



भगवत् गीता

द्वितीयोऽध्यायः - सांख्य योगः

Chapter 2

Volume 7

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Sri Krishna has been explaining to Arjuna that the true nature of oneself is **आत्मा**, and the nature of **आत्मा** is **नित्यः** Eternal, **अव्ययः** unchanging, **अचिनाशि** unchangeable, **अप्रमेयः** incomprehensible through any means of knowledge, etc. and for one to be happy, one has to know oneself, and one has to be oneself in terms of one's true nature, and at the same time, do whatever is one's duty in the circumstances of one's own life in this transient world of existence.

Arjuna has been listening to all this talk about **आत्मा**, self-realization, etc, but his own mind is in a different plane, and in a different mood. Whatever be the truth about one's real nature, one still has to deal with the reality of one's own world of daily life; and that world is an ever-changing one, where a person is identified only in terms of one's body,



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mind and intellect, and their actions. In terms of such identification, Arjuna is certainly not happy in the situation in which he finds himself at this time and place.

Therefore Arjuna does not feel particularly enlightened or uplifted from his state of depression, sorrow and distress by the words of Sri Krishna. Arjuna obviously needs more help to uplift himself; Sri Krishna knows this, and He now comes to the rescue of Arjuna at his own level.

Sri Krishna says:

अथ चैनं नित्यं जातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम् ।
तथापि त्वं महाबाहो, नैनं शोचितुं अर्हसि ॥ 2 - 26

महाबाहो - O! Arjuna

अथ च एनं (आत्मानं) मन्यसे - Even if you look upon Self simply as

नित्यं जातं वा नित्यं मृतम् - the physical body which is subject to repeated birth and death,

तथा अपि त्वं एनं शोचितुं न अर्हसि - even then, it does not befit you, a person of your stature and maturity, to entertain sorrow in the manner you are doing now. Even if you accept the popular view that the self is only शरीर - the physical body, and that it is not eternal, but it is subjected to repeated birth and death, even then, there is no reason for you to entertain grief, because,

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युः ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
तस्मात् अपरिहार्येऽर्थे, न त्वं शोचितुं अर्हसि ॥ 2 - 27

जातस्य ध्रुवो मृत्युः - For the one who is born, death is certain; and

ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च - For the one who is dead, birth is also certain.

हि - indeed. That being so,

अपरिहार्ये अर्थे - in this matter, which is inevitable and this being the natural and unalterable fact of life,

त्वं न शोचितुं अर्हसि - it does not befit you to entertain sorrow. From the point of view of this शरीर - this physical body - birth and death are nothing but changes in one's continuing evolution. Therefore, from the point of view of the शरीर also, it does not befit you to entertain शोक - any kind of sorrow, particularly because

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि, व्यक्त मध्यानि भारत ।



अव्यक्त निधनान्येव तत्र का परि देवना ॥ 2 - 28

अव्यक्त आदीनि भूतानि,

- All people who are living today were unmanifest to begin with;
- they were not seen before their birth;
- for all people, beginning is unknown;
- for all of us, the origin of our शरीर is unknown;

अव्यक्त निधनानि एव - All people living today will become unmanifest again some day; when they leave their physical bodies, they disappear into the unknown;

व्यक्त मध्यानि - In between birth and death, people become manifest - they move about with an appearance. All of us, living now, are व्यक्त मध्यानि - we have an appearance of existence in the in-between stages of our journey. Such appearance is called मिथ्या or माया in Vedanta. With reference to all living beings:

- before, they were not here;
- later, they will not be here;
- in-between, it appears they are here;
- that is the nature of मिथ्या

मिथ्या is an appearance; anything that has an appearance can also disappear; on this kind of appearance and disappearance,

तत्र का परि देवना - What is there to lament?

