

BEING UNFABULOUS

THE APOTHEOSIS OF THE ORDINARY JO(E)



SELECTED VERSES FROM
THE SONG OF THE ONE WITH EIGHT CROOKED LIMBS
(ASHTAVAKRA GITA)



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I. BECOMING UNFABULOUS

न त्वं विप्रादिको वर्णो नाश्रमी नाक्षगोचरः ।

असङ्गोऽसि निराकारो विश्वसाक्षी सुखी भव ॥ १-५ ॥

na tvaṁ viprādiko varṇo nāśramī nākṣagocaraḥ ।
asaṅgo'si nirākāro viśvasākṣī sukhī bhava ॥ 1-5 ॥

You do not belong to any of the castes, beginning with the Brahmins, nor are you in any particular stage of life. You are imperceptible, unattached, and invisible. You are the mere observer of everything. So be happy! (1.5)

वाग्मिप्राज्ञानमहोद्योगं जनं मूकजडालसम् ।

करोति तत्त्वबोधोऽयमतस्त्यक्तो बुभुक्षभिः ॥ १५-३ ॥

vāgmiprājñānamahodyogaṁ janam mūkajadālasam ।
karoti tattvabodho'yamatastyakto bubhuḥṣabhiḥ ॥ 15-3 ॥

This awareness of how things really are makes one who is talkative, clever, and busy into someone silent, stupified, and inactive. That's why it is shunned by those who just want to mindlessly live it up. (15.3)

अयं सोऽहमयं नाहं विभागमिति संत्यज ।

सर्वमात्मेति निश्चित्य निःसङ्कल्पः सुखी भव ॥ १५-१५ ॥

ayaṁ so'hamayaṁ nāhaṁ vibhāgamiti santyaja ।
sarvamātmeti niścitya niḥsaṅkalpaḥ sukhī bhava ॥ 15-15 ॥

Give up such distinctions as, “I am so-and-so, but not such-and-such.” Realize that you are everything. Be purposeless. Be happy. (15.15)

II. BECOMING UNCOOL

स्वप्नेन्द्रजालवत् पश्य दिनानि त्रीणि पंच वा ।

मित्रक्षेत्रधनागारदारदायादिसंपदः ॥ १०-२ ॥

svapnendrajālavat paśya dināni trīṇi pañca vā ।
mitrakṣetradhanāgāradāradāyādisampadaḥ ॥ 10-2॥

Look upon things like friends, property, wealth, houses, wives, and gifts as being like a dream or a magic show. They last only a few days. (10.2)

यत्र यत्र भवेत्तृष्णा संसारं विद्धि तत्र वै ।

प्रौढवैराग्यमाश्रित्य वीततृष्णः सुखी भव ॥ १०-३ ॥

yatra yatra bhavettṛṣṇā saṁsāraṁ viddhi tatra vai ।
prauḍhavairāgyamāśritya vītatṛṣṇaḥ sukhī bhava ॥ 10-3॥

Know that wherever there is craving there is samsara. Practice strong detachment and be free of craving and happy. (10.3)

तृष्णामात्रात्मको बन्धस्तन्नाशो मोक्ष उच्यते ।

भवासंसक्तिमात्रेण प्राप्तिर्मुष्टिर्मुहुर्मुहुः ॥ १०-४ ॥

tṛṣṇāmātrātmako bandhastannāśo mokṣa ucyate ।
bhavāsaṁsaktimātreṇa prāptitṛṣṭirmuhurmuhuḥ ॥ 10-4॥

It's just this craving that is the very soul of bondage, and destroying it is what is known as liberation. Just by detaching from the world one obtains perpetual contentment. (10.4)

अर्जयित्वाखिलान् अर्थान् भोगानाप्नोति पुष्कलान् ।

न हि सर्वपरित्याजमन्तरेण सुखी भवेत् ॥ १८-२ ॥

arjayitvākhilān arthān bhogānāpnoti puṣkalān ।
na hi sarvaparityājamantareṇa sukhī bhavet ॥ 18-2 ॥

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. (18.2).

III. BECOMING UNCLEVER

यथातथोपदेशेन कृतार्थः सत्त्वबुद्धिमान् ।

आजीवमपि जिज्ञासुः परस्तत्र विमुह्यति ॥ १५-१ ॥

yathātathopadeśena kṛtārthaḥ sattvabuddhimān ।
ājīvamapi jijñāsuḥ parastatra vimuhyati ॥ 15-1 ॥

A person of pure intellect achieves the goal when given some off-handed teaching, while others spend their whole lives seeking wisdom and remain confused. (15.1)

अतद्वादीव कुरुते न भवेदपि बालिशः ।

जीवन्मुक्तः सुखी श्रीमान् संसरन्नपि शोभते ॥ १८-२६ ॥

atadvādīva kurute na bhavedapi bālīśaḥ ।
jīvanmuktaḥ sukhī śrīmān saṁsarannapi śobhate ॥ 18-26 ॥

He acts like one who is unable to say why he does things, although he is not a fool. Liberated while living, happy, illustrious, he thrives even while in samsara. (18.26)

भावनाभावनासक्ता दृष्टिर्मूढस्य सर्वदा ।

भाव्यभावनया सा तु स्वस्थस्यादृष्टिरूपिणी ॥ १८-६३ ॥

bhāvanābhāvanāsaktā dṛṣṭirmūḍhasya sarvadā ।
bhāvyaabhāvanayā sā tu svasthasyādṛṣṭirūpiṇī ॥ 18-63॥

The consciousness of the fool is perpetually involved with conceptualization and non-conceptualization. But the mind of one who is independent is like that of someone unconscious, even when it is thinking.

