

the sixth verse of this chapter, Arjuna raised a question that they did not know whether they would conquer the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra or Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons, would conquer them. So Lord Kṛṣṇa answers the question and says, "If you are killed by Karna etc., you will attain heaven and if you gain victory, you will gain the kingdom. Thus righteous warfare would result in good, both here and hereafter. So you should be prepared to wage war, otherwise you risk to lose both." Kṛṣṇa by addressing Arjuna as Kaunteya wants to remind him of the message to wage the war, sent by his mother when He went to the Kauravas, with a proposal for a treaty. Therefore, he should rise to the occasion with full determination.

Arjuna was determined not to fight and Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the third verse of this chapter, ordered him to rise to the occasion. Here, Arjuna is in a dilemma, whether to wage war or not. So Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorts him to be determined to fight, without having any doubts.

Here, Lord Kṛṣṇa wants to say that everyone should discharge his duty very sincerely and enthusiastically, to the best of his power and ability, in whatever circumstances, he is placed. Humanity demands it.

Appendix—By discharging one's duty, one makes advancement in this world and other world. It means that by discharging one's duty and by abstaining from what ought not to be done, one attains perfection here as well as hereafter.



सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।

ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ ३८ ॥

sukhaduḥkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābhau jayājayau
tato yuddhāya yujyasva naivaṁ pāpamavāpsyasi

Treating alike victory and defeat, gain and loss, pleasure

and pain and engage yourself in battle. Fighting thus you will incur no sin. 38

Comment:—

[Arjuna was thinking that by killing his kinsmen he would incur sin. So Lord Kṛṣṇa clarifies that it is not the war but desire, which induces a man to incur sin. So by renouncing desire, he should be engaged in war.]

'Sukhaduḥkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābhau jayājayau tato yuddhāya yujyasva'—In a war a man either gains victory or suffers defeat. Victory results in gain, while defeat results in loss. Worldly people, view gain with pleasure and loss with pain. But your aim is not to think of victory and defeat, gain and loss, and pleasure and pain, but your goal is to discharge your duty by treating the agreeable and the disagreeable, alike. By doing so you will incur no sin viz., you will be free from bondage.

Everyone should discharge his duty earnestly and efficiently, whether he has a desire or not for its fruit. By refusing to be affected by favourable and unfavourable circumstances, the mind becomes steady. So treating the two equally, one should discharge one's duty. Moreover, one should not perform an action for the sake of pleasure, and refrain from another, for fear of its pain. Scriptures should be the authority in determining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done (Gītā 16/24).

'Naivam pāpamavāpsyasi'—Here, the word, sin, has been used both for sin and virtue. The former, leads to the bondage of hell and the latter to the constraints of heaven. Both of these deprive a man of salvation and binds him to follow the cycle of birth and death. So, Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorts Arjuna, to discharge his duty of waging war, by being even-minded. This will help him to escape the bondage of both sin and virtue.

Something Noteworthy Regarding This Section

In this section of eight verses from the thirty-first to the thirty-

eighth Lord Kṛṣṇa has disclosed several variegated feelings.

(i) While delivering a discourse or explaining a subject, the beginning should deal with positive aspects, the middle with negative aspects and the conclusion should again deal with positive aspects. In this context also, Lord Kṛṣṇa in the thirty-first and thirty-second verses, explains the favourable consequences of discharging one's duty; in the middle from the thirty-third to the thirty-sixth verses, He explains the adverse consequences of not performing one's duty; and again concludes, in the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth verses, by explaining the favourable consequences of discharging the duty and orders Arjuna to act accordingly.

(ii) In these verses, Lord Kṛṣṇa has also clarified the doubts arising in the mind of Arjuna. For example Arjuna says, "I don't foresee any good, ensuing from the slaughter of kinsmen" (1/31). Lord Kṛṣṇa replies in 2/31, "There is nothing more welcome to a man of the warrior class, than a righteous war." In 1/37 Arjuna says, "How can we, by killing our kinsmen, be happy?" Lord Kṛṣṇa replies in 2/32, "Happy are the Kṣatriyas who get the opportunity of waging such an, unsolicited warfare." In 1/44 Arjuna says, "The consequence of the war will lead to hell." In 2/32,37 Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "The war is an open gateway to heaven." In 1/36 Arjuna says, "Sin alone will accrue to us by waging the war and by slaying them." Lord Kṛṣṇa replies in 2/33, "If you do not wage such a righteous war and abandon your duty, you will incur sin." In 1/40 Arjuna says, "The result of the war will be that impiety will take hold of the entire family." Lord Kṛṣṇa in 2/33 says, "If you do not wage such a righteous war, you will abandon your duty viz., righteousness."

