

BOOK II

SANJAYA SAID:

To him thus full of distress, his eyes perplexed and filled with tears, despondent, the slayer of Madhu spoke this word:

THE MASTER SAID:

Whence has this faint-heartedness in trouble come upon thee, unseemly for a noble, not bringing heaven, inglorious, O Arjuna?

Fall not into impotence, O son of Pritha, for this beseems thee not! Put away this mean faint-heartedness, and arise, O consumer of the foe!

ARJUNA SAID:

How can I fight against Bhishma, how against Drona, with my arrows, O slayer of Madhu, for they are both worthy of honor, O slayer of the foe!

Rather than slay these great ones, worthy of all honor, it were better to eat the bread of beggars in this world; for slaying them, even though they seek my possessions, I should eat feasts sprinkled with blood! (5)

Nor do we know which is heavier for us, whether we conquer or whether they conquer us; for Dhritarashtra's sons are here facing us, slaying whom we should not wish to live.

Overwhelmed with pity and fear of sin I ask thee, for my vision of duty is obscured. Which is better? Tell me clearly! I am thy disciple! Teach me! I appeal to thee!

For I see no way to drive away my grief and this fever in all my powers, though gaining wealth and mastery of the earth without a rival, or even overlordship of the gods!

SANJAYA SAID:

He of the crested locks, consumer of the foe, thus addressing him of the flowing hair, saying to the lord of the earth: I will not fight! was silent.

To him Krishna of the flowing hair replied, smiling as it were, O son of Bharata, as he sank there despondent between the two armies: (10)

THE MASTER SAID:

Thou hast grieved for those who need no grief, and thou speakest words of wisdom! The wise grieve neither for the dead nor for the living;

For never was I not, nor thou, nor these princes of men; nor shall we all ever cease to be, in the time to come.

As the lord of the body in the body here finds boyhood, youth and age, so is there the gaining of another body; the wise err not concerning this.

These things of matter, that bring us cold, heat, pleasure, pain, come and go again; they last not; therefore endure them, O son of Bharata!

Whom these perturb not, O bull of men, equal in pain and pleasure, wise, he builds for immortality. (15)

For the unreal there is no being, nor any end of being for the real; the truth as to these two is seen by those who behold reality.

But know That to be imperishable whereby all this is stretched forth; and none can cause the destruction of the everlasting.

These temporal bodies are declared to belong to the eternal lord of the body, imperishable, immeasurable; therefore fight, O son of Bharata!

He who sees him as slayer, or who thinks of him as slain, both understand not; he slays not nor is slain.

He is never born nor dies, nor will he, having being, evermore cease to be; unborn, eternal, immemorial, this Ancient is not slain when the body is slain. (20)

He who knows this imperishable, eternal, unborn, and passing not away, how can that man, O son of Pritha, slay any, or cause any to be slain?

As putting off worn garments, a man takes others new, so putting off worn-out bodies, the lord of the body enters others new.

Swords cut him not, nor may fire burn him, O son of Bharata, waters wet him not, nor dry winds parch.

He may not be cut nor burned nor wet nor withered; he is eternal, all-present, firm, unshaken, everlasting.

He is called unmanifest, unimaginable, unchanging; therefore, knowing him thus, deign not to grieve! (25)

But even if thou thinkest of him as ever born, ever dying, yet deign not, therefore, to grieve for him, O mighty armed one!

For certain is the death of what is born, and certain is the birth of what dies; therefore, deign not to grieve in a matter that is inevitable.

The beginnings of things are unmanifest, their mid course is manifest, O son of Bharata; their ending is unmanifest; what cause is here for lamentation?

One sees him as marvellous, another speaks of him as marvellous, another hears of him as marvellous, yet even hearing, one knows him not.

This lord of the body dwells ever immortal in the body of each, O son of Bharata; therefore, deign not to grieve even for all beings! (30)

Or having regard to thy duty, deign not to shrink back! For nothing is better for a warrior than a righteous battle.

And such a battle has come to thee of its own accord, a very door of heaven wide opened; happy the warriors, son of Pritha, who find such a fight as this!

But if thou shalt not fight this righteous fight, then failing in duty and honor, thou wilt incur sin;

And men will tell of thy lasting dishonor, and for one who has stood in honor, ill-fame is worse than death.

The warriors in their chariots will think thou hast retreated from the battle through fear, and thou shalt come to light esteem among those who held thee high. (35)

Many unspeakable words will thy enemies speak of thee, impeaching thy manhood. What fate could be more grievous than that?

