

## BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

### CHAPTER 3, KARMA-YOGA

atha śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā

atha trītiya 'dhyāyaḥ | karma yogaḥ |

Here begins the third chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā on karma-yoga.

arjuna uvāca

jyāyasi cet karmaṇaste

matā buddhir-janārdana |

tat kiṁ karmaṇi ghore māṁ

niyo jayasi keśava || 1 ||

Arjuna says:

If, O Kṛṣṇa, you consider intelligence to be superior to action, why do you urge me to engage in this terrible deed?

vyāmiś-reṇeva vākyena

buddhiṁ moha yaśiva me |

tad ekaṁ vada niścitya

yena śreyoḥam-āpnuyām || 2 ||

You confuse me with statements that seem to contradict each other; tell me for certain the way I can reach the highest good.

śrī bhagavān uvāca

loke'smin dvivi-dhā niṣṭhā

purā proktā mayā'nagha |

jñāna-yogena sāṅkhyānām

karma-yogena yoginām || 3 ||

Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

O sinless one, as I have mentioned in this world there are two paths: jñāna-yoga [1] for those who are ready to contemplate and analyse, and karma-yoga for those ready to act in detachment.

na karmaṇām anārambhān

naiṣkarmyaṁ puruṣo'snute |

na ca saṁnyasanād-eva

siddhiṁ samādhi gacchati || 4 ||

Understand that no one achieves freedom from action simply by abstaining from it, and no one ever attains perfection by renunciation alone.

na hi kaścit kṣaṇam-api  
jātu tiṣṭhatya karma-kṛt |  
kāryate hy-avaśaḥ karma  
sarvaḥ prakṛti-jair-guṇaiḥ || 5 ||

No one can remain still even for a moment without performing action. Everyone is helplessly forced to act by the guṇas born from material nature.

karmendriyāṇi saṁyamya  
ya āste manasā smaran |  
indriyārthān vimūḍhātmā  
mithyā cāraḥ sa ucyate || 6 ||

One who restrains the organs of action whilst still contemplating on the objects of the senses is deluded and a hypocrite.

yastv-indriyāṇi manasā  
niyam yāra bhate' rjuna |  
karmendriyaiḥ karma-yogam  
asaktasya viśiṣyate || 7 ||

But, Arjuna, one who can subdue the senses with the mind and practise karma-yoga with the organs of action, free from attachment, is far superior.

niyataṁ kuru karma tvaṁ  
karma jyāyo hy-akarmaṇaḥ |  
śarīra-yātrā'pi ca te  
na prasid dhyed akarmaṇaḥ || 8 ||

You must perform your duty for action is superior to the avoidance of action. Understand that one cannot even maintain one's own body without action.

yajñārthāt karmaṇo'nyatra  
loko'yaṁ karma bandhanaḥ |  
tad-arthaṁ karma kaunteya  
mukta saṅgas-samācara || 9 ||

Apart from action done in a spirit of sacrifice, this world is bound by action. Therefore, Arjuna, being free from attachment, you must act with this purpose alone.

saha yajñaiḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā  
purovāca prajāpatiḥ |  
anena prasaviṣ yadhvam  
eṣa vo'stviṣṭa kāmādhuk || 10 ||

In the beginning, the Lord of all beings created humans, along with the sacrifice, saying: 'By this shall you prosper; this shall be the cow of plenty granting all your desires.'

devān bhāvaye tānena  
te devā bhāva yantu vaḥ |  
parasparaṁ bhāva yantaḥ  
śreyaḥ paramavāp-syatha || 11 ||

By this, may you nurture the gods, and in return the gods will nurture you. In this way, nurturing one another, you will obtain the highest good.

iṣṭān-bhogān-hi vo devā  
dāsyante yajñā-bhāvitāḥ |  
tair-dattān apradāyai bhyo  
yo bhuñkte stena eva saḥ || 12 ||

The gods, pleased by sacrifice, will bestow on you the enjoyments you desire. One who enjoys the gifts of the gods without offering them anything in return is verily a thief.

yajñā-śiṣṭā śinaḥ santo  
mucyante sarva kilbiṣaiḥ |  
bhuñjate te tvaghaṁ pāpā  
ye pacant'yātma kāraṇāt || 13 ||

The righteous who eat the remnants of sacrifices are freed from all sins. But the sinful ones who cook only for their own gratification eat only sin.

annād-bhavanti būtāni  
parjanyaād-anna-sambhavaḥ |  
yajñād-bhavati parjanyaḥ  
yajñāḥ karma samud-bhavaḥ || 14 ||

