



भगवत् गीता

द्वितीयोऽध्यायः - सांख्य योगः

Chapter 2

Volume 8

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकंपितुं अर्हसि ।

svadharma mapi cāveksya na vikāṃpituṃ arhasi ।

धर्मात् हि युद्धात् श्रेयः अन्यत् क्षत्रियस्य न विध्यते ॥

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dharmāt hi yuddhāt śreyaḥ anyat kṣatriyasya na vidhyate ॥

यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गं द्वारं अपावृतम् ।

yadṛcchayā copapannaṃ svarga dvāraṃ apāvṛtam ।

सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥

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sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ pārtha labhante yuddhamīdṛśam ॥

अथ चेत्त्वं इमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।

atha cettvaṃ imaṃ dharmyaṃ saṅgrāmaṃ na kariṣyasi ।

ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापं अवाप्स्यसि ॥

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tataḥ svadharmam kīrtim ca hitvā pāpaṃ avāpsyasi ॥

अकीर्तिम् चपि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।

akīrtim capi bhūtāni kathayiṣyanti te'vyayām ।

संभावितस्य चाकीर्तिः मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥

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sambhāvitasya cākīrtiḥ maraṇādatiricyate ॥

भयात् रणात् उपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।

bhayāt raṇāt uparataṃ maṁsyante tvāṃ mahārathāḥ ।

येषां च त्वं बहुमतः भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवं ॥

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yeṣāṃ ca tvam bahumataḥ bhūtvā yāsyasi lāghavaṃ ॥

अवाच्य वादान् च बहून् वदिष्यन्ति तव अहिताः ।

avācya vādān ca bahūn vadiṣyanti tava ahitāḥ ।



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निन्दन्तः तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किं ॥ 2 - 36
nindantaḥ tava sāmartyaṁ tato duḥkhataraṁ nu kiṁ ॥

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा मोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।
hato vā prāpsyasi svargaṁ jitvā vā mokṣyase mahim ।
तस्मात् उत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥ 2 - 37
tasmāt uttiṣṭha kaunteya yuddhāya kṛtaniścayaḥ ॥

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।
sukhaduḥkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābhau jayājayau ।
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व, नैवं पापं अवाप्स्यसि ॥ 2 - 38
tato yuddhāya yujyasva, naivaṁ pāpaṁ avāpsyasi ॥

Arjuna is still in a mood of mental agitation and depression born of confusion. The confusion is about धर्म *dharma*, अधर्म *adharma*, पुण्य *puṇya*, पाप *pāpa*, etc. He must first uplift himself from such confusion, before he can absorb any Vedantic knowledge about आत्मा *ātmā*, जीव *jīva*, जगत् *jagat*, 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 ।
svadharma mapi cāveksya, na vikāmpitum arhasi ।
धर्मात् हि युद्धात् श्रेयः अन्यत् क्षत्रियस्य न विध्यते ॥ 2 - 31
dharmāt hi yuddhāt śreyaḥ anyat kṣatriyasya na vidhyate ॥

स्वधर्मं अपि च अवेक्ष्य *svadharmaṁ api ca avekṣya* - Even looking at the situation from the point of view of स्वधर्म *svadharma* - one's own duty - one's duty to oneself, न विकंपितुं अर्हसि *na vikāmpitum arhasi* - it does no befit you, to be shaken by it, to be agitated by it, हि *hi* - because, धर्मात् युद्धात् श्रेयः अन्यत् क्षत्रियस्य न विध्यते *dharmāt yuddhāt śreyaḥ anyat kṣatriyasya na vidhyate* - for a क्षत्रिय *kṣatriya*, there is nothing superior, there is nothing more welcome, than a righteous war. For a क्षत्रिय *kṣatriya*, there is no duty



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higher than that of protecting धर्म *dharma* 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 *mokṣa* - total freedom from every kind of शोक *śoka* - sorrow and distress.

Such मोक्ष *mokṣa* - such freedom from every kind of शोक *śoka* 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 *parameśvar*, and welcoming the results of one's actions as the very Grace of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, every duty well-performed becomes मोक्ष साधनं *mokṣa sādhanam* - 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 *kṣatriya* 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 *dharma yuddha* - a war in-keeping with धर्म *dharma*. 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 *mokṣa*.

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

यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं, स्वर्गं द्वारं अपावृतम् ।

yadṛcchayā copapannaṁ, svarga dvāraṁ apāvṛtam ।

सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ, लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥ 2 - 32

sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ pārtha, labhante yuddhamīdṛśam ॥

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

स्वर्गं द्वारं अपावृतम् *svarga dvāraṁ apāvṛtam* - the gate of Heaven is open to you by this war

Earlier, in Chapter 1, Arjuna talked about नरक *naraka* and स्वर्ग *svarga* - 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



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heaven, because स्वधर्म *svadharma* is मोक्ष साधनं *mokṣa sādhanam* - one's duty to oneself, always leads to मोक्ष *mokṣa*; and That is indeed the Highest Heaven".

Therefore, Sri Krishna says:

सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ, लभन्ते युद्धं ईदृशं ॥

sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ pārtha, labhante yuddham īdṛśam ॥

पार्थ *pārtha* - O! Arjuna, Happy are the क्षत्रियस *kṣatriyas* 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 *svadharma*.

