



भगवत् गीता

द्वितीयोऽध्यायः - सांख्य योगः

Chapter 2

Volume 8

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकंपितुं अर्हसि । धर्मात् हि युद्धात् श्रेयः अन्यत् क्षत्रियस्य न विध्यते ॥	2 - 31
यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गं द्वारं अपावृतम् । सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥	2 - 32
अथ चेत्त्वं इमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि । ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापं अवाप्स्यसि ॥	2 - 33
अकीर्तिम् चपि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् । संभावितस्य चाकीर्तिः मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥	2 - 34
भयात् रणात् उपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः । येषां च त्वं बहुमतः भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवं ॥	2 - 35
अवाच्य वादान् च बहून् वदिष्यन्ति तव अहिताः । निन्दन्तः तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किं ॥	2 - 36
हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा मोक्ष्यसे महीम् । तस्मात् उत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥	2 - 37
सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ । ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व, नैवं पापं अवाप्स्यसि ॥	2 - 38

Arjuna is still in a mood of mental agitation and depression born of confusion. The confusion is about धर्म, अधर्म, पुण्य, पाप, etc. He must first uplift himself from such confusion, before he can absorb any Vedantic knowledge about आत्मा, जीव, जगत्, etc. In order to help Arjuna to uplift himself from such confusion, Sri Krishna, apparently departing from Vedantic teaching, now speaks in a worldly language, touching the natural, in-born, sensitive, mental make-up of Arjuna at this time. Sri Krishna tells Arjuna:



स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य, न विकंपितुं अर्हसि ।

धर्मात् हि युद्धात् श्रेयः अन्यत् क्षत्रियस्य न विध्यते ॥ 2 - 31

स्वधर्म अपि च अवेक्ष्य - Even looking at the situation from the point of view of स्वधर्म - one's own duty - one's duty to oneself,

न विकंपितुं अर्हसि - it does no befit you, to be shaken by it, to be agitated by it,

हि - because,

धर्मात् युद्धात् श्रेयः अन्यत् क्षत्रियस्य न विध्यते - for a क्षत्रिय, there is nothing superior, there is nothing more welcome, than a righteous war. For a क्षत्रिय, there is no duty higher than that of protecting धर्म in society; and, if that protection involves a war, that war is a righteous war, and it does not befit you to abandon that duty.

Vedic society, in its purest form, is a duty-based society, which means that everyone has duties to do, and nothing else. The word "duty", by its very nature, means that there is no choice involved, which again means that one duty is just as sacred as any other; there is nothing superior or inferior in duties. A duty-based society implies that the overriding objective of every individual, and the society as a whole, is the same. In Vedic Society, that objective is मोक्ष - total freedom from every kind of शोक - sorrow and distress.

Such मोक्ष - such freedom from every kind of शोक is possible for everybody, each by doing one's own duty that has naturally come to one by virtue of one's birth, and other circumstances of life. By doing such duties, in the spirit of Worship of परमेश्वर, and welcoming the results of one's actions as the very Grace of परमेश्वर, every duty well-performed becomes मोक्ष साधनं - one's surest Means for Absolute Freedom - Absolute Happiness - Absolute Peace - and That is so for everybody.

In the Vedic Society, it is the duty of a क्षत्रिय to protect dharma, uphold Law and Justice, and protect the people, weak and strong, alike. If such protection involves fighting a war, then that war becomes a धर्म युद्ध - a war in-keeping with धर्म. It is not for any selfish end of winning a kingdom, or enjoying royal comforts - it is for the protection of people in their overriding pursuit of मोक्ष.

