



भगवत् गीता
द्वितीयोऽध्यायः - सांख्य योगः

Chapter 2
Volume 3

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As we saw last time, awakened by the उत्तिष्ठ-मन्त्र - the call of Sri Krishna for Arjuna to wake up, and live up to his Real Nature, Arjuna correctly identifies the cause, and also the ultimate solution for his शोक - acute sorrow and distress at this time. The cause for his शोक is the inescapable necessity for him to fight, with his respected teachers भीष्म and द्रोण, whom he will have to kill, in order to win this war, which kind of victory would bring only even greater शोक to his mind;

Therefore, Arjuna now realizes that the real solution for his शोक lies in the pursuit of श्रेयस् , which means pursuit of मोक्ष, which will give him Absolute Freedom - Freedom from every kind of शोक, since such pursuit of श्रेयस् means committing to a life of मोक्ष मार्ग - path of Absolute Freedom, and gaining आत्म ज्ञानं - Self-Knowledge. Arjuna seeks Knowledge about मोक्ष मार्ग and आत्म ज्ञानं from Sri Krishna in the proper manner.



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After making the request for Knowledge on मोक्ष मार्ग and आत्म ज्ञानं, Arjuna stops talking and starts listening to Sri Krishna with deep attention, in a devotional mood.

Sri Krishna responds with a smile; and गीतोपदेश - The Gita Teaching - begins with these words from Sri Krishna.

श्री भगवान् उवाच

अशोच्यान् अन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादान् च भाषसे ।

गतासून् अगतासून् च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥

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The very first teaching of Sri Krishna is that आत्मा is immortal. This is how He presents this Knowledge. भगवान् tells Arjuna:

अशोच्यान् - भीष्म, द्रोण, and people like them, are अशोच्यान्, which means that they are not the kind of people about whom one should entertain any kind of शोक or distress. When that is the case, what is it you are doing?

अन्वशोचः त्वं meaning त्वं अनुशोचितवान् असि - you are entertaining शोक - sorrow and distress about them; not only that,

त्वं प्रज्ञावादान् च भाषसे - you speak words which only sound wise but lack wisdom, because,

गतासून् अगतासून् च, नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः

पण्डिताः - the wise people do not dissipate their energies and natural faculties by entertaining शोक - sorrow and distress, either for those who are dead, or for those who are not yet dead. On the other hand, realizing Reality as It is, the wise people do what needs to be done right now, under one's own circumstances.

People like भीष्म and द्रोण are not the kind of people about whom you should entertain sorrow. Your words only sound wise, but lack wisdom. Wise people do not dissipate their energies and natural abilities by entertaining sorrow and distress either for the past events, or for future events. On the other hand, recognizing Reality as It is, wise people concentrate only on doing what is right and necessary at this moment, doing what needs to be done right now under one's own circumstances.

That is the word meaning of the first verse. We must now reflect on this verse in some detail. The Gita Upadesa starts with the word अशोच्यान् - meaning - These are NOT the kind of people etc. Thus Sri Krishna opens the Teaching with a negation.



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Generally, in the objective world, negation is not the best way to open a topic. But, in the subjective world of Vedanta, it is indeed the best way, because the entire purpose of Vedanta is one of "de-conditioning", निषेद.

Each one of us has hypnotized ourselves into believing that "... I am limited in this or that; and consequently, I am this or that, etc."; we are thus the products of self-conditioning of various kinds. The whole Vedantic teaching is one of de-conditioning the person completely so that he or she is left totally free, because that is what every person really is.

As we go along, we will see that Vedanta is not another kind of conditioning; it is total de-conditioning, so that you get the ability to see yourself and the world around as they really are, beyond their appearances. Such de-conditioning process naturally starts with negation of common misconceptions arising from changing appearances.

Thus the teaching method itself is just as important as the teaching.