अथ चेत्त्वं इमं धर्म्यं, संग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।

atha cettvaṁ imaṁ dharmyaṁ, saṅgrāmaṁ na kariṣyasi ।

ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च, हित्वा पापं अवाप्स्यसि ॥ 2 - 33

tataḥ svadhamam kīrtim ca, hitvā pāpaṁ avāpsyasi ॥

अथ चेत् त्वं इमं धर्म्यं *atha cet tvaṁ imaṁ dharmyaṁ*, संग्रामं न करिष्यसि *saṅgrāmaṁ na kariṣyasi* - Suppose you will not do what you must do - what you must do as a matter of duty to yourself in this धर्म युद्ध *dharma yuddha* - righteous war. Suppose you choose not to fight in this war, upheld by धर्म *dharma*.

ततः *tataḥ* - Then,

स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च, हित्वा त्वं पापं अवाप्स्यसि *svadharman kīrtim ca, hitvā tvaṁ pāpaṁ avāpsyasi*- you will not only be abandoning your स्वधर्म *svadharma*. 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 ।

akīrtim cāpi bhūtāni, kathayiṣyanti te'vyayām ।

संभावितस्य चाकीर्तिः, मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥ 2 - 34

sambhāvatasya cākīrtaḥ, maraṇādati ricyate ॥

अपि च *api ca* - Further



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भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति *bhūtāni kathayiṣyanti* - people in general will talk about

ते अव्ययाम् अकीर्तिं *te avyayām akīrtiṁ* - 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 *sambhāvitasya* - 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 *dharmātmā* - one committed to धर्म *dharma*,

शूरः *śūrah* - never afraid of anyone,

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

अकीर्तिः *akīrtiḥ*, मरणात् अतिरिच्यते *maraṇāt atiricyate* - 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 ।

bhayāt raṇāt uparataṁ, maṁsyante tvāṁ mahārathāḥ ।

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

yeṣāṁ ca tvāṁ bahumataḥ, bhūtvā yāsyasi lāghavaṁ ॥

महारथाः त्वां भयात् रणात् उपरतं मंस्यन्ते *mahārathāḥ tvāṁ bhayāt raṇāt uparataṁ maṁsyante* - 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 *yeṣāṁ bahumataḥ bhūtvā tvāṁ yāsyasi lāghavaṁ* - 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 *lāghavaṁ*).

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 ।

avācya vādān ca bahūn vadiṣyanti tava ahitāḥ ।



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निन्दन्तः तव सामर्थ्यम्, ततो दुःखतरं नु किं ॥ 2 - 36
nindantaḥ tava sāmāthyam, tato duḥkhataram nu kiṁ ॥

अवाच्य वादान् बहून् वदिष्यन्ति *avācya vādān bahūn vadiṣyanti* - They will use unspeakable and undeserving words about you.

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

निन्दन्तः तव सामर्थ्यं *nindantaḥ tava sāmāthyam* - they will talk very lightly of your prowess;

निन्दन्तः *nindantaḥ* 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 *tato duḥkhataram nu kiṁ* - 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 *svadharma* or कीर्ति *kīrti* - 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 ।

hato vā prāpsyasi svargaṁ, jitvā vā mokṣyase mahīm ।

तस्मात् उत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय, युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥ 2 - 37

tasmāt uttiṣṭha kaunteya, yuddhāya kṛtāniścayaḥ ॥

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं *hato vā prāpsyasi svargaṁ* - If you are slain in this war, you will go to heaven;

जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् *jitvā vā bhokṣyase mahīm* - 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 *dharma*, and the society will be well served. In either case you are a gainer.

तस्मात् *tasmāt* - Therefore, कौन्तेय *kaunteya*, O! Arjuna,

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

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

युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः *yuddhāya kṛtāniścayaḥ* - 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 *svadharma* - duty to yourself. Recall again and again:

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुं अर्हसि *svadharma mapi cāveṣya na vikampitum arhasi* - Even from the point of view of स्वधर्म *svadharma*, it does not befit you, a



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person of your caliber, to get shaken, to get agitated, by this war situation. The only way to do your duty स्वधर्म *svadharma* - and do it well under all circumstances, is to have the appropriate attitude towards the concept of स्वधर्म *svadharma* - one's own duty. That appropriate attitude is:

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा, लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।
sukha duḥkhe same kṛtvā, lābhālābhau jayā jayau ।
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व, नैवं पापं अवाप्स्यसि ॥ 2 - 38
tato yuddhāya yujyasva, naivaṁ pāpaṁ avāpsyasi ॥

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

सुख *sukha* or दुःख *duḥkha* - 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 *svadharma* attitude. That means:

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा *sukha duḥkhe same kṛtvā* - 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 *lābha alābhau same kṛtvā jaya ajayau same kṛtvā* - 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 *karma yoga* attitude)

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

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

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



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

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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 *smṛti* - the context in the Mahabharata story. The advice of the श्रुति *śruti* - the उपनिषत् *upaniṣat* is: Convert कर्म *karma* into कर्म योग *karma yoga* and That is the road leading to मोक्ष *mokṣa* - Freedom and Happiness.

On reflection, we can understand that the message of the स्मृति *smṛti*, and that of श्रुति *śruti* 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 *karma* into कर्म योग *karma yoga*, 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.