



श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता  
तृतीयोऽध्यायः - कर्मयोगः  
**Chapter 3**  
**Volume 2**

श्री भगवान् उवाच

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Arjuna seeks श्रेयस् - The परम पुरुषार्थ - The Supreme Goal of Life - which is मोक्ष,  
- Absolute freedom, Everlasting Happiness and Total Fulfillment in life.

In the state of Existence called श्रेयस्-मोक्ष,

- there is no sense of emptiness, discontent or bitterness of any kind
- there is no sense of dependence on wants and desires of any kind; and
- there is no मोह or शोक - no delusion, confusion, sorrow or distress

Thus श्रेयस् is Total Fullness, and perennial Happiness in every day life.



## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

In order to gain such श्रेयस्, should I go on doing whatever कर्म - whatever actions are demanded of me by the situations of my daily life, or should I give up all these worldly activities, become a Sanyasi or a renunciate and concentrate exclusively on the pursuit of ब्रह्म ज्ञानं - आत्म ज्ञानं - SELF Knowledge? That is essentially Arjuna's question.

This is an extraordinary question, because, in order to ask that question, one must first realize that such श्रेयस् does exist, and also such श्रेयस् is the only state of Being worth seeking in life. Even this extent of realization is a sign of remarkable spiritual growth and maturity, which is possible only for a person who is not only totally ethical in daily life, but is also sufficiently enlightened by repeated study and significant assimilation of Upanishad knowledge.

Sri Krishna's answer to this question is equally extraordinary. In this and the next 15 chapters, Sri Krishna gives the complete answer to this question, not only for the benefit of Arjuna, but also for the benefit of the entire humanity.

In brief, Sri Krishna says: "Gaining श्रेयस् is not a matter of choice between कर्म and आत्म ज्ञानं. It does not depend merely on what you do or what you do not do in your daily life. It does not also depend merely on your knowledge of scriptures.

Gaining श्रेयस् is entirely a matter of your realizing what you really are, by the only way such realization is possible for a human being, namely through कर्मयोग and ज्ञानयोग. The श्रेयस् that you are seeking is not the result of any action, or the mere knowledge of scriptures. You seek श्रेयस् because you are, in fact, That श्रेयस् - whether you know it or not. You do not see your true Self now, because you have obstructions in your मनस् and बुद्धि- in your faculty of thinking and in your faculty of judgment, which prevent your vision of yourself, as you really are.

You have, in fact, several layers of such obstructions. You must first overcome these obstructions through कर्मयोग, and then use the instruments of your mind and बुद्धि through ज्ञानयोग to gain the clear vision of yourself as you are. When you thus gain clarity of vision of yourself, you will realize that you are, in fact, the very श्रेयस् that you are now seeking. Such realization is indeed gaining Total Freedom - Total Happiness - Total Fulfillment in Life".

So says Sri Krishna.

Sri Krishna gives this message in such a manner and in such a sequence, that makes it possible for Arjuna, and likewise you and I, to understand, appreciate and assimilate



this message on reading the **भगवत् गीता** in its entirety. Let us now see in detail what exactly Sri Krishna says, and how he says it.

श्री भगवान् उवाच

लोकेऽस्मिन् द्विविधा निष्ठा, पुरा प्रोक्ता मयानघ ।

ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥

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Sri Krishna addresses Arjuna as **अनघ** - meaning "Sinless one", one who has no obstructions to spiritual progress. With Sri Krishna as the teacher, Arjuna has now no impediments to his continued spiritual progress. In the word "**अनघ**", there is a clear Vedantic message for all of us.

Throughout **भगवत् गीता**, Sri Krishna is our Teacher, our ONLY Teacher - there is really no other teacher for **भगवत् गीता**. So long as we give our undivided attention, meaning total commitment in thought, word and deed to Sri Krishna's teachings, there can never be any obstruction to our continued spiritual progress.

So it is with respect to one's own well-being in every day life too.

**भगवत् गीता** is entirely about one's own self. Sri Krishna - The Teacher, is already in oneself as the Best and the highest in one's own self. All the teachings of the **भगवत् गीता** are those of the best and the highest in one's own self - one's own innermost consciousness – **प्रत्यग आत्मा**. So long as one gives one's undivided attention, total commitment in thought, word and deed to the teachings of the best and the highest in one's own self - to the teachings of one's own inner most consciousness, there can never be any obstruction to one's proper endeavor for material and spiritual progress in daily life - That is what the word "**अनघ**" indicates.

