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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

तृतीयोऽध्यायः - कर्मयोगः

trītiyo'dhyāyaḥ - karma yogaḥ

Chapter 3

Volume 7

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यं, अनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।

ye me matamidam nityam, anutiṣṭhānti mānavāḥ ।

श्रद्धावन्तः अनसूयन्तः, मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥ 3 - 31

śraddhāvantaḥ anasūyantaḥ, mucyante te'pi karmabhiḥ ॥

ये तु एतत् अभ्यसूयन्तः, न अनुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतं ।

ye tu etat abhyasūyantaḥ, na anutiṣṭhanti me matam ।

सर्वज्ञान विमूढान्, तान् विद्धि, नष्टान् अचेतसः ॥ 3 - 32

sarvajñāna vimūdhān, tān viddhi, naṣṭān acetasaḥ ॥

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेः ज्ञानवान् अपि ।

sadṛśam ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛteḥ jñānavān api ।

प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि, निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥ 3 - 33

prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni, nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati ॥

इन्द्रियस्य इन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।

indriyasya indriyasyārthe rāgadveṣau vyavasthitau ।

तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्, तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥ 3 - 34

tayorna vaśamāgacchet, tau hyasya paripanthinau ॥

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः, परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

śreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ, paradharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt ।

स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः, परधर्मो भयावहः ॥ 3 - 35

svadharme nidhanaṁ śreyaḥ, paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ ॥

Recalling the last verse we saw last time

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्य अध्यात्मचेतसा ।



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mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi samnyasya adhyātma cetasā ।

निराशीः निर्ममो भूत्वा, युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥ 3 - 30

nirāśīḥ nirmamo bhūtvā, yudhyasva vigatajvaraḥ ॥

- ✓ "Dedicating all actions to ME - the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*
- ✓ with the attitude born of विवेक बुद्धि *viveka buddhi* - discriminative knowledge
- ✓ with the mind not being governed by any expectations
- ✓ with the mind totally devoid of any मम *mama* notion ("my" notion)
- ✓ uplifting yourself from the ailment of confusion and depression which has now descended upon you
- ✓ do what you must do, as your duty at this time and place, and do it as well as you can"

So said Sri Krishna to Arjuna.

That is कर्म योग *karma yoga* - That is Being in कर्म योग *karma yoga*. For living a life of कर्म योग *karma yoga* there are three essential prerequisites. They are: श्रद्धा *śraddhā*, अनसूय *anasūya* and अनुष्ठान *anuṣṭān*.

श्रद्धा *śraddhā* is faith - faith in the best in your own self, as you see it, by your own innermost intuition. It is faith born of the power of discriminative understanding that God has blessed you with; and in the context here, श्रद्धा *śraddhā* is faith in कर्म योग *karma yoga* as the solution, as the only solution to your problems of daily life.

अनसूय *anasūya* is the total absence of any trace of असूय *asūya* - cynicism, intolerance or any tendency to find fault with others, due to one's own in-born likes and dislikes.

अनुष्ठान *anuṣṭān* is कर्म योग अनुष्ठान *karma yoga anuṣṭān* - the practice of कर्म योग *karma yoga* in daily life, not based on any blind belief, or any pragmatic considerations, but based only on विवेक बुद्धि *viveka buddhi* - one's faculty of discriminative understanding.

The practice of कर्म योग *karma yoga* involves actions, not actions pushed by the forces of one's likes and dislikes, but actions inspired by ज्ञानं - knowledge - ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ* - that knowledge governed by ईश्वर आराधन बुद्धि



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īśvara ārādhana buddhi, which makes every कर्म *karma* a यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* - that is कर्म योग *karma yoga*, practice of कर्म योग *karma yoga*.

Such कर्म योग अनुष्ठान *karma yoga anuṣṭān* is possible only if one has श्रद्धा *śraddhā* and अनसूय *anasūya*. If one has श्रद्धा *śraddhā* and अनसूय *anasūya*, and practices कर्म योग *karma yoga* as described by Sri Krishna in the previous verse, then, what happens? Sri Krishna says:

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यं, अनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।

ye me matamidam nityam, anutiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ ।

श्रद्धावन्तः अनसूयन्तः मुच्यन्ते तेषुपि कर्मभिः ॥ 3 - 31

śraddhāvantaḥ anasūyantaḥ mucyante te'pi karmabhiḥ ॥

मतं *matam* usually means advice based on understanding. Here मे मतं *me matam* is ईश्वर मतं *īśvara matam* - the Divine counsel - Sri Krishna's advice to humanity to live a life of कर्म योग *karma yoga* for one's own good.