IV. BECOMING UNBUSY

अहं कर्तेत्यहंमानमहाकृष्णाहिदंशितः ।

नाहं कर्तेति विश्वासामृतं पीत्वा सुखी भव ॥ १-८ ॥

ahaṁ kartetyahammānamahākṛṣṇāhidamśitaḥ ।
nāhaṁ karteti viśvāsāmṛtaṁ pītvā sukhī bhava ॥

The one who thinks “I am the actor” has been bitten by the big black snake of egoism. Drinking the nectar of confidence, say “I am not the actor” and be happy! (1.8)

प्रवृत्तौ वा निवृत्तौ वा नैव धीरस्य दुर्ग्रहः ।

यदा यत्कर्तुमायाति तत्कृत्वा तिष्ठते सुखम् ॥ १८-२० ॥

pravṛttau vā nivṛttau vā naiva dhīrasya durgrahaḥ ।
yadā yatkartumāyāti tatkṛtvā tiṣṭhate sukham ॥ 18-20॥

For the wise man there is no stress either in activity or non-activity. When it's time to act he acts and stays happy. (18.20)

निर्वासनो निरालंबः स्वच्छन्दो मुक्तबन्धनः ।

क्षिप्तः संस्कारवातेन चेष्टते शुष्कपर्णवत् ॥ १८-२१ ॥

nirvāsano nirālambaḥ svacchando muktabandhanaḥ ।
kṣiptaḥ saṁskāravātena ceṣṭate śuṣkaparṇavat ॥ 18-21 ॥

Desireless, free, spontaneous, liberated from all bondage, he moves like a dried leaf blown by the wind of karmic imprints. (18.21)

कर्तव्यतैव संसारो न तां पश्यन्ति सूरयः ।

शून्याकारा निराकारा निर्विकारा निरामयाः ॥ १८-५७ ॥

kartavyataiva saṁsāro na tāṁ paśyanti sūrayaḥ ।
śūnyākārā nirākārā nirvikārā nirāmayāḥ ॥ 18-57 ॥

Samsara is nothing other than having something that needs to be done. The sages do not see that. They conform themselves to emptiness and are formless, unchangeable, and taintless. (18.57)

V. BECOMING UNSPIRITUAL

तदा बन्धो यदा चित्तं सक्तं काश्चपि दृष्टिषु ।

तदा मोक्षो यदा चित्तमसक्तं सर्वदृष्टिषु ॥ ८-३ ॥

tadā bandho yadā cittam saktam kāśvapi dṛṣṭiṣu ।
tadā mokṣo yadā cittamasaktam sarvadṛṣṭiṣu ॥ 8-3 ॥

It is bondage when the mind attaches to any doctrine, and it is freedom when the mind detaches from all doctrines (8.3)

तत्त्वं यथार्थमाकर्ण्य मन्दः प्राप्नोति मूढताम् ।

अथवा याति संकोचममूढः कोऽपि मूढवत् ॥ १८-३२ ॥

tattvaṁ yathārthamākarnya mandaḥ prāpnoti mūḍhatām ।
athavā yāti saṅkocamamūḍhaḥ ko'pi mūḍhavat ॥ 18-32॥

A fool who hears the truth about reality just gets more confused. The wise man likewise is humbled by it. Although like a fool, he is not a fool. (18.32)

एकाग्रता निरोधो वा मूढैरभ्यस्यते भृशम् ।

धीराः कृत्यं न पश्यन्ति सुप्तवत्स्वपदे स्थिताः ॥ १८-३३ ॥

ekāgratā nirodho vā mūḍhairabhyasyate bhr̥śam ।
dhīrāḥ kṛtyaṁ na paśyanti suptavatsvapade sthitāḥ ॥ 18-33॥

Great efforts are made by fools to achieve one-pointedness of mind and cessation. The wise, staying within themselves like someone asleep, do not see anything that needs to be done.