All beings are sustained by food; food is produced from rain; rain comes from sacrifice; and sacrifice is achieved through action.

karma brahmod-bhavaṁ viddhi  
brahmā kṣara samudbhavam |  
tasmāt sarva-gataṁ brahma  
nityaṁ yajñe pratiṣṭhitam || 15 ||

This ritual action comes from the Vedas and the Vedas come from the Supreme Lord, therefore that all-pervading divinity is ever established in acts of sacrifice.

evaṁ pravartitaṁ cakram  
nānu varta-yati-ha yaḥ |  
aghāyur-indriyā rāmo  
moghaṁ pārtha sa jīvati || 16 ||

O Arjuna, one who does not follow this cycle, which has been set in motion, lives in error. Revelling in the senses, he lives in vain.

yastvātma-ratir-eva syād  
ātma tṛptaśca mānavah |  
ātmanyeva ca santuṣṭas  
tasya kāryam na vidyate || 17 ||

But the person who delights in the Self, who is satisfied with the Self, who rejoices in the Self, for him there is nothing left to achieve.

naiva tasya kṛten-ārtho  
nākṛte-nehā kaścana |  
na cāsyā sarva-bhūteṣu  
kaścid artha vyapāś-rayah || 18 ||

For such a person there is nothing to gain from renouncing or performing action, nor is he dependent on any other being.

tasmād asaktaḥ satataṁ  
kāryam karma samācara |  
asakto hyācaran karma  
param-āpnoti pūruṣaḥ || 19 ||

Therefore, always perform that work which ought to be done without attachment. For one who acts without attachment attains the Supreme.

karma-ṇaiva hi saṁsiddhim  
āsthitā janakādayaḥ |  
loka saṅgraham-evāpi  
saṁpaśyan kartum arhasi || 20 ||

Verily, by karma-yoga alone did Janaka and others reach perfection. Indeed, you should act bearing in mind the welfare of the world.

yadyad-ācarati śreṣṭhas  
tat-tad-evetarō janaḥ |  
sa yat pramāṇam kurute  
lokaś-tad-anuvartate || 21 ||

Whatever an eminent person does, other people also do; whatever standard that one sets, the world follows.

na me parthāsti kartavyam  
triṣu lokeṣu kiñcana |  
nānavāptam-avāptavyam  
varta eva ca karmaṇi || 22 ||

For Me, O Arjuna, there is nothing in all the three worlds which needs to be done, nor is there anything for Me to gain. But despite this, I continually engage in action.

yadi hyahaṁ na varteyaṁ  
jātu karmaṇya-tandritaḥ |  
mama vartmānu-vartante  
manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ || 23 ||

For if I did not continuously engage Myself in action, the world would follow My example.

utsīdeyur-ime lokā  
na kuryaṁ karma ced aham |  
saṅkarasya ca kartā syāṁ  
upa-hanyāṁ-imāḥ prajāḥ || 24 ||

If I did not perform action these worlds would perish; I would be the author of confusion and the cause of destruction for living beings.

saktāḥ karmaṇya vidvāṁ so  
yathā kurvanti bhārata |  
kuryād-vidvāṁś-tathā saktāś  
cikiṛṣur loka-saṅgraham || 25 ||

Arjuna, just as the ignorant act with attachment to their work, so should the wise act without any attachment, thinking only for the welfare of the world.

na buddhi-bhedaṁ janayed  
ajñānaṁ karma-saṅgināṁ |  
joṣayet sarva karmāṇi  
vidvān yuktaḥ samācaran || 26 ||

The wise should not disturb the minds of the ignorant who are attached to work. Instead by performing work with devotion, one should inspire others to do likewise.

prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni  
guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ |  
ahaṅkāra vimūḍhātmā  
kartā'ham-iti manyate || 27 ||

All actions are being performed in every way by the guṇas within material nature. One whose mind is deluded by the sense of individuality, thinks, 'I am the doer.'

tattva-vittu mahābāho  
guṇa-karma-vibhāgayoḥ |  
guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta  
iti matvā na sajjate || 28 ||

But he who knows the truth, O mighty armed one, sees the difference between the guṇas and action. He recognises how they act on one another, and, through this awareness, he remains unattached.

prakṛter-guṇa saṁmūḍhāḥ  
sajjante guṇa-karmasu |  
tān-akṛtsna vidō mandān  
kṛtsna-vinna vicālayet || 29 ||

Those who are deluded by the guṇas within material nature, are attached to the actions produced by them. However, one of perfect knowledge should not unsettle the ignorant who do not see the whole truth.

mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi  
saṁnyasyā-dhyātma-cetasā |  
nirāśīr-nir-mamo bhūtvā  
yudhyasva vigata-jvaraḥ || 30 ||

Dedicating all your actions to Me, with a mind centred in the Self, free from desire and selfishness, with your emotions held in balance, you should engage in battle.

ye me matam idaṁ nityam  
anu-tiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ |  
śraddhā-vanto'nasūyanto  
mucyante te'pi karmabhiḥ || 31 ||

Those people who have faith, who are free from envy and always practise this teaching of Mine, will be released from karma.

ye tvetaḍ abhya-sūyanto  
nānu-tiṣṭhanti me matam |  
sarva jñāna vimūḍhāṁ stān  
viddhi naṣṭān acetasaḥ || 32 ||

But those who disregard My teaching and those who do not practise it — know them to be seriously deluded, devoid of reasoning, and therefore lost.

sadrśaṁ ceṣṭate svasyāḥ  
prakṛter-jñānavān api |  
prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni  
nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣ-yati || 33 ||

Everyone follows their nature, even an enlightened person, so what will repressing it do?

indriyas-yendriyas-yārthe  
rāga-dveṣau vyavas-thitau |  
tayor-na vaśam āgacchet  
tau hyasya pari-panthinau || 34 ||

Desire and aversion arise when the senses rest in the objects they perceive. One should not allow oneself to come under their sway, as they are obstacles on the spiritual path.

śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ  
para-dharmāt svanuṣ-ṭhitāt |  
sva-dharme nidhanaṁ śreyāḥ  
para-dharmo bhayāvahaḥ || 35 ||

It is better to carry out one's own duty incorrectly, than it is to carry out the duty of another perfectly. Death is better in one's own duty, for the duty of another is filled with danger.

arjuna uvāca  
atha kena prayukto'yaṁ  
pāpaṁ carati pūruṣaḥ |  
anicchann-api vārṣṇeya  
balādiva niyojitaḥ || 36 ||

Arjuna says:

But what is it, Kṛṣṇa, that causes one to stray even against one's own will, as if compelled by some force?

śrī bhagavān uvāca  
kāma eṣa krodha eṣa  
rajoḡguṇa samudbhavaḥ |  
mahāśano mahā-pāpmā  
viddhyenam-iha vairiṇam || 37 ||

Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

It is the desire born of the guṇa of rajas and the resulting anger. That is the all-devouring, sinful enemy of the world.

dhūmen-āvriyate vahnir  
yathā-darśo malena ca |  
yathol-benāvrto garbhas  
tathā tenedam-āvṛtam || 38 ||

Just as a fire is enveloped by smoke, a mirror is covered by dust, and an embryo by the amnion, so is this world enveloped by desire.

āvṛtaṁ jñānam etena  
jñānino nitya vairiṇā |  
kāma-rūpeṇa kaunteya  
duṣpūreṇā nalena ca || 39 ||

O Arjuna, knowledge is veiled by desire, and desire is therefore the great enemy of the wise. Desire burns like an insatiable fire.

indriyāṇi manobuddhir  
asyādhiṣṭhānam-ucyate |  
etair-vimohayaty-eṣa  
jñānam-āvṛtya dehinam || 40 ||

The senses, the mind, and the intellect are said to be desire's abode. Through these, desire deludes the embodied Self by concealing Its wisdom.

tasmātvam-indriyāṇyādau  
niyamyā bharatar-śabha |  
pāpmānaṁ prajahi hyenaṁ  
jñāna vijñāna nāśanam || 41 ||

Therefore, O Arjuna, you should control the senses first, and slay this source of sin that destroys both knowledge and discrimination.

indriyāṇi parāṇyāhur  
indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ |  
manas-astu parā buddhir  
yobuddheḥ paratas-tu saḥ || 42 ||

The senses are superior to matter, the mind is superior to the senses, the intellect is higher than the mind, and the Self is even greater than the intellect.

evaṁ buddheḥ paraṁ buddhvā  
saṁsta-bhyātmānam ātmanā |  
jahi śatruṁ mahā-bāho  
kāma-rūpaṁ durāsadam || 43 ||

O Arjuna, knowing that which is greater than the intellect and steadying yourself by your spiritual strength, slay this enemy in the form of desire, which is difficult to overcome.

om tat-sad-iti śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā-sūpaniṣatsu  
brahma-vidyāyāṁ yoga-śāstre śrī-kṛṣṇārjuna-saṁvāde  
karma-yogonāma tṛtīyo 'dhyāyaḥ ||

OM is the Truth. Thus ends the conversation between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, in the yoga scripture Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, chapter three.