

Happy with oneself, happy with others

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Spending time with oneself is the first step to self-acceptance

The next two values go together. The first one is *vivikta desha sevitvam*, 'to spend some time quietly by yourself', meaning to be with yourself on a regular basis. Before you go towards self-realization, it's necessary to be aware of oneself as a person. Most of us are busy escaping from ourselves, our worries, anxieties, etc. Whenever we have time for ourselves, most of us either pick up a book or a magazine to read or turn on the TV or music. Here Krishna is saying, 'Get to know yourself as a person.'

How do you do that? Have a date with yourself, spend some time alone with yourself. Don't escape from your own imperfections, from your own worries, from your own goodness. It's not all negative, there are a lot of positive things there. Listen to what your mind is trying to tell you, what your worries are trying to tell

you, what your emotions, your desires are trying to tell you. All of them are trying to tell you something, all your thoughts are an attempt by your mind to tell you something. But you don't want to listen to them, you want to escape because you don't like some of it, you want to flee from the dark areas of your own mind. But the dark areas of your mind will give you strength once you get to know them well. Accept them and deal with them and your dark side will become your strength.

You will find the silence within! He could have done that or gone higher to Gomukh, but there are no arrangements for food, etc. up there. There is noise—the hum of life— everywhere and there is also quietness, and if you can't find a place, you can always find a quiet time.

It's a huge topic to discuss in a blog, but Krishna is basically telling you to spend some time with yourself regularly. If you can't do it everyday, do it at least once a week so that you can take your first step towards self-acceptance if not self-love. Self-acceptance would be accepting oneself with all of one's imperfections. All the time we have been focusing on accepting situations, accepting whatever happens to us. Whatever happens to us creates a certain personality, a mind-set, a pattern of thinking and feeling. Now, here, Krishna advises us to change the focus inside and get to understand why we are the way we are. Better self-understanding may call for a rearrangement of some priorities in life, an owning up of a lot of things about oneself, a willingness to change a few things about oneself one is not happy with. All this is part of *vivikta desha sevityam*—investing time in developing a better psychological understanding of oneself and a certain acceptance of yourself as you are.

Now I know it's difficult to find a quiet place in a big, bustling city, and if you are like the *sadhu* I met it's absolutely impossible. When I was in Rishikesh, a *sadhu* landed up looking for a quiet place to meditate. He came to the ashram adjacent to ours, which was quiet enough. But, a few days later, the *sadhu* was complaining that the place was full of *sadhus* who were not very quiet, and so he went off to the Uttar Kashi, a beautiful, quiet place a hundred miles upsteam of the Ganga. But that place was full of birds in those days—too noisy for him—and so he went higher up to Gangotri to live in a cave at Gauri kund. A month later, I took a group of students there and I happened to meet him. Now the Ganga was making too much noise, he whined, as she forms a waterfall on her way down at Gauri kund. It's a beautiful place, the river makes a noise, and all you have to do is shut up and listen. You will find the silence within! He could have done that or gone higher to Gomukh, but there are no arrangements for food, etc. up there. There is noise—the hum of life— everywhere and there is also quietness, and if you can't find a place, you can always find a quiet time. It is up to you to find a quiet place or time if you really wish to get to know yourself.

Aratihi jansamsadhihi, the next value, is connected with the previous value. 'Not being someone who revels in people's company'. One should be able to enjoy the company of others when it's there but one should not need it all the time. For example, if you have a free evening without a date or a movie to watch, enjoy the time by yourself. It's fine to have people in your life, it's also fine to have emotional needs which are fulfilled by other people. In fact, that's why sociologists define us as social animals, but one should grow out of the need of always wanting people around, because then one's emotional fullness or satisfaction has to be met by other people and not by one's own self. As Somerset Maugham said in his book, *The Razor's Edge*, "The journey to the self is alone to the alone, all alone".

You are the only reality that is there and you can be completely fulfilled as a person by yourself. Discover that wisdom. At least, learn to be free of this constant need of having people around. If I am alone, I am happy alone, but if I am with friends I can enjoy that too. I am not dependent on one to the exclusion of the other. Please note: Krishna is not advising you to become a recluse or a loner. All he's saying is learn to be happy by yourself. This way you can have a balance of both—happy being with people, happy being with yourself.

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