Reading the **भगवत् गीता** again and again, one discovers more and more about one's own infinite Self - Infinite Dimensions - Infinite strength and Infinite potentialities, which makes the words of the **भगवत् गीता** Ever-new, Ever-enlightening and supremely inspiring. Therefore, let us listen to the words of Sri Krishna with undivided attention.

Addressing Arjuna as **अनघ**, Sri Krishna says

लोकेऽस्मिन् द्विविधा निष्ठा, पुरा प्रोक्ता मया



## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

अस्मिन् लोके - In this world, in this world of all kinds of knowledge and experience  
द्विविधा निष्ठा - there are two निष्ठा - states of existence. There are two distinct well established ways of life for gaining श्रेयस्.

पुरा प्रोक्ता मया - as they have been revealed by ME, long time ago in the beginning of each cycle of creation for the benefit of humanity, in the words of the Vedas and the Upanishads

Sri Krishna is talking here as the very embodiment of परमेश्वर - "As already revealed by ME - the परमेश्वर - in the words of the Vedas and the Upanishads, in the beginning of this creation - there are two निष्ठाs - there are two distinct ways of life for those seeking श्रेयस्. They are ज्ञानयोग and कर्मयोग.

ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानां, कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥

ज्ञान योग is for the Sankyas - who are people well advanced in their spiritual development. And कर्म योग is for the योगी s who are still in the early stages of spiritual development, being well committed to various worldly pursuits.

योग is the means by which one achieves the ultimate purpose in life - namely, realization of one's natural ONENESS with oneself - the entire creation - and the creator - the परमेश्वर. For achieving this ultimate purpose in life, there are only two योगs, which are mutually distinct, namely ज्ञान योग and कर्म योग. Except ज्ञान योग, every other kind of योग which we commonly talk about is only another form of कर्म योग.

These two distinct kinds of योगs are meant for two distinct kinds of people, or two distinct stages in spiritual development of the same person.

ज्ञान योग is for those who already have विवेक-बुद्धि - discriminative judgment about आत्मा and अनात्मा, सत्- and असत् - The Real and the transient - those whose minds are unbound to the objects of the senses, and those who can, and are ready to assimilate Upanishadic Knowledge - such people are called सांख्या s.

कर्म योग is for those whose mind and बुद्धि are still bound to कर्म विषयाs- worldly activities, even though they are spiritually mature enough to realize that what they really need is श्रेयस्. कर्म योग- is for people like ourselves. The purpose of कर्म योग is अन्तः



## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

करण शुद्धि - restoration of the natural purity of the mind and बुद्धि, overcoming mental obstacles for spiritual progress in preparation for ज्ञानयोग. Once the अन्तःकरण शुद्धि is accomplished, the mind and बुद्धि become an appropriate receptacle for ज्ञानयोग.

It is only ज्ञानयोग that leads one to श्रेयस् or मोक्ष, but कर्मयोग is the necessary prerequisite for ज्ञानयोग. In other words, ज्ञानयोग is not possible unless one is fit for ज्ञानयोग, and one becomes fit for ज्ञानयोग only through कर्मयोग. For a person like Arjuna, and likewise for almost all of us, कर्मयोग comes first and then only ज्ञानयोग. As one matures through कर्मयोग, one is naturally led into ज्ञानयोग, which ultimately leads one to श्रेयस् or मोक्ष, which is the Supreme Goal of life.

Therefore, Sri Krishna teaches कर्मयोग to Arjuna at this time.

न कर्मणां अनारम्भात् नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।

न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥

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कर्मणां अनारम्भात् पुरुषः नैष्कर्म्यं न अश्नुते ।

कर्मणां अनारम्भात् - By not beginning, by not initiating कर्मs - actions that are to be done. कर्म means कर्तव्यं कर्म, तेन त्यक्तेन कर्म, ईश्वर प्राप्ति कर्म, कर्म - that has been left for you to do by परमेश्वर.

Every कर्म has to be begun first before it gets done. The nature of कर्म is such that one has to decide first to do the कर्म, because कर्म IS पुरुष तन्त्रं, which means that doing a कर्म is centered on one's will. Therefore,

कर्मणां अनारम्भात् - by not beginning the कर्मs one needs to do as धर्म - as a matter of one's duty

पुरुषः नैष्कर्म्यं न अश्नुते

पुरुषः - a person

न अश्नुते - does not gain

नैष्कर्म्यं - Absolute Actionlessness - Absolute Sanyasa. A person does not gain Absolute Actionlessness - True Sanyasa - True Renunciation by not beginning the कर्तव्यं कर्म - the कर्म to which one is duty-bound.