Further, for a person who feels sorrowful and distressed for any reason, the moment a trusted friend says: "अशोच्यान् अन्यशोचः त्वं there is really no reason for you to feel distressed or sorrowful about; you are entertaining शोक unnecessarily" - the moment a trusted friend says that, there is immediate sense of relief for that person. Thus, Sri Krishna brings an immediate sense of relief to Arjuna by reminding him that he is entertaining sorrow and distress over things which do not befit such sorrow and distress.

In one way or another, every person entertains sorrow and distress of some kind, when, in fact, there is really no rational basis for such sorrow and distress. Thus Gita Teaching is for every one of us.

Again, शोक - meaning sorrow and distress, involves different forms of limitations and bondages. Every limitation and every bondage causes शोक at some time or other. Thus शोक is **the** problem for every human being. शोक निवृत्ति is दुःख निवृत्ति - Release from शोक is release from दुःख - release from unhappiness.

दुःख निवृत्ति is possible only by आनन्द अवाप्ति - Release from unhappiness is possible only by gaining आनन्द. But आनन्द - Happiness, is not an object. It is one's own Self. Therefore gaining Happiness is possible only by realizing that "I am Happiness" अहं आनन्दः - अहं आनन्द स्वरूपः - My real nature is आनन्द - Happiness.

That is आत्म ज्ञानं - That is SELF-Knowledge.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

In order to introduce Arjuna to his own self - in order to introduce Arjuna to SELF Knowledge, Sri Krishna starts with the words: अशोच्यान् अन्यशोचः त्वं - They are NOT the ones about whom you should entertain शोक. "They" means who? The word अशोच्यान् applies to everybody, but in the context here, the word refers to भीष्म and द्रोण who are occupying the mind of Arjuna at this time.

भगवान् says: भीष्म and द्रोण are अशोच्यान्. They are not the ones about whom one should entertain any kind of शोक - sadness, sorrow or distress because of two reasons.

The first reason is - as individual जीवs, they are सत् वृत्तवान् - they are the very embodiments of सत्, i.e., in their daily life, they are the very embodiments of धर्म, which is मोक्ष साधनं - a conduct which leads to मोक्ष - Total Freedom and Absolute Happiness. They are on Duryodhana's side, not because of anything against you, nor because of approval of Duryodhana's conduct. By virtue of their own circumstances and situations in life, they have a sense of duty to be on the side of Duryodhana in spite of their total disapproval of his conduct.

What भीष्म and द्रोण are doing now by being on the side of Duryodhana does not in any way bring blemish to them. They are Mahatmas, but, like any other individual जीव, they have their own प्रारब्ध-कर्मs to be experienced and exhausted. The momentum of the already sprouted results of their past कर्मs will soon be exhausted and their bodies will fall dead in this battlefield, and they know it. When that event happens, it will not be because of you or anybody else. It will be because of the exhaustion of their own कर्म फलs, which exhaustion is conducive to them to gain मोक्ष.

That is spiritual progress for their individual जीवs. In this matter, there is no cause for you to entertain शोक of any kind. There is also another reason why there is no basis for you to entertain शोक on account of भीष्म and द्रोण, and that reason is this.

The essential nature of every individual जीव is आत्मा - The SELF. Therefore, the true nature of भीष्म and द्रोण - as for that matter - the true nature of every one of us is आत्मा which is नित्यः - Eternal. Nobody can destroy आत्मा. आत्मा is ever existent - It is All - Happiness; Ever - Happiness; it is सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूपः. Therefore, there is Absolutely no cause for anyone to entertain शोक with respect to आत्मा.



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Therefore, with respect to आत्मा - The SELF, शोक वचनं is मूढ लक्षणं - any talk of शोक is only a manifestation of a confused mind. To recognize मूढत्यं-confusion, is NOT to condemn oneself. It is only to appreciate the problem better. Such appreciation requires a clarity of knowledge, and here we are concerned about knowledge about one's own self.

Thus in the very first verse of गीतोपदेश - Gita Teaching, Sri Krishna helps Arjuna to isolate the problem, and also indicates the solution to the problem. The problem is one of confusion about the true nature of oneself, and the solution to the problem lies in gaining a clarity of knowledge about the true nature of all existence and the code of right conduct necessary for every human being in every day life in order to be able to gain such clarity of knowledge.