ये मानवाः, इदं मे मतं, अनुतिष्ठन्ति *ye mānavāḥ, idam me matam, anutiṣṭhanti*
- Those people who follow the advice of Sri Krishna, and practice कर्म योग *karma yoga* in daily life

नित्यं *nityam* - at all times - not occasionally

श्रद्धावन्तः अनसूयन्तः *śraddhāvantaḥ anasūyantaḥ* - With श्रद्धा *śraddhā* and अनसूय *anasūya* - with unqualified faith in कर्म योग *karma yoga* and total absence of cynicism

ते अपि कर्मभिः मुच्यन्ते *te api karmabhiḥ mucyante* - they are also released - even **they** are released, from the bondages of कर्म *karma*.

Here Sri Krishna is telling something that is very significant - please listen.

To gain release from the bondages of कर्म *karma* means gaining मोक्ष श्रेयस् *mokṣa śreyas* - the highest goal of life. We know that only a ज्ञानी *jñānī* - an enlightened person, gains मोक्ष *mokṣa*. कर्म योग *karma yoga* involves action, and ज्ञानं *jñānam* is not the result of any action.

Sri Krishna tells here:



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In order to gain मोक्ष *mokṣa*, you need not have to become a ज्ञानी *jñānī*. Be a कर्मयोगी *karma yogī*, that is enough. Because कर्म योग *karma yoga* itself will release you from bondages of कर्म *karma*. Once that happens, the rest will take its natural course, ultimately leading you to मोक्ष *mokṣa*.

कर्म योग *karma yoga* naturally brings about अन्तःकरण शुद्धि *antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi* - makes your mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* free from the hold of your in-born राग-द्वेष *rāga-dveṣa* forces. When that happens, your mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* will naturally grow to their full maturity through ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidya* and आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*.

This means there is no choice between कर्म *karma* and ज्ञानं *jñānaṁ*. For gaining ज्ञानं *jñānaṁ*, कर्म *karma* is a necessity. Therefore, for gaining आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* - ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānaṁ* - ईश्वरज्ञानं *īśvara jñānaṁ* what should one do? First, do कर्तव्यं कर्म *katavyaṁ karma*, do कर्म *karma* that has come to you naturally, as your duty, and do that कर्म *karma* always in accordance with धर्म *dharma* - propriety and gratitude - धर्म कर्म *dharma karma* and यज्ञकर्म *yajña karma*.

Enjoy all that such धर्म कर्म *dharma karma* and यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* can give you. As the Upanishad says

जिजीविषेच्छतै समाः *jijī viṣecchataṁ samāḥ* - Then realize the limitations of कर्म फल *karma phala*, then become a मुमुक्षु *mumukṣu* - one who wants to gain मोक्ष *mokṣa*. Then follow कर्म योग *karma yoga*, thereby gain अन्तःकरण शुद्धि *antaḥ karaṇa śuddha* - which will naturally lead you to ब्रह्म विद्या *brahma vidyā* - ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānaṁ* and hence मोक्ष *mokṣa*. That is the route, for gaining श्रेयस् *śreyas* - Total fulfillment in life.

Now, what happens to one who has no श्रद्धा *śraddhā* and no अनसूय *anasūya* - one who has no faith in

कर्म योग *karma yoga* and also not free from cynicism, intolerance, etc., and hence does not, and cannot, practice कर्म योग *karma yoga*? About such a person, Sri Krishna says:



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ये तु एतत् अभ्यसूयन्तः, न अनुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतं ।

ye tu etat abhyasūyantaḥ, na anutiṣṭhanti me mataṁ ।

सर्वं ज्ञानं विमृष्टान् तान् विद्धि नष्टान् अचेतसः ॥ 3-32

sarva jñāna vimūḍhān tān viddhi naṣṭān acetasaḥ ॥

ये तु, न अनुतिष्ठन्ति, मे मतं *ye tu, na anutiṣṭhanti, me mataṁ* - Whereas those who do not follow my advice to humanity to live a life of कर्म योग *karma yoga*

अभ्यसूयन्तः *abhyasūyantaḥ* means अभि असूयन्तः *abhi asūyantaḥ* - not seeing the virtue in it, laughing at it or finding fault with it due to असूय *asūya*, due to intolerance, envy, jealousy, likes, dislikes, etc.