## ब्रह्मचिदा **Brahma Vidya**

Everybody has to go through कर्मयोग first, because कर्मयोग - action, as duty performed with attitude of total dedication to परमेश्वर - duty performed with ईश्वर आराधन बुद्धि, ईश्वर प्रसाद बुद्धि- has the ability to bring about अन्तःकरण शुद्धि - which is the essential prerequisite for आत्म ज्ञानं to take place in one's mind and बुद्धि. Therefore कर्मयोग fixes the mind ready for ज्ञानयोग. Without prior कर्मयोग - either in this birth or in the previous birth, ज्ञानयोग is not possible.

Arjuna has been playing in his mind with the popular notion of ordinary संन्यास - renunciation of worldly activities and worldly obligations as the solution to his problems. Sri Krishna puts him straight.

नैष्कर्म्य - The state of Absolute Actionlessness is the state of true sanyasa - true renunciation, and That is the state of being a ज्ञानयोगी. That state of Absolute Actionlessness is not literal inactivity. Literal inactivity is an absolute impossibility for any human being, whether one is a ज्ञानी or अज्ञानी - whether one is wise or unwise. The Actionlessness of a ज्ञानयोगी arises from one's realization that "I am आत्मा-सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूप आत्मा "

आत्मा has no notion of Doership, and hence आत्मा is not involved in any action. आत्मा is अचलं - unmoving and immovable. That means the नैष्कर्म्य - the Actionlessness of a ज्ञानयोगी is not the absence of कर्म, but it is the absence of the notion that "I am the Doer of a कर्म "

By being active, which is the natural order of a human being, by doing whatever is one's duty to do, the ज्ञानयोगी still remains the very embodiment of actionlessness - one is led to this state of actionlessness - only through कर्मयोग.

न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति

संन्य सनादेव - Simply, by just giving up all actions without Enlightenment of आत्मज्ञानं, सिद्धिं न समधिगच्छति - one does not gain, one cannot gain, the ultimate Goal of Life, which is श्रेयस् - Freedom, Happiness, Total Fulfillment in Life.



## ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

One cannot pursue ज्ञानयोग simply by abstaining from actions to be done. ज्ञानयोग becomes ज्ञानयोग only when the pursuit of आत्मज्ञानं overrules every other pursuit - not by sheer will, but because of one's natural maturity of mind born of कर्मयोग.

The Actionlessness of a ज्ञानयोगी has nothing to do with the actionlessness of an ignorant or lazy person. In fact, literal actionlessness is not possible.

न हि कश्चित् क्षणं अपि जातु तिष्ठति अकर्मकृत् ।

कार्यते हि अवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैः गुणैः ॥

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A person without आत्मज्ञानं cannot gain नैष्कर्म्यं - Absolute Actionlessness, by mere renunciation of worldly actions - one's obligatory actions, हि because

कश्चित् क्षणं अपि, जातु न तिष्ठति अकर्मकृत्

कश्चित् - any person

क्षणं अपि - even for a moment

जातु - at any time

न तिष्ठति - does not remain

अकर्मकृत् - not performing some action.

Even for a moment, a person cannot remain without performing some action - that is again, हि because

सर्वः अवशः प्रकृतिजैः गुणैः कर्म कार्यते

सर्वः - every person

अवशः - necessarily - there is no choice,

कर्म कार्यते - is impelled to act, is engaged in action,

प्रकृतिजैः गुणैः - by the सत्त्व, रजस्, and तमस् गुणs arising from one's in-born nature.

Everybody is impelled to act, at all times, in accordance with one's in-born nature, which is in the form of सत्त्व, रजस् and तमस् qualities of the person. That is the Nature of प्रकृति - the in-born nature of a human being. Nobody escapes कर्म, whether one is a ज्ञानी or अज्ञानी.



## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

But the ज्ञानी - the Enlightened person, does not look upon oneself as the कर्ता - the Doer of a कर्म. Therefore, he is unaffected by both कर्म and कर्मफल - both action and the result of action.

On the other hand, the अज्ञानी - the person who is still struggling to grow up spiritually, has to develop the कर्मयोग बुद्धि first before he can become unaffected by कर्मफल. Therefore an ordinary human being has to start with कर्मयोग and gain अन्तःकरण शुद्धि before entering the stage of life of a ज्ञानी.

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य, य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।  
इन्द्रियार्थान् विमूढात्मा, मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥

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While still being an अज्ञानी - while still being bound to कर्मविषयs - matters of worldly activities, if one tries to abandon कर्मs that one must do as one's duty, as one's धर्म, then one is only inviting more sorrow and distress.