As a first step in gaining such clarity of knowledge, Sri Krishna introduces the concept of Eternity in existence in the next verse. भगवान् says:

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥

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जातु means at any time. Never indeed it was so at any time that I did not exist, which means, there was never a time when I did not exist. Similarly, with respect to you, and with respect to everybody else here

न अहं न आसं
न त्वं न आसीः
न इमे जनाधिपाः न आसन्

} Everywhere Sri Krishna
uses double-negative for emphasis

There was never a time when I did not exist
There was never a time when you did not exist
There was never a time that anybody else here did not exist

Sri Krishna uses double negatives to eliminate the concept of time with respect to आत्मा. Anything that is bound to time is bound to change. आत्मा is not bound to time.

There was never a time in the past when I did not exist, or you did not exist, or anyone else did not exist. Does that mean that there can be a time in the future when one may not exist? No. Sri Krishna makes that very clear.

न च एव न भविष्यामः There will never be a time when we will not exist. Thus Sri Krishna completely eliminates time from the existence of आत्मा - The SELF. Not only that,



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सर्वे वयं, अतः परं - even after the destruction of this physical body, all of us will exist, so says Sri Krishna.

That is the meaning of Eternity. I, you and everyone else who exist now, existed before we were born, and will exist even after the death of this physical body. Thus Sri Krishna completely negates the physical body as the Atma - The Self. That means, what is referred by the words अहं, त्वं, जनाधिपाः - I, you and they is not the physical body but That which survives Death, and That is the real I, you and they. That is the लक्ष्यार्थ - the indicated meanings of the words I, you and they.

We use the words "we, they", etc. in plural, not because Atma is plural, but because "bodies" are plural. There is only ONE Atma, and That आत्मा is Eternal. ONE Atma accommodates infinite number of bodies, just as ONE ocean accommodates infinite number of waves. Illustrating further, the eternal and all-pervading nature of आत्मा, भगवान् says:

देहिनोऽस्मिन् यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।

तथा देहान्तर प्राप्तिः धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥

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देह is one's body and देही is the Indweller in the body and That is आत्मा - The SELF.

Therefore,

देहिनः - For the Indweller in one's body, which means, for the आत्मा - The SELF,

अस्मिन् देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा-यथा-तथा - just as obtaining the change in the experiences of childhood, youth and old age is, so also is

देहान्तर प्राप्तिः - the change in the experiences on obtaining another body

तत्र धीरः न मुह्यति - A wise person is not confused or overpowered by such change in experiences.

For the आत्मा -The SELF in this body, just as obtaining the change in the experiences of childhood, youth and old age is, so also is the change in the experiences on obtaining another body. A wise person is not confused or overpowered by such change in experiences.

Let us understand this statement properly. Just as the Indweller - The आत्मा in one's body is the same in one's childhood, youth and old age, similarly, on obtaining another body, the Indweller in that new body also is the same आत्मा. Childhood, youth and old age are only with respect to one's physical body. The आत्मा - The SELF - without undergoing any change remains in all the three stages of bodily experiences. It is the



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same आत्मा which is the Indweller in any new body one may assume later, after the present body falls.

There can never be a time when आत्मा is not there. Thus at all times, "I am" does not change, but "what I am" may change. A wise person is not confused or overpowered by such changes. If one thinks that "I" changes from "childhood I" to "youth I" to "old-age I" and to another "I" in another body, one must simply ask oneself the question who is "That I" who recognizes all these changes in "I"s. That "I" - That Recognizer I - That Seer I - "That Knower - I" is indeed आत्मा, The SELF which is Eternal - All-pervading, never subject to change.