तान् विद्धि, सर्वं ज्ञानं विमृष्टान् *tān viddhi, sarva jñāna vimūḍhān* - recognize such people to be confused in all branches of knowledge - not only in आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - self-knowledge, but also in any branch of knowledge, because श्रद्धा *śraddhā* and अनसूय *anasūya* are necessary for gaining a true and abiding appreciation of any knowledge. With असूय *asūya* - with envy or intolerance, a dispassionate enquiry and clarity of any knowledge are not possible.

Therefore, those who have no श्रद्धा *śraddhā*, no अनसूय *anasūya* and no कर्मयोग *karma yoga* - those people are

नष्टान् *naṣṭān* - they are ruining themselves, because

अचेतसः *acetasaḥ* - they are devoid of विवेक बुद्धि *viveka buddhi*. They have no ability to decide what is right and what is wrong. Because of their inability to appreciate any branch of knowledge, they become confused as to what is right and what is wrong, and they bring only ruin to themselves, even with respect to their धर्म-अर्थ-काम *dharma-artha-kāma* pursuits - even in terms of transient values and material prosperity.

Therefore, the prerequisites of कर्म योग *karma yoga*, namely श्रद्धा *śraddhā* and अनसूय *anasūya*, faith in the best in oneself and total absence of intolerance, cynicism, envy, jealousy, etc. - these prerequisites of कर्म योग *karma* are necessary for every human being, even from the point of view of one's pursuit of transient happiness, prosperity and success in daily life.



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On the other hand, for real, abiding prosperity, success and happiness, श्रद्धा *śraddhā* and अनसूय *anasūya* alone are not enough. कर्म योग अनुष्ठान *karma yoga anuṣṭān* - practice of कर्म योग *karma yoga* is also necessary.

Again, just think about it - what is कर्म योग *karma yoga*?

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं *niyataṁ kuru karma tvam* - Do the कर्म *karma* that has come to you naturally, as your duty.

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्य *mayi sarvāṇi karmaṇi saṁnyasya* - Do all actions as dedication to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. How?

अध्यात्मचेतसा *adhyātma cetasā* - with your mind absorbed in विवेक बुद्धि *viveka buddhi* - i.e. with no dissipations of the mind

निराशीः *nirāśiḥ* - with your mind not being governed by any expectations

निर्ममो भूत्वा *nirmamo bhūtvā* - with your mind free from any sense of self-possession and

विगतज्वरः *vagatajvaraḥ* - with your mind free from any sorrow or distress

That is the कर्म योग *karma yoga* way of doing things. That seems easy enough to do. That kind of doing should make one's life easier, free from worries, and certainly far less stressful. Then why is it that people are not following कर्म योग *karma yoga*?

Even after reading all the scriptures, the words of Veda and Vedanta, even after knowing that ईश्वर शासनं *īśvara śāsanam* - the Divine Law of nature, is that doing कर्म *karma* as कर्म योग *karma yoga* is good for everybody, why do people cross the law of nature? Why are they not frightened of the consequences?

If one mishandles fire, it will certainly hurt. Everybody knows that. Then why would anyone like to mishandle fire? For such a question, Sri Krishna says:

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेः ज्ञानवान् अपि ।

sadṛśam ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛteḥ jñānavān api ।

प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि, निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥

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prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni, nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati ॥



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सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः, प्रकृतेः ज्ञानवान् अपि *sadṛśam ceṣṭate svasyāḥ, prakṛteḥ jñānavān api*

ज्ञानवान् अपि *jñānavān api* - Even a knowledgeable person, even a person who has all the knowledge contained in the Vedas and Vedanta

चेष्टते *ceṣṭate* - he does all his कर्मसु *karmas* - all his actions

सदृशं स्वस्याः प्रकृतेः *sadṛśam svasyāḥ prakṛteḥ* - in keeping with, or, in accordance with one's own प्रकृति *prakṛti* body-mind-intellect nature.