मूढो नाप्नोति तद् ब्रह्म यतो भवितुमिच्छति ।

अनिच्छन्नपि धीरो हि परब्रह्मस्वरूपभाक् ॥ १८-३७ ॥

mūḍho nāpnoti tad brahma yato bhavitumicchati ।
anicchannapi dhīro hi parabrahmasvarūpabhāk ॥ 18-37॥

The fool does not reach God because he wants to become God. The wise one, without wanting at all, realizes the nature of the Supreme Deity. (18.37)

धीरो न द्वेष्टि संसारमात्मानं न दिदृक्षति ।

हर्षामर्षविनिर्मुक्तो न मृतो न च जीवति ॥ १८-८३ ॥

dhīro na dveṣṭi saṁsāramātmānaṁ na didṛkṣati ।
harṣāmarṣavinirmukto na mṛto na ca jīvati ॥ 18-83॥

The wise man neither abhors samsara nor longs to perceive ultimate reality. Liberated from joy and sorrow, he's not living and he hasn't died.

विक्षेपेऽपि न विक्षिप्तः समाधौ न समाधिमान् ।

जाड्येऽपि न जडो धन्यः पाण्डित्येऽपि न पण्डितः ॥ १८-९७ ॥

vikṣepe'pi na vikṣiptaḥ samādhau na samādhimān ।
jāḍye'pi na jaḍo dhanyaḥ pāṇḍitye'pi na paṇḍitaḥ ॥ 18-97॥

Amid distraction the blessed one remains undistracted. When in meditation he doesn't meditate. Although appearing stupid, he's not; appearing learned, he's not learned.

VI. BECOMING UNBOUND

मुक्ताभिमानी मुक्तो हि बद्धो बद्धाभिमान्यपि ।

किं वदन्तीह सत्येयं या मतिः सा गतिर्भवेत् ॥ १-११ ॥

muktābhimānī mukto hi baddho baddhābhimānyapi ।
kiṁ vadantīha satyeyaṁ yā matiḥ sā gatiṛbhavet ॥ 1-11॥

The one who thinks he is free is free; the one who thinks he is bound is bound. It is true what they say: You become what you think. (1.11)

तदा बन्धो यदा चित्तं किञ्चिद् वाञ्छति शोचति ।

किञ्चिन् मुञ्चति गृण्हाति किञ्चिद् दृष्यति कुप्यति ॥ ८-१ ॥

tadā bandho yadā cittam kincid vāñchati śocati ।
kiñcin muñcati gr̥ṇhāti kiñcid dr̥ṣyati kupyati ॥ 8-1॥

Bondage is when the mind likes or dislikes anything, rejects or accepts anything, or rejoices or is displeased about anything. (8.1)

तदा मुक्तिर्यदा चित्तं न वाञ्छति न शोचति ।

न मुञ्चति न गृण्हाति न हृष्यति न कुप्यति ॥ ८-२ ॥

tadā muktiryadā cittam na vāñchati na śocati ।
na muñcati na gr̥ṇhāti na hr̥ṣyati na kupyati ॥ 8-2॥

Liberation is when the mind does not want or dislike, reject or accept, rejoice or is displeased. (8.2)

यदा नाहं तदा मोक्षो यदाहं बन्धनं तदा ।

मत्वेति हेलया किञ्चिन्मा गृहाण विमुञ्च मा ॥ ८-४ ॥

yadā nāham tadā mokṣo yadāham bandhanam tadā ।
matveti helayā kiñcinmā gr̥hāṇa vimuñca mā ॥ 8-4॥

When there is no “I” there is liberation, and when there is an “I” there is bondage. Taking this into consideration, simply stop accepting and rejecting anything.

VII. THE RETURN OF ORDINARY JO(E)

अंतर्विकल्पशून्यस्य बहिः स्वच्छन्दचारिणः ।

भ्रान्तस्येव दशास्तास्तास्तादृशा एव जानते ॥ १४-४ ॥

antarvikalpaśūnyasya bahiḥ svacchandacāriṇaḥ ।
bhrāntasyeva daśāstāstāstādṛśā eva jānate ॥ 14-4॥

On the inside he is devoid of wrong ideas about things, while on the outside he conducts himself just as he pleases, like someone untrained. The life of such a person is known only to someone like him. (14.1)

यदा यत्कर्तुमायाति तदा तत्कुरुते ऋजुः ।

शुभं वाप्यशुभं वापि तस्य चेष्टा हि बालवत् ॥ १८-४९ ॥

yadā yatkartumāyāti tadā tatkurute ṛjuḥ ।
śubham vāpyaśubham vāpi tasya ceṣṭā hi bālavat ॥ 18-49॥

The master does whatever comes to him to do, whether it's good or bad. His conduct is like that of a child. (18.49)

स्वातंत्र्यात्सुखमाप्नोति स्वातंत्र्याल्लभते परम् ।

स्वातंत्र्यान्निरवृत्तिं गच्छेत्स्वातंत्र्यात् परमं पदम् ॥ १८-५० ॥

svātantryātsukhamāpnoti svātantryāllabhate param ।
svātantryānnirvṛtīm gacchetsvātantryāt paramaṁ padam ॥ 18-50॥

Because he is free, he obtains happiness; because he is free he achieves the highest. Because he is free, he is in nirvana; because he is free he goes to the highest state.