Therefore, Sri Krishna says "In terms of your स्वधर्म - duty to yourself, it does not befit you to get shaken or agitated by this war-event"; further,



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं, स्वर्गं द्वारं अपावृतम् ।

सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ, लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥

2 - 32

यदृच्छया च उपपन्नं - This war has come to you without your seeking; it is indeed God-sent

स्वर्गं द्वारं अपावृतम् - the gate of Heaven is open to you by this war

Earlier, in Chapter 1, Arjuna talked about नरक and स्वर्ग - hell and heaven. He said that he would go to hell by fighting in this war. Sri Krishna corrects him now. " By doing one's duty, nobody goes to hell; whether you win or lose, you go to heaven, because स्वधर्म is मोक्ष साधनं - one's duty to oneself, always leads to मोक्ष; and That is indeed the Highest Heaven".

Therefore, Sri Krishna says:

सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ, लभन्ते युद्धं ईदृशं ॥

पार्थ - O! Arjuna, Happy are the क्षत्रियs who obtain such a warfare (that comes unsought, as an open gateway to heaven). A duty that has to be done has come to you unsought; therefore, do your duty in terms of your own स्वधर्म.

अथ चेत्त्वं इमं धर्म्यं, संग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।

ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च, हित्वा पापं अवाप्स्यसि ॥

2 - 33

अथ चेत् त्वं इमं धर्म्यं, संग्रामं न करिष्यसि - Suppose you will not do what you must do - what you must do as a matter of duty to yourself in this धर्म युद्ध - righteous war. Suppose you choose not to fight in this war, upheld by धर्म,

ततः - Then,

स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च, हित्वा त्वं पापं अवाप्स्यसि - you will not only be abandoning your स्वधर्म and worldly fame, you will also incur sin, which means that you will not only lose your name and fame on earth, you will also lose heaven.

It is not simply a matter of abandoning your duty, and losing your name and fame; there is also something more involved.

अकीर्तिम् चापि भूतानि, कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।

संभावितस्य चाकीर्तिः, मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥

2 - 34



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

अपि च - Further

भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति - people in general will talk about

ते अव्ययाम् अकीर्ति - your loss of fame and honor forever. It is not simply that you will lose your fame; ill-fame will come to you; and people will continue to talk for ever about your loss of fame and honor, in the face of duty (all this, of course, being totally undeserved)

संभावितस्य - for an honored and respected person like you. Today you are the most respected man in the society; you are held in high esteem by friends and foes alike; people think of you as धर्मात्मा - one committed to धर्म,

शूरः - never afraid of anyone,

परंतपः - destroyer of foes to the society, etc; for such an honored person like you,

अकीर्तिः, मरणात् अतिरिच्यते - death is far better than undeserving ill-fame. In short, it is not simply a matter of some temporary loss of fame which will soon be forgotten. It is a matter of ill-fame for you which will stick around for generations to come. Further, what the other army-generals here will think of you?

भयात् रणात् उपरतं, मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।

येषां च त्वं बहुमतः, भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवं ॥ 2 - 35

महारथाः त्वां भयात् रणात् उपरतं मंस्यन्ते - The great warriors assembled here will think of you, will look upon you, as one who has fled the battlefield out of sheer fear; also,

येषां बहुमतः भूत्वा त्वं यास्यसि लाघवं - From the very same people from whom you commanded high respect and regard all this time, you will now receive only lightness and ridicule (लाघवं).

The great generals, army commanders and the other warriors assembled here are not going to think that you are retreating from the battlefield out of compassion; they will think that you are running way from the battlefield out of sheer fear. Having been one very well respected and regarded by friends and enemies alike, now people will talk very lightly of you; people will ridicule you. Do you want to know how lightly they will talk about you?

अवाच्य वादान् च बहून् वदिष्यन्ति तव अहिताः ।

निन्दन्तः तव सामर्थ्यम्, ततो दुःखतरं नु किं ॥ 2 - 36

अवाच्य वादान् बहून् वदिष्यन्ति - They will use unspeakable and undeserving words about you.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

तव अहिताः - your enemies, those who do not wish well for you

निन्दन्तः तव सामर्थ्यं - they will talk very lightly of your prowess;

निन्दन्तः means you will live to listen to all this. What they talk about you will reach your ears wherever you are, whether you like it or not;

ततो दुःखतरं नु किं - What is there more painful than this, to live to listen to all these undeserving ill-words about you.