Even a knowledgeable person does all actions in conformity with one's own प्रकृति *prakṛti* or nature. प्रकृति *prakṛti* - one's nature is nothing but an expression of one's पूर्व-कर्मसु *pūrva-karmas* - one's past प्रारब्ध कर्मसु *prārabdha karmas*, which are yielding fruits in the form of one's present life. One's past कर्मसु *karmas* and कर्म फलसु *karma phalas* - one's past actions and their results, even though they might have been over long time ago, they have still left something in the person in the form of वासनासु *vāsanās*, impressions.

वासनासु *vāsanās* are like the lingering smell of an object that was left in the bottle long time ago. The object is no longer there, but the smell is still there. Similarly, one's past actions and experiences have left some वासनासु *vāsanās* - some impressions, in the person in the form of one's innate tendencies, in the form of one's राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* - likes and dislikes.

One may like an object, or one may dislike an object. But the likes and dislikes themselves are not objects. I did not put my likes and dislikes in me. They are just there. Everybody has वासनासु *vāsanās* - likes and dislikes. Even a baby has likes and dislikes. These likes and dislikes are different for different people. Even a knowledgeable person does actions, and behaves in conformity with his वासनासु *vāsanās* which manifest themselves as राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* - likes and dislikes.

प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि *prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni* - All human beings, indeed, all beings, behave according to their प्रकृति वासनासु *prakṛtiṁ vāsanās*. Thus the प्रकृति वासनासु *prakṛtiṁ vāsanās* - the left over impressions of one's past actions and experiences, **set** the innate, or natural tendencies in every human being. There is nothing you can do with these tendencies. You cannot get rid of them. If these tendencies are strong



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enough, they will decide your every day behaviour. Nobody, no knowledge can change your behaviour.

निग्रहः किं करिष्यति *nigrahaḥ kiṃ kariṣyati* -

निग्रहः *nigrahaḥ* - means restraint or advice as to what to do, and what not to do.

किं करिष्यति *kiṃ kariṣyati* - what can it do? If your वासनाs *vāsanās* are strong enough, advice from anybody, even from Sri Krishna, cannot stop you from doing what you are pushed to do by your own वासनाs *vāsanās*. That is why, even though people know what is right and what is wrong, what is proper and what is improper, still they sometimes do wrong things because they are overpowered by their प्रकृति वासनाs *prakṛti vāsanās* - the tendencies stored up in them by the residual effects of their past actions and experiences.

If I cannot get rid of my प्रकृति वासनाs *prakṛti vāsanās* - which are already in me because of my past actions and experiences, what is it that I can do now to uplift myself from the tyranny of my own tendencies? The answer is, you cannot stop the rain, but you can protect yourself from the rain. Sri Krishna gives this answer in the following words

इन्द्रियस्य इन्द्रियस्य अर्थे राग द्वेषौ व्यवदिथतौ ।

indriyasya indriyasya arthe rāga dveṣau vyavādthitau ।

तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत् तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥

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tayorna vaśamāgacchet tau hyasya paripanthinau ॥

इन्द्रियस्य इन्द्रियस्य अर्थे *indriyasya indriyasya arthe* means प्रति इन्द्रियस्य अर्थे विषये *prati indriyasya arthe viṣaye* - In the object of each one of your organs of perception and action, including mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, for example, the objects of your organs of perception are शब्द *śabda*, स्पर्श *sparśa*, रूप *rūpa*, रस *rasa*, and गन्ध *gandha* - the senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell, in each one of these sense objects, and similarly also, in each one of the objects of one's thought, word and deed.

रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ *rāgadveṣau vyavasthitau* - the राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* - passion and hatred, intense likes and dislikes, are firmly lodged. Your प्रकृति वासनाs *prakṛti vāsanās* exist firmly lodged in each one of your इन्द्रिय विषयस *indriya vaśayas* - objects of your organs of perception, action, mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*. They exist as



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passion and hatred, as intense likes in what you desire, and as intense dislikes in what you do not desire.