(iii) In 2/5 Arjuna insists and says, "It is better to live on alms, than to wage war." Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa in 2/38, orders him to wage war. Uddhava had a desire to live with Lord Kṛṣṇa. So Lord Kṛṣṇa directed him to go to the northern mountains and do penance there (Śrīmadbhāgavata 11/29/41). It means that,

desire of any type is an obstacle to salvation.

(iv) In these verses Lord Kṛṣṇa has explained in details some of the things which were referred to in brief, in the second and third verses of this chapter. For example earlier the expression 'anāryajuṣṭam' (it is shunned by noble souls) was used, here the expression 'dharmyāddhi yuddhācchreyo'nyat' (any other thing more welcome than a righteous war) has been used. There the term 'asvargyam' (not leading to heaven), was used here the expression 'svargadvāramapāvṛtam, (an open gateway to heaven), has been used. There the term 'akīrtikaram' not bringing fame was used, here the expression 'akīrtim cāpi bhūtāni kathayiṣyanti te'vyayām' (all creatures will even recount your undying infamy) has been used. There, Lord Kṛṣṇa ordered Arjuna to fight by using the expression 'tyaktvotiṣṭha parantapa' here, also, He orders him the fight by using the expression 'tato yuddhāya yujyasva'.

Appendix—The Gītā teaches the remarkable art of spiritual upliftment through one's own dealings so that a person, under all circumstances, having all kinds of dealings sanctioned by the scriptures, may attain salvation. Generally other scriptures mention that if you want to attain salvation, become a recluse by renouncing mundane materials and live in solitude because the mundane affairs and spiritual upliftment can't go together. But the Gītā declares that at whatever place you are, whatever sect you follow, whatever principle you live up to, whatever religion, school of thought, 'Varṇa' (caste), 'Āśrama' (stage of life) you follow, by following them if you act according to the gospel of the Gītā, it will lead you to salvation. The Supreme Truth, which recluses and saints attained in solitude by practising spiritual discipline for years together, will be attained in practical worldly life by following the teachings of the Gītā. By becoming even-minded in success and failure, performance of one's duty without the desire for fruit, is to act according to the gospel of the Gītā.

What can be more terrible circumstance and activity (action)

than a war? When a man can attain salvation under such a terrible circumstance and activity as a war, then what other more terrible circumstance and activity will be there in which he may not attain salvation? According to the Gītā sitting on a seat in loneliness and meditating on God can lead to salvation (Gītā 6/10—13) and waging a war can also lead to salvation.

Arjuna wanted neither heaven nor kingdom (Gītā 1/32, 35, 2/8). He wanted to turn away from the sin which would accrue by killing his kith and kin (Gītā 1/36, 39, 45). Therefore the Lord appears to say, “If you don’t covet heaven and kingdom and want to turn away from the sin, discharge your duty of fighting in the war treating the agreeable and the disagreeable alike, thus you will incur no sin—‘naivam pāpamavāpsyasi’. The reason is that sin is not incurred by waging war; but uneven-mindedness (partiality), desire, selfishness and ego are the causes of sin. It is your duty (dharma) to wage war. Sin is incurred by not performing one’s duty and by doing which should not be done.”

In the preceding verse the Lord seemed to say to Arjuna, “If you want to gain kingdom and heaven, it is proper for you to perform your duty,” while in this verse He seems to say, “If you don’t want to gain kingdom and heaven, it is proper for you to discharge your duty by being even-minded.” It means that it is improper not to discharge one’s duty under any circumstances.



Link:— The Lord, in the next two verses, authorizes Arjuna to be guided by even-mindedness, already mentioned in the preceding verse and he describes its glory.

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| एषा | तेऽभिहिता | साङ्ख्ये | |
| | बुद्धिर्योगे | त्विमां | शृणु । |
| बुद्ध्या | युक्तो | यया | पार्थ |
| कर्मबन्धं | | प्रहास्यसि ॥ ३९ ॥ | |