योगिनः ॥

svārājye bhaiṣavṛttau ca lābhālābhe jane vane ।
nirvikalpasvabhāvasya na viśeṣo'sti yoginaḥ ॥

For a yogi whose nature is free from distinctions there is no difference between sovereignty and beggary, gain and loss, life in society or in the wilderness.

क्व धर्मः क्व च वा कामः क्व चार्थः क्व विवेकिता ।

इदं कृतमिदं नेति द्वन्द्वैर्मुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥

kva dharmāḥ kva ca vā kāmāḥ kva cārthaḥ kva vivekitā ।
idaṁ kṛtamidaṁ neti dvandvairmuktasya yoginaḥ ॥

For a yogi who has become free of dualities such as “This is to be done, this is not to be done,” where is the pursuit of spirituality, pleasure, and getting ahead in the world? Where is there any discrimination between things?

कृत्यं किमपि नैवास्ति न कापि हृदि रंजना ।

यथा जीवनमेवेह जीवन्मुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥

kr̥tyaṁ kimapi naivāsti na kāpi hṛdi rañjanā ।
yathā jīvanameveha jīvanmuktasya yoginaḥ ॥

For the yogi liberated in this very lifetime, just here living out his life, what is there to be done when there is no attachment in his heart?

निर्वासनो निरालंबः स्वच्छन्दो मुक्तबन्धनः ।

क्षिप्तः संस्कारवातेन चेष्टते शुष्कपर्णवत् ॥

nirvāsano nirālambaḥ svacchando muktabandhanaḥ ।
kṣiptaḥ saṁskāravātena ceṣṭate śuṣkaparṇavat ॥

Desireless, free, spontaneous, liberated from all bondage, he moves like a dried leaf blown by the wind of karmic imprints.

कुत्रापि न जिहासास्ति नाशो वापि न कुत्रचित् ।

आत्मारामस्य धीरस्य शीतलाच्छतरात्मनः ॥

kuṭrāpi na jihāsāsti nāśo vāpi na kuṭracit ।
ātmārāmasya dhīrasya śītalācchatarātmanaḥ ॥

There is no feeling that one needs anything or needs to get rid of anything in the wise man who delights in himself and whose nature is cool and clear.

असमाधेरविक्षेपान् न मुमुक्षुर्न चेतः ।

निश्चित्य कल्पितं पश्यन् ब्रह्मैवास्ते महाशयः ॥

asamādheravikṣepān na mumukṣurna cetaraḥ ।
niścitya kalpitaṁ paśyan brahmaivāste mahāśayaḥ ॥

Without concentration and without distraction, he neither desires liberation nor its opposite. Seeing things but knowing they are projections, such a noble person is like God.

B. From the *Bhāgavad Gītā* 3.22; 4.18, 20-22

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।

नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥

na me pārthāsti kartavyaṁ triṣu lokeṣu kiñcana ।
nānavāptamavāptavyaṁ varta eva ca karmaṇi ॥

Throughout the three worlds, Arjuna, there is nothing whatsoever that I need to do. There is nothing unattained that I need to attain, and yet I still engage in action.

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।

स बुद्धि मान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥

karmaṇyakarma yaḥ paśyedakarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ
sa buddhi mānmanuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsnakarmakṛt

One who sees inaction in action and action in inaction has understanding among men, disciplined in all actions he performs.

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।

कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः ॥

tyaktvā karmaphalāsaṅgaṁ nityatr̥pto nirāśrayaḥ ।
karmaṇyabhipravṛtto'pi naiva kiñcatkaroti saḥ । ।

The one who abandons attachment to the results of action, who is always satisfied, independent, does nothing at all even when he is engaged in action.

निराशीर्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।

शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥

nirāśīryatacittātmā tyaktasarvaparigrahaḥ ।
śārīraṁ kevalaṁ karma kurvannāpnoti kilbiṣam । ।

Without wishing for something else, restraining himself and his mind, abandoning all grasping, the one who performs action only with his body incurs no fault.

यदृच्छालाभसन्तुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।

समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥

yadṛcchālābhasantuṣṭo dvandvātīto vimatsaraḥ ।
samaḥ siddhāvasiddhau ca kṛtvāpi na nibadhyate । ।

Content with whatever comes his way, transcending all dualities, free from envy, impartial in success and failure, he not bound even though he acts.

C. From Arya Nagarjuna's *Mūlamādhyamakakārikā* 16.9

निर्वास्याम्यनुपादानो निर्वाणं मे भविष्यति ।

इति येषां ग्रहस्तेषामुपादानमहाग्रहः ॥

nirvāsyāmyanupādāno nirvāṇaṃ me bhaviṣyati ।
iti yeśāṃ grahasteṣāmupādānamahāgrahaḥ ॥

“Without grasping, I will extinguish suffering and nirvana will be mine!”
The grasping of those who say this is a great grasping and clinging.

VII. Seeing Nirvana in Samsara

A. From *Aṣṭāvakra Gītā* 18.14-15

क्व मोहः क्व च वा विश्वं क्व तद् ध्यानं क्व मुक्तता ।

सर्वसंकल्पसीमायां विश्रान्तस्य महात्मनः ॥

kva mohaḥ kva ca vā viśvaṃ kva tad dhyānaṃ kva muktatā ।
sarvasaṅkalpasīmāyāṃ viśrāntasya mahātmanaḥ ॥

For the great-souled one who has reached repose, where is delusion? Where is the world? Where is meditation on That One? Where is liberation? All these are within the boundaries of the will.

येन विश्वमिदं दृष्टं स नास्तीति करोतु वै ।

निर्वासनः किं कुरुते पश्यन्नपि न पश्यति ॥

yena viśvamidam dṛṣṭaṃ sa nāstīti karotu vai ।
nirvāsanaḥ kiṃ kurute paśyannapi na paśyati ॥

He who sees this world may say, “It doesn't exist.” But what does one who is not compelled by karmic imprints do? Even though he is seeing, he does not see.

B. From Arya Nagarjuna's *Mūlamādhyamakakārikā* 25.19

न संसारस्य निर्वाणात्किं चिदस्ति विशेषणं ।

न निर्वाणस्य संसारात्किं चिदस्ति विशेषणं ॥

na saṃsārasya nirvāṇātkiṃ cidasti viśeṣaṇaṃ ।
na nirvāṇasya saṃsārātkiṃ cidasti viśeṣaṇaṃ ॥

There is nothing whatsoever that distinguishes samsara from nirvana or
nirvana from samsara.

VIII. Silent: Beyond Disputation and Dogma

A. From the *Aṣṭāvakra Gītā* 18.27

नानाविचारसुश्रान्तो धीरो विश्रान्तिमागतः ।

न कल्पते न जाति न शृणोति न पश्यति ॥

nānāvīcārasuśrānto dhīro viśrāntimāgataḥ ।
na kalpate na jāti na śṛṇoti na paśyati ॥

The wise man, exhausted by endless disputation, comes to peace. He
doesn't think, know, hear, or see.

B. From Arya Nagarjuna's *Mūlamādhyamakakārikā* 27.30

सर्वदृष्टिप्रहाणाय यः सद्धर्ममदेशयत् ।

अनुकम्पामुपादाय तं नमस्यामि गौतमं ॥

sarvadṛṣṭiprahāṇāya yaḥ saddharmamadeśayat ।
anukampāmupādāya taṃ namasyāmi gautamaṃ ॥

I bow down to him, to Gautama, who out of compassion taught the true dharma
in order to bring about the abandoning of all viewpoints.