It is important to understand the nature of राग-द्वेष *rāga-dveṣa* tendencies in oneself. They, by themselves, do not generate any desire. It is not that you desire something because you intensely like it. You intensely like something because you desire it. How does desire come into your mind? Sri Krishna has already told that in Chapter 2:

ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः, संगस्तेषूपजायते । संगत् संजायते कामः 2 - 62
dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ, saṁgasteṣūpajāyate | saṁgāt saṁjāyate kāmah

Dwelling on the objects of the organs of perception and action, one develops an attachment to them, and if that attachment gets rooted into the mind, a काम *kāma* desire - a desire leading to a longing, craving, a thirst for something outside of yourself, such a काम *kāma* desire is born and this काम *kāma* desire is assisted by one's प्रकृति वासनās *prakṛti vāsanās* of राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* - intense likes and dislikes.

Suppose I hear something which I desire. Immediately my प्रकृति वासन *prakṛti vāsanā* props up as राग *rāga*, and assists that desire to grow into a thirst for what I hear. Similarly, suppose I hear something that I do not desire, again, immediately, my प्रकृति वासन *prakṛti vāsanā* props up in the form of द्वेष *dveṣa* - a dislike for what I hear. So is the case with respect to objects of all our organs of perception and action, both internal and external.

Thus one's वासन *vāsanā* itself has no form or name, it is an in-born tendency, peculiar to each person, inseparably bound to one's ज्ञानेन्द्रिय *jñānendriyas* and कर्मेन्द्रिय *karmendriyas* - organs of perception and action. One may not even be aware of one's own राग-द्वेष *rāga-dveṣa* tendencies.

Here is an object which I had never seen before. Somehow, I happen to see it. The moment I see it, my वासन *vāsanās* props up, as राग *rāga* or द्वेष *dveṣa* and clouds my vision. As a result, I either like the object or dislike the object, for apparently no reason. Thus the प्रकृति वासन *prakṛti vāsanās* - राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* - exist in me as if they are two invisible, ever-vigilant, formless, twin-brothers jumping on me, any time I hear, I feel, see, taste or smell something and create in me a thirst of like or dislike.



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About the existence of राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* itself, there is nothing one can do. But then, there is always an expression arising from राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* - here comes our पुरुष प्रयत्न *puruṣa prayatna* - self-effort.

In the existence of राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* you have no control, but in the expression of राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa*, you **do** have control, so says Sri Krishna.

तयोः न वशं आगच्छेत्, तौ हि अस्य परिपन्थिनौ ।

tayoḥ na vaśam āgacchet, tau hi asya paripanthināu ।

The पुरुष प्रयत्न *puruṣa prayatna* - the self-effort, is to put a restraint, a प्रतिबन्ध *pratibandha*, on the expression of राग-द्वेष *rāga-dveṣa* - that is all that is required. And it is this ability to restrain oneself that really matters in life.

All the advice and knowledge of Vedanta is only to give you the ability to cultivate the effective means of controlling your expressions of राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa*. One can have any number, or any kind of राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa*, as long as one can effectively control their expressions, or redirect their expressions. How to control and redirect the expressions of राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* is indeed the purpose of self-effort and Vedantic Knowledge.

Self-Knowledge and self-effort are absolutely essential for one's true happiness in life and for one's progress towards मोक्ष *mokṣa*. The entire भगवत् गीता *bhagvat gītā* is only to help people to progress through Self-Knowledge and self-effort. The very last verse of the Gita says:

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।

yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārtho dhanurdharaḥ ।

तत्र श्रीः विजयो भूतिः ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥

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tatra śrīḥ vijayo bhūtaḥ dhruvā nītimatirmama ॥

Wherever is भगवान् *bhagvān* Sri Krishna, together with Arjuna, **there** is perennial prosperity, success and happiness. Sri Krishna is the very embodiment of Self-knowledge and Arjuna is the very embodiment of self-effort. Therefore, wherever there is self-knowledge - Vedantic knowledge, and self-effort - कर्म योग *karma yoga*, **there** is true prosperity, success and happiness.



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Such prosperity, success and happiness. is possible only for those who do not come under the power of राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* in terms of their expressions. Therefore, भगवान् *bhagavān* says here:

तयोः न वशं आगच्छेत् *tayoḥ na vaśam āgacchet* - Do not surrender to the power of राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* in your expressions. Develop the strength - physical and mental, moral and intellectual strength, necessary to fight the forces of राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* - that is the real fight for everyone of us in life.