भारत - O! Arjuna,

Just look at the infinite kinds of appearances and disappearances taking place in the world every day. This kind of appearance and disappearance is indeed a wonder; indeed, मिथ्या is indeed a wonder to marvel and enjoy. In order to marvel and enjoy this wonder of मिथ्या, one should first be able to appreciate the marvel that is आत्मा - The सत्यं, the Truth behind all मिथ्या, the Truth behind all appearances and disappearances.

That is why, you should first have an appreciation of the nature of आत्मा. If you have that appreciation, then you will naturally appreciate and enjoy the marvel of मिथ्या, and then you will realize that in this marvel of मिथ्या, there is nothing to lament, there is nothing to entertain sorrow.



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Therefore, in order to bring enlightenment to मिथ्या - the appearances and disappearances in this transient world - Sri Krishna has all along been talking about आत्मा. Then, Sri Krishna points out that it is only natural that आत्मा is something difficult to understand.

This आत्मा, this पूर्ण आत्मा - This आत्मा which is Full and All-embracing, is indeed difficult to comprehend, appreciate and realize, because of माया - the inherent power of ब्रह्मन् - manifesting itself as मिथ्या - transient existence, characterized by continuous changes involving infinite appearances and disappearances. We are caught up in these changes so much that we cannot easily understand what is behind all these changes.

Sri Krishna tells here how difficult it is to realize आत्मा

आश्चर्यवत् पश्यति कश्चिदेनं आश्चर्यवत् वदति तथैव चान्यः ।
आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः श्रुणोति श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥

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कश्चित् means "a few" - which few?

भगवान् tells later: मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु

कश्चित् यतति सिद्धये - that कश्चित् - only a few among the millions even try to realize आत्मा; those few are referred here as कश्चित् . Among those few, भगवान् says, कश्चित् एनं (आत्मानं) आश्चर्यवत् पश्यति - a few among those few, see आत्मा as if It is a wonder (आश्चर्यवत्)

तथा एव च, अन्यः एनं (आत्मानं) आश्चर्यवत्

वदति - In a similar manner, a few others among those few, talk about - or teach about - आत्मा as if It is a wonder;

अन्यः च एनं (आत्मानं) आश्चर्यवत् श्रुणोति - yet a few others , among those few, listen about आत्मा, as if It is a Wonder;

श्रुत्वा अपि एनं (आत्मानं) कश्चित् न वेद एव च - Even though one may see, talk, teach or listen about आत्मा as a Wonder, no one really knows आत्मा - because आत्मा is:

अदृष्ट पूर्वं - one has never seen anything like that before;

अद्भुतं - one has never experienced anything like that before;

अकस्मात् दृश्यमानं - recognition of आत्मा is totally unexpected and spontaneous.

Realization of आत्मा is not something you gain logically by doing certain things;



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- it happens, when it happens;
- You realize आत्मा when you realize आत्मा, that is all to it.
- That is indeed आश्चर्य - a wonder, a marvel, a miracle.

The Nature of आत्मा Itself, is indeed a Wonder because:

- It is सत् as well as असत् - It is ever-existent, but it is never separate from anything that is transient existence only;
- आत्मा has no eyes to see, but all eyes see because of आत्मा only;
- आत्मा has no ears to hear, but all ears hear because of आत्मा only;
- आत्मा has no mind, but all minds function because of आत्मा only;
- आत्मा is not located anywhere, but still It is available for recognition in the बुद्धि of everyone, as one's very Self - "I";
- आत्मा has no form, but all forms are nothing but those of आत्मा only;
- आत्मा does not undergo any change, but all changes which do take place are inseparable from आत्मा;
- आत्मा is free from time and place, but all time and place are only in आत्मा;
- आत्मा is not bound by birth and death, but again, birth and death are only appearances of आत्मा ;
- आत्मा has no गुण but all गुणs - all attributes, arise from आत्मा only;
- आत्मा is ONE and indivisible, but It appears divided in this creation as माया with all its infinite manifestations;
- आत्मा is the cause for everything, but It Itself has no cause;

That is why आत्मा is a Wonder, until It is realized. This entire creation arises from, is sustained by, and ultimately merges into आत्मा, while आत्मा remains unchanged during all the changes in this creation. It is indeed an inexplicable Wonder. We really cannot talk much about this creation. As we go on analyzing the cause of everything in this creation, we finally find that we have less and less to talk about. The thing with which we start first as a creation, on further and further analysis, ultimately disappears. What is finally left is only आत्मा, and at this point we have nothing to talk about, and we are reduced to Silence, and That Silence is आत्मा.