Either, slain, thou wilt gain heaven, or, conquering, thou wilt enjoy the earth; therefore, arise, O son of Kunti, determined to do battle!

Making equal good and ill fortune, gain and loss, victory and defeat; gird thyself for the fight, for thus thou shalt not fall into sin!

[This thought is declared to thee according to Sankhya; now hear it according to Yoga. Held by this thought, O son of Pritha, thou shalt free thyself from the bond of works.]

Here is no loss of advantage, nor any going back; even a little of this law saves from the great fear. (40)

The thought whose essence is determination is single, O rejoicer of the Kurus! Many-branched and endless are the thoughts of the undetermined.

[This is a flowery word which the unwise declare, who delight in the letter of the Vedas, O son of Pritha, and say there is nothing else,

[They are full of desire and eager for heaven; this word offering rebirth and the reward of works, abounding in special rites making for feasts and lordship;

[The thought of those who are set on feasts and lordship, whose minds are carried away thereby, has not determination as its essence, nor is it set in soul-vision;

[The Vedas have the Three Powers as their object; be thou above the Three Powers, O Arjuna! Be free from duality, ever standing in the real without desire of possessions, full of the Soul; (45)

[As much use as there is in a well, when the whole land is flooded, so much use is there in all the Vedas for a Knower of the Eternal who possesses wisdom.]

Thy right is to the work, but never to its fruits; let not the fruit of thy work be thy motive, nor take refuge in abstinence from works.

Standing in union with the Soul, carry out thy work, putting away attachment, O conqueror of wealth; equal in success and failure, for equalness is called union with the Soul.

For work is far lower than union in soul-vision, O conqueror of wealth; find refuge in soul-vision, for pitiful are those whose motive is the fruit of their works.

He who is united in soul-vision offers up even here both things well done and ill done; therefore, gird thyself for union with the Soul, for this union brings success in works. (50)

For the possessors of wisdom, united in soul-vision, giving up the fruit of works, freed from the bondage of rebirth, reach the home where no sorrow dwells.

When thy soul shall pass beyond the forest of delusion, thou shalt no more regard what shall be taught or what has been taught.

When withdrawn from traditional teaching, thy soul shall stand steadfast, firm in soul-vision, then shalt thou gain union with the Soul.

AR]UNA SAID:

What is the description of one firm in perception, of one firm in soul-vision, O thou of the flowing hair? He who is firm in soul, how does he speak? How does he sit? How does he go?

THE MASTER SAID:

When he offers up all desires that dwell in the heart, O son of Pritha, in soul rejoicing in the Soul, then he is said to be firm in perception. (55)

Whose heart is untroubled in sorrows, who in pleasures is unallured, from whom lust and fear and wrath have gone, that silent one is declared to be firm in soul.

He who is free from over-fondness, meeting glory and gloom alike, who exults not nor hates, his perception is set firm.

When as a tortoise withdraws its limbs on all sides, he withdraws his powers from things of sense, his perception is set firm.

Things of sense withdraw from the lord of the body who tastes them not; even the desire for them falls away from him who has seen the desireless Supreme.

Even when a wise man strives, O son of Kunti, the turbulent powers swiftly steal away his heart; (60)

Controlling them all, let him remain united, intent upon Me; for of him who controls his powers, the perception is set firm.

In the man who broods on things of sense, attachment to them springs up; from attachment is born desire, from desire wrath takes birth;

From wrath comes delusion, from delusion loss of recollection, from loss of recollection comes loss of soul-vision, through loss of soul-vision he perishes.

But who among things of sense uses his powers, freed from lust and hate, and controlled by the Soul, with soul well-disposed, he enters into peace.

In peace there comes the ending of all sorrows, for the soul of inspiration swiftly enfolds him whose heart is full of peace. (65)

There is no soul-vision for him who is not united, nor is there any divine experience for him; without experience of the divine, there is no peace, and what happiness can there be without peace? For when his emotion follows the powers in their action it carries his perception away, as the wind carries a boat away to sea.

Therefore, of him, O mighty armed one, whose powers are altogether withheld from things of sense, the perception is set firm.

He who has attained self-mastery wakes where is night for all beings, and where all being wake is night for the silent seer.

As the waters enter the ocean, ever filled yet standing unmoved, whom all desires so enter, he gains peace, not he who lusts after desires. (70)

The man who, offering up all desires, walks without allurements, without the sense of possessing, without self-reference, he enters into peace.

This is the God-like resting-place, O son of Pritha, nor will he who has gained it be led away; dwelling in this at the time of the end, he wins union with the Eternal.