Do not ever underestimate the strength of राग-द्वेष *rāga-dveṣa* forces, because

तौ हि अस्य परिपन्थिनौ *tau hi asya paripanthinau* - they are like highway robbers, ever ready, invisible and powerful. They are indeed formidable obstructions in one's road to freedom and happiness.

You cannot make राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* disappear, nor can you change their nature. But you can overpower them by self-knowledge and self-effort, by उपनिषत् *upaniṣat* knowledge and कर्म योग *karma yoga*. If you do that, they will still be there, but they will be rendered powerless. Slowly you can tame them, and make good use of them.

You can use राग वासन *rāga vāsana* to intensify your desire for उपनिषत् *upaniṣat* knowledge and कर्म योग बुद्धि *karma yoga buddhi*, and you can use द्वेष वासन *dveṣa vāsana* to intensify your distaste for improper conduct in daily life. Thus the प्रकृति वासना *prakṛti vāsanā*s of राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* can be made to serve you well, in the pursuit of your highest human endeavour, namely to gain मोक्ष *mokṣa* - Freedom and Happiness.

Arjuna has been playing with the idea of taking to a life of कर्म संन्यास *karma samnyāsa* - which means withdrawing oneself deliberately from all worldly activities, preferring to be a recluse, living on alms, etc., which is totally unnatural to his birth and upbringing. Therefore, भगवान् *bhagavān* concludes this exposition as कर्म योग *karma yoga* with these words.



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श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

śreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ paradharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt ।

स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥

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svadharme nidhanam śreyaḥ paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ ॥

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मोः विगुणः *śreyān svadharmoḥ viguṇaḥ* - One's own धर्म *dharma*, one's own duty, is far better, far superior, far more praiseworthy, even if it appears to be विगुणः *viguṇaḥ* - devoid of any virtue, even if you do not see any virtue in your own duty, in your own birth and other circumstances of life, doing your duty, following your own धर्म *dharma*, is far superior to

परधर्मात् सु अनुष्ठितात् *paradharmāt su anuṣṭhitāt* - the duty of another, even though well discharged.

If you reject your धर्म *dharma* and take to somebody else's धर्म *dharma* that is not natural to you, even if you discharge that धर्म *dharma* properly, you can never gain true happiness, because, the moment you see no virtue in स्वधर्म *svadharma* - your own धर्म *dharma*, you have already surrendered to your enemies.

You must understand that in स्वधर्म *svadharma* - in performing one's duty, whatever that is, there is no such thing as superior or inferior. Duty is duty, it is कर्तव्यं कर्म *katavyam karma* - it is कर्म *karma* to be done, that is all, and nothing more.

Duty has no गुण *guṇa* - duty has no attributes, virtuous or otherwise. If you see no virtue, or if you see something inferior in your own duty, it is only because of your प्रकृति-वासनाs *prakṛti-vāsanās* - राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* forces - the evil forces of your own innate tendencies. When you are propelled by the evil forces of राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa*, which make you think that your स्वधर्म *svadharma* is विगुण *viguṇa* - devoid of any virtue, no matter what other धर्म *dharma* you follow, however virtuous it may appear to be in name and form, really it can bring you no enlightenment or happiness, because you are already a slave to your राग-द्वेष *rāga-dveṣa* forces, and have lost your freedom. Therefore, भगवान् *bhagavān* says

स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः *svadharme nidhanam śreyaḥ* - Even if you have to die while engaged in performing your duty,



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it is far superior, because to that extent you have won the battle over the evil forces of राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* who are your real enemies for your progress. Further,

परधर्मो भयावहः *paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ* - rejecting your own धर्म *dharma* and following somebody else's धर्म *dharma* is only cheap imitation. It is total surrender to your राग-द्वेष वासनाs *rāga-dveṣa vāsanās* which gain more power over you, and they will bring you only more and more fear, leading to greater unhappiness, discontent and delusion.

Therefore, stick to your धर्म *dharma* and do your duty.

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं *niyataṁ kuru karma tvam* - Do what you have to do at this time and place, and do it with कर्म योग बुद्धि *karma yoga buddhi*

So says Sri Krishna.

At this point Arjuna raises a specific question to which Sri Krishna responds appropriately, which we will see next time.