We find that every little thing in this creation is a Wonder. A point has no dimension, but a succession of points making up a line has a dimension; how can you have dimension from no dimension - It is a wonder. All my limbs work; how? It is a wonder.



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आत्मा is a Wonder, which means "I" am a wonder. It is about this wonderful "I" that I need to know something. The one who realizes आत्मा as "I am ब्रह्मन्", that person immediately becomes everything - It is indeed a Wonder.

I thought I was locked up in this body; the moment I realize that "I am ब्रह्मन्", I see myself in all beings - It is indeed a Wonder. Such sight itself is a wonder.

How does one see आत्मा? आत्मा is not an object. आत्मा is subject itself. When I realize आत्मा, the subject and the object become identical. The subject आत्मा "I", sees the object आत्मा "I"; such sight itself is a Wonder.

Similarly, neither the mind, nor the words can reach आत्मा. That being the case, how can one talk about आत्मा? Yes, one can talk about आत्मा - how?

ईश्वर प्रसादेन - by the Grace of God,

गुरु वेदान्त वाक्येन - by the words of the उपनिषत्s when unfolded by an enlightened Teacher, as we have here in the भगवत् गीता;

All that is indeed a Wonder - आश्चर्य;

The word आश्चर्य - Wonder, refers only to the कश्चित् the few who see, talk, teach or listen, with respect to आत्मा. After all, one can get on with the business of life, without any आत्म ज्ञानं. To get on in life, one needs only आत्मा which is already there anyway, no आत्म ज्ञानं is necessary. The need for आत्म ज्ञानं arises only when one becomes mature enough to realize that without आत्म ज्ञानं, life is really meaningless. Even for them, until one realizes आत्मा, आत्मा remains a wonder.

The Nature of आत्मा is indeed a Wonder for everybody, the one who sees the आत्मा, the one who talks about आत्मा, the one who listens about आत्मा - each one is a Wonder. In fact, seeing, talking, listening - each is a Wonder in itself. In spite of all this seeing, talking, listening, etc., until one realizes आत्मा, आत्मा is a Wonder for everybody. That is the meaning of this verse.

आश्चर्यवत् पश्यति कश्चिदेनं आश्चर्यवत् वदति तथैव चान्यः ।

आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः श्रुणोति श्रुत्याप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥

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That being the nature of आत्मा, भगवान् says:

देही नित्यं अवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ।
तस्मात् सर्वाणि भूतानि, न त्वं शोचितुं अर्हसि ॥

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भारत - O! Arjuna,

सर्वस्य देहे अयं देही नित्यं अवध्यः - This आत्मा, which indwells in the bodies of all, is
नित्यं अवध्यः - is ever indestructible.

तस्मात् - Therefore, realizing this fact,

सर्वाणि भूतानि, त्वं न शोचितुं अर्हसि - it does not befit you to entertain any sorrow and
distress, on behalf of all the people in front of you.

All this talk about आत्मा, the spiritual nature of existence, etc. has not helped Arjuna to
uplift himself from his mood of depression and sadness. Knowing this, Sri Krishna now
changes his mode of teaching to suit the current mood of Arjuna.

Sri Krishna speaks now in a worldly language, touching the natural, in-born, sensitive
mental make-up of Arjuna, and points out why it is the best for him to stick to his स्वधर्म
- one's own duty, at all times.

How Sri Krishna does that, we will see next time.