

SEEING THE **Sacred**

In Everyday Life

Advice from the Bhagavad Gita on Reaching the Divine



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SEEING THE SACRED IN EVERYDAY LIFE

I. THE DREARINESS AND DANGER OF SECULAR LIFE

प्रवृत्ति च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः ।

pravṛtti ca nivṛttiṃ ca janā na vidurāsuraḥ।

न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ॥

na śaucam nāpi cācāro na satyam teṣu vidyate॥

People who are like demons do not know what to give up and what to take up. In them there is no purity, no good conduct, and no truth. (16.7)

असत्यमप्रतिष्ठं ते जगदाहुरनीश्वरं ।

asatyamapraṭiṣṭham te jagadāhuranīśvaram।

अपरस्परसम्भूतं किमन्यत्कामहेतुकम् ॥

aparasparasambhūtam kimanyatkāmahaitukam।

They say there is no truth and there is nothing in the world which is fixed; that there is no Lord; that no cause other than pure desire brings things into being one after another. (16.8)

चिन्तामपरिमेयां च प्रलयान्तामुपाश्रिताः ।

cintāmaparimeyāṃ ca pralayāntāmupāśritāḥ।

कामोपशोगपरमा एतावदिति निश्चिताः ॥

kāmopāśogaparamā etāvaditi niścittāḥ॥

Certain that the gratification of desire is all there is, they are tormented by countless anxieties and brought to the brink of destruction. (16.11)

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आशापाशशतैर्बद्धाः कामक्रोधपरायणाः ।

āśāpāśāśatairbaddhāḥ kāmakrodhaparāyaṇāḥ।

ईहन्ते कामभोगार्थमन्यायेनार्थसञ्चयान् ॥

īhante kāmabhogārthamanyāyēnārthasañcayān॥

Bound by hundreds of the chains of expectation, filled with desire and anger, they try to obtain wealth by any means at all to satisfy their desires. (16.12)

II. THE CONDITION OF POSSIBILITY FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY LIFE: UNDERSTANDING WHERE THINGS COME FROM

उद्धरेदात्मनाऽऽत्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।

uddharedātmanā"tmānaṁ nātmānamavasādayet।

आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्दुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥

ātmaiva hyātmano bandurātmaiva ripurātmanaḥ।।

One should raise up the self by oneself, and not degrade oneself. For the self is its own best friend and its own worst enemy. (6.5)

बन्दुरात्माऽऽत्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः ।

bandurātmā"tmanastasya yēnātmāivātmanā jitaḥ।

अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥

anātmanastu śatrtve vartetātmaiva śatruvat।।

The self is the friend of the one who conquers himself, but for one who hasn't it is like an enemy at war with itself. (6.6)

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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. (6.32)

III. OPENING THE DOOR TO THE DIVINE

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये ।

यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥

manuṣyāṅāṁ sahasreṣu kaścidyatati siddhaye
yatatāmapī siddhānāṁ kaścīnmaṁ veti tattvataḥ॥

There is barely one man among thousands who strives for perfection. And of those few who do try to achieve the goal, only the rare one recognizes me for who I really am. (7.3)

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।

श्रद्धावान्भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥

yogināmapī sarveṣāṁ madgatenāntarātmanā
śraddhāvānbhajate yo māṁ sa me yuktatamo mataḥ॥

Of all the yogis, it is the one who, with his innermost soul devoted to me, faithfully serves me that I regard to be the most disciplined. (6.47)

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यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।

यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥

yatkarōṣi yadaśnāsi yajjuhoṣi dadāsi yat |
yattapasyasi kaunteya tatkuruṣva madarpaṇam ||

Whatever you do, Arjuna, whatever you eat or offer or give, whatever austerities you undertake, do it all as an offering to me. (9.27)

तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।

teṣāmaham samuddhartā mṛtyusaṁsārasāgarāt |

भवामि निचरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥

bhavāmi nicarātpārtha mayyāveśitacetasām ||

For those whose minds are engrossed in me, I soon arise as the savior from the ocean of death and the cycle of rebirth and suffering. (12.7)

IV. SEEING BEYOND MERE APPEARANCES

अवजानन्ति मां मुढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।

परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥

avajānanti mām muḍhā mānuṣīṁ tanumāśritam |
param bhāvamajānanto mama bhūtamahēśvaram ||

Stupid people, not knowing of my higher existence as the great lord of all beings and seeing only the human body I have assumed, treat me contemptuously. (9.11)

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एवमेतद्यथात्थ त्वमात्मानं परमेश्वर ।

evametadyathāttha tvamātmānaṁ parameśvara |

द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरं पुरुषोत्तम ॥

draṣṭumicchāmi te rūpamaiśvaraṁ puruṣottama ||

I want to see your sovereign form, as you have described it, o Supreme among Men. (11.3)

मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो ।

योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दश्यात्मानमव्ययम् ॥

manyase yadi tacchakyaṁ mayā draṣṭumiti prabho |

yogēśvara tato me tvaṁ darśyātmānamavyayam ||

If you think I'm ready to see it, my Master, reveal to me your irreducible essence, Lord of Yoga. (11.4)

सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तं हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति ।

अजानता महिमानं तवेदं मया प्रमादात्प्रणयेन वापि ॥

sakheti matvā prasabhaṁ yaduktaṁ he kṛṣṇa he yādava he sakheti |

ajānatā mahimānaṁ tavedaṁ mayā pramādātpṛaṇayena vāpi ||

Thinking You were just my pal, I boldly said, “Yo, Krishna! Hey cousin! Hey friend!” Because of carelessness and blind infatuation I was ignorant of Your greatness. (11.41)

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तस्मात्प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायं प्रसादये त्वामहमीशमीडयम् ।

पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः प्रियः प्रियायार्हसि देव सोढुम् ॥

tasmātpṛaṇamya praṇidhāya kāyaṁ prasādaye tvāmahamīśamīḍyam |
piteva putrasya sakheva sakhyuḥ priyaḥ priyāyārhasi deva soḍhum ||

I prostrate to You; I lay down my body before You, my Lord, and ask You to be gracious. As a father with his son, as friend with a friend, as a lover to a beloved, bear with me, my Angel. (11.44)

V. SEEING THE DIVINE EVERYWHERE

अनेकबाहूदरवक्रनेत्रं पश्यामि त्वां सर्वतोऽनन्तरूपम् ।

नान्तं न मध्यं न पुनस्तवादिं पश्यामि विश्वेश्वर विश्वरूप ॥

anekabāhūdaravakṛanetraṁ paśyāmi tvāṁ sarvato'nantarūpam |
nāntaṁ na madhyaṁ na punastavādiṁ paśyāmi viśveśvara viśvarūpa ||

I see your unlimited form everywhere – many arms, bellies, mouths, and eyes. You can take all forms; I see no beginning, middle or end to You, Lord of All. (11.16)

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।

sarvabhūtasthamātmānaṁ 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. (6.29)

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यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।

yo mām paśyati sarvatra sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati।

तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥

tasyāhaṁ na praṇaśyāmi sa ca me na praṇaśyati॥

I will never be separated from one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, nor will he ever be separated from Me. (6.30)

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।

sarvabhūtasthitaṁ yo mām bhajatyekatvamāsthitaḥ।

सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥

sarvathā vartamāno'pi sa yogī mayi vartate॥

One who resides in this oneness worships Me as abiding in all beings. That yogi, no matter what he is doing is engaged in Me. (6.31)