Now Arjuna may say: Well Krishna, all this talk about आत्मा is interesting. It is nice to know that all of us are in fact eternal, and आत्मा is आनन्द स्वरूपः, Atma is All-Happiness. I have not experienced That Atma yet. Our scriptures say so; you say so; I accept all that to be true. But that does not help me much just now. The ups and downs of daily life do create pain and sorrow. This is common experience. Whether it is justified or not, it is still a fact that I am suffering from शोक - sorrow and distress at this time. Please tell me how I must handle this situation. Anticipating such a request from Arjuna, भगवान् says:

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।

आगमापायिनोऽनित्याः तान् तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥

2-14

कौन्तेय, भारत - O! Arjuna - Please try to understand the nature of pleasure and pain in daily life

मात्राः स्पर्शाः शीत-उष्ण-सुख दुःख-दाः - The contacts of the sense organs (including the mind and बुद्धि) with the sense objects give शीत and उष्ण, and सुख and दुःख - give feelings of cold and heat, and pleasure and pain, which means, the sensory contacts - contacts with sound, touch, form, taste and smell by the sense organs, give the feelings of cold and heat, pleasure and pain.

Cold gives pleasure sometimes and pain sometimes Similarly, heat sometimes gives pleasure, and sometimes pain. Consequently, शीतं and उष्णं - cold and heat are अनित्य स्वरूपं - their effects are indefinite. Sense organs contacting the sense objects, is necessary for the sensory experiences of cold and heat; that, by itself, does not necessarily cause you pleasure and pain. The cold and heat are indefinite in their effects on you. Therefore, these effects are:

आगमापायिनः They come and go; they are



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अनित्याः - transient; they have no permanent existence; it is not worth going after them, or be perturbed by them. Therefore,
तान् तितिक्षस्य - Learn to endure them.

Do not entertain complaints about transient changes. Learn to endure them, and do whatever you need to do, as you meet them. You need not have to jump with joy, simply because they give you some pleasure, and you need not have to entertain शोक simply because they cause you some pain. Any elation depending on a transient thing is short lived. Similarly, any sorrow depending on a transient thing is also short-lived. Therefore, do not entertain any sorrow or elation arising from transient changes. Thus, Sri Krishna says:

- Even though there is no question about the destruction of आत्मा because of its eternal nature, but still, there can be sorrow born out of शीत-उष्ण experiences, arising from sense organs contacting sense objects. This kind of sorrow is transient in nature. Therefore, learn to endure such sorrows and do what you have to do.
- Only when you learn to endure such sorrows, you can cultivate a mind which is capable of appreciating the eternal nature of आत्मा. On such appreciation, the शीत and उष्ण - cold and heat - pleasure and pain experiences will not bother you any more.

Thus Sri Krishna points out that what cannot be cured, has to be endured, and Endurance is a necessary qualification for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं - Self-Knowledge.

To start with, तितिक्षत्वं - Endurance is a साधन - a means, but as one matures, endurance becomes spontaneous expression of a wise man. शीत and उष्ण are pairs of opposites - such as success and failure, gain and loss, etc. If one learns to endure happily the pairs of opposites, what one gets out of such endurance - Sri Krishna says in the next verse:

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।
समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥

2-15

पुरुषर्षभ - O! Arjuna,

यं हि पुरुषं - Indeed, that person - which person?

समदुःखसुखं - The one who remains the same in the wake of the occurrence of desirable or undesirable events; the one who is free from elation or depression in the wake of occurrence of desirable or undesirable events - that person; again,



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एते न व्यथयन्ति - that person to whom the effects of sensory contacts - the शीत and उष्ण - the pairs of opposites - do not cause any agitation, that person is a धीरः - a wise person.

सः अमृतत्वाय कल्पते

-that person becomes fit for मोक्ष;

-that person qualifies himself or herself for total fulfillment in life - Absolute Happiness in life;

- that person becomes eligible for आत्म ज्ञानं - realization of Self-Knowledge

Thus Sri Krishna has pointed out the importance of तितिक्षत्यं - Endurance - as a prerequisite for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं, and gaining आत्म ज्ञानं is the only way for overcoming every kind of शोक - sadness and distress in life.

We will continue next time.