कर्म-इन्द्रियाणि संयम्य, यः मनसा इन्द्रिय - अर्थान् स्मरन् आस्ते, सः विमूढात्मा

कर्म इन्द्रियाणि संयम्य - Withdrawing the organs of actions from activity,

यः मनसा इन्द्रिय अर्थान् स्मरन् आस्ते - the one who sits, the one who dwells in one's mind on objects of the senses or the pleasures of the objects, even though not doing any कर्मs by the organs of action, but if one still dwells on the objects and experiences of the senses in one's mind,

सः - विमूढात्मा - such a person is a deluded person, a misguided person, a person overpowered by ignorance, stupidity and laziness.

सः मिथ्याचारः उच्यते - That person is called a मिथ्याचार - meaning one who leads a false life.

अन्तःकरण शुद्धि - restoration of the purity of mind and बुद्धि cannot take place in such a person. A false life can only create more पाप - more obstructions to one's spiritual progress. Such a life is not conducive to any kind of positive achievements in life.

Simply abstaining from action, but thirsting for all kinds of worldly experiences and sense pleasures in your mind, cannot make you a true sanyasi. It will not lead you to श्रेयस्. Such a life is मिथ्याचार, meaning पापाचार - a false life of self-inflicted sorrow and distress.



## ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

यस्तु इन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्य आरभतेऽर्जुन ।  
कर्मन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगं, असक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥

3 - 7

On the other hand,

यः तु नियम्य मनसा इन्द्रियाणि नियम्य, असक्तः कर्म इन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगं आरभते सः विशिष्यते  
अर्जुन -

यः तु नियम्य मनसा, इन्द्रियाणि नियम्य - The one who is able to restrain the senses by the mind, which itself is held under control, and  
कर्म इन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगं आरभते - commences and performs all actions to be done as  
कर्मयोग असक्तः - keeping the mind free from any thirst for the fruits of actions  
सः विशिष्यते - such a person is far superior  
अर्जुन - O! Arjuna, that is the kind of person you should be.

Let all your organs of action be fully active with whatever you need to do as your धर्म, but let your actions be done with the attitude of कर्मयोग as कर्तव्यं कर्म, कर्म as totally dedicated to परमेश्वर.

Actions done with the full powers of your instruments of perception and action, together with the attitude of कर्मयोग - total dedication to परमेश्वर, will release you from every kind of राग and द्वेष - passion and hatred, and will naturally bring about अन्तःकरण शुद्धि, making your mind and बुद्धि fit for ज्ञानयोग. Therefore

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं, कर्म ज्यायो हि अकर्मणः ।  
शरीर यात्रापि च ते, न प्रसिद्धयेत् अकर्मणः ॥  
नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं - त्वं, नियतं कर्म कुरु

3 - 8

त्वं कर्म कुरु - You must do the कर्म - what कर्म ?

नियतं कर्म - the कर्म to which you have been naturally led, by virtue of your birth, education, training and the other circumstances of life.

नियतं कर्म is not a matter of choice, it is a matter of duty, a sacred duty - because it has been specially left for you to do by परमेश्वर - it is तेन त्यक्तेन कर्म



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.  
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G8

## ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

This entire creation is ईश्वर कर्म. You are here as a participant in this creation. Your role is only to do the कर्म that has been left for you to do by परमेश्वर. That is नियतं कर्म. That कर्म, whatever that is, you must do.

कर्म ज्यायः हि अकर्मणः - For a person like you, a life of action is always far superior to a life of inaction. By doing the नियतं कर्म with the कर्मयोग attitude, you not only gain अन्तःकरण शुद्धि naturally, you also become fit for gaining the श्रेयस् that you seek. On the other hand,

अकर्मणः - by taking to a life of inactivity,

शरीर यात्रापि न प्रसिद्धयेत् - even mere maintenance of the body would not be possible.

A person like अर्जुन is simply unfit to live the life of an ordinary संन्यासी, going from house to house for भिक्षा for his food and spend the rest of his time on contemplation on आत्मा. Such a life style is totally inappropriate and also fruitless for a person like Arjuna.

Therefore, Sri Krishna says,

Be active doing your नियतं कर्म as best as you can, making full and effective use of all your faculties, all your abilities, and all your instruments of perception and action. But, in order to make all that कर्म as a means for gaining श्रेयस्, you must do - every कर्म that you do - with the attitude of कर्मयोग, which means, कर्म looked upon as one's धर्म totally dedicated to परमेश्वर.

Sri Krishna's discourse on कर्मयोग continues, which we will see next time.