Thus, from the point of view of स्वधर्म or कीर्ति - duty to yourself or worldly fame and people's reactions, you cannot abandon your duty and still expect to be happy, and try to serve yourself or the society, now, or at any time in the future.

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं, जित्वा वा मोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।

तस्मात् उत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय, युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥ 2 - 37

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं - If you are slain in this war, you will go to heaven;

जित्वा वा मोक्ष्यसे महीम् - If you conquer, if you gain victory in this war, you will enjoy this earth, bringing happiness to yourself and the society, by re-establishing धर्म, and the society will be well served. In either case you are a gainer.

तस्मात् - Therefore, कौन्तेय, O! Arjuna,

उत्तिष्ठ - get up; get out of this sense of depression and confusion; what for?

कर्तव्यं कुरु - Do what needs to be done; what is that?

युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः - resolve to fight in this war, which has come to you as your duty at this time. Please recognize, to fight in this battle at this time is your स्वधर्म - duty to yourself. Recall again and again:

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुं अर्हसि - Even from the point of view of स्वधर्म, it does not befit you, a person of your caliber, to get shaken, to get agitated, by this war situation. The only way to do your duty स्वधर्म - and do it well under all circumstances, is to have the appropriate attitude towards the concept of स्वधर्म - one's own duty. That appropriate attitude is:

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा, लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।

ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व, नैवं पापं अवाप्स्यसि ॥ 2 - 38

In the performance of one's duty, there is no सुख or दुःख - pleasure or pain involved, because when it is a thing to be done, it should just be done, that is all to it.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

सुख or दुःख - pleasure or pain - does not come into the picture, so long as one's vision is on the duty to be done. Whether you gain or lose, makes no difference. The duty is to be done - That is the स्वधर्म attitude. That means:

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा - making pleasure and pain equal, i.e. neither entertaining a passion for pleasure, nor entertaining any hatred for pain. Similarly,

लाभ अलाभौ समे कृत्वा जय अजयौ समे कृत्वा - making gain and loss, success and defeat, all equal; which means, let not considerations of gain and loss govern your action; let not considerations of victory and defeat govern your action, and let there be no passion for pleasure and no hatred for pain. With that attitude (which is the कर्म योग attitude)

युद्धाय युज्यस्व - Get ready for war; prepare yourself both in mood and in action, to fight in this war, as you must;

न एवं पापं अवाप्स्यसि - by doing so, you will not incur any sin. There is no sin involved here It is a matter of स्वधर्म. In engaging yourself in a war which is स्वधर्म - duty to yourself, you will never incur any sin.

In other words, Arjuna, please convert your कर्म into कर्म योग. If you do so, you will not encounter any obstacle to the श्रेयस् - The मोक्ष - Freedom and Happiness you seek. So says Sri Krishna, and That is the Upanishadic Message in today's verses.

From today's verses one should not conclude that Sri Krishna advocates war or violence of any kind, by his advice to Arjuna to fight the war he is in. We must understand that Sri Krishna's advice is entirely with reference to the context. The advice given to Arjuna to fight in the war under the circumstances of his life is स्मृति - the context in the Mahabharata story. The advice of the श्रुति - the उपनिषत् is: Convert कर्म into कर्म योग and That is the road leading to मोक्ष - Freedom and Happiness.

On reflection, we can understand that the message of the स्मृति, and that of श्रुति are indeed identical. Thus, Sri Krishna has converted what is essentially a pep-talk, into a powerful Vedantic Message. The Message is "Convert every कर्म into कर्म योग, and that will uplift you from every kind of confusion and depression".

Sri Krishna builds up on this Message from the next verse onwards, which we will see next time.