



श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता
तृतीयोऽध्यायः - कर्मयोगः

Chapter 3
Volume 3

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Let us recall the words of Sri Krishna in the last verse that we saw the last time.

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं - You must do the नियतं कर्म - the कर्म to which you have been naturally led by virtue of your birth, education, training and other past and immediate circumstances of life. नियतं कर्म is not a matter of choice, it is a matter of duty. It is कर्तव्यं कर्म. It is your धर्म - it is your sacred duty at this time and place, because it has been specially left for you to do by परमेश्वर - It is तेन त्यक्तेन कर्म.

This entire creation is ईश्वर कर्म. You are here as a participant in this creation, where everyone has definite roles to play at any given time, and your role at this time and place is to do the कर्म that has been left for you to do by परमेश्वर, and that is नियतं कर्म.

That नियतं कर्म, whatever that is, you must do, that is your धर्म. So said Sri Krishna. Continuing, in today's verses, Sri Krishna says,



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In order to transform that **नियतं कर्म** as **कर्मयोग**, as a means for gaining **अन्तःकरण शुद्धि** and ultimately **मोक्ष**, you must not only do that **नियतं कर्म** as **धर्म कर्म**, as your sacred duty, you must also do it as a **यज्ञ कर्म**, as a **कर्म** totally dedicated to **परमेश्वर**.

कर्म totally dedicated to **परमेश्वर** means what? Such dedication is entirely a matter of one's attitude - the disposition of one's mind and **बुद्धि**.

यज्ञ कर्म is a visible expression of one's sincere sense of appreciation and gratitude to **परमेश्वर** for the opportunity and means given to the person to uplift oneself through a symbolic act of worship of **परमेश्वर** in which one offers one's entire **नियतं कर्म** to **परमेश्वर** itself, from where it came.

By such act of worship of **परमेश्वर**, through one's **नियतं कर्म** as a **यज्ञ कर्म**, one gains **ईश्वर प्रसादं** - The Grace of **परमेश्वर** in the form of **अन्तःकरण शुद्धि**, restoration of natural purity of one's mind and **बुद्धि**, which makes one's **अन्तःकरण** an appropriate receptacle for gaining **ईश्वर ज्ञानं**, **आत्म ज्ञानं** - Self-Knowledge, and ultimately, **श्रेयस्** - Total Fulfillment in life. That **परमेश्वर** to whom one is dedicating one's **नियतं कर्म** is already within oneself.

Therefore, through the integrated attitude of **धर्म कर्म** and **यज्ञ कर्म**, which is **कर्म योग**, one is naturally enabled to move closer and closer to **ONENESS** with That **परमेश्वर**, which means closer and closer to one's own true self.

Sri Krishna talks about **यज्ञ कर्म** again and again, in different ways, in the later chapters of the **भगवत् गीता**. Here, He is just introducing the topic.

In the language of the **वेद**, any ceremonial ritual dedicated to **परमेश्वर** is a **यज्ञ**. In any **यज्ञ**, by virtue of the dedication involved, the **कर्ता** - the Doer of the **यज्ञ**, the **भोक्ता** - the enjoyer, namely **परमेश्वर**, and the **कर्म**, the ceremonial action involved in the ritual, all become one, which means **यज्ञ** and **परमेश्वर** are identical. That is why our Upanishads say **यज्ञो वै विष्णुः** :- **यज्ञ** is indeed **महाविष्णु** - The All-pervading, All-inclusive **परमेश्वर**.



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Thus a यज्ञ कर्म is ईश्वर कर्म. Do the नियतं कर्म as यज्ञ कर्म, because, Sri Krishna says

यज्ञार्थात् कर्मणोऽन्यत्र, लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।

तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय, मुक्त संगः समाचर ॥

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यज्ञार्थात् कर्मणः अन्यत्र - Any कर्म other than यज्ञ कर्म, any action other than that which is totally dedicated to परमेश्वर, is called अन्यत्र कर्म, or "other कर्म".

लोकः : अयं - the person who does the other कर्म

कर्म बन्धनः - gets bound to that कर्म, which means that

यज्ञ कर्म, कर्म totally dedicated to परमेश्वर is the only कर्म that cannot bind you in any way. Every other कर्म necessarily binds you in some way. Therefore, भगवान् says

तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्त संगः समाचर

तदर्थं means यज्ञार्थं - ईश्वरार्थं - Totally dedicated to परमेश्वर in attitude

मुक्त संगः means कर्म फल संग वर्जितः - free from any kind of attachment to fruits of action

कौन्तेय, कर्म समाचर- सम्यक् आचार - O! Arjuna, DO the कर्म as a यज्ञ कर्म as well as you can, as best as you can.

Sri Krishna does not say "Don't expect कर्म फल ". Every कर्म will yield a कर्म फल, whether you expect or not, whether you want it or not. भगवान् says "Do not go after कर्म फल, because कर्म फल does not belong to you. If you go after कर्म फल, you will be disappointed.

With ईश्वर अर्पित बुद्धि, with your बुद्धि firmly fixed on परमेश्वर, do whatever कर्म you need to do in your particular situation. The result will automatically take care of itself in such a way that it will ultimately lead you to श्रेयस् - मोक्ष - liberation from every kind of sorrow and distress. This entire creation is non-separate from ईश्वर, ईश्वर is Ever-existent, and ईश्वर 's creation is always "ON", cycle after cycle.



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Every जीव - every person, is an active participant in this creation. The role of every person is the role assigned by ईश्वर. Therefore every कर्म, every धर्म कर्म that has been left for one to do is only ईश्वर कर्म. Doing that ईश्वर कर्म, one is always in tune with the creation as well as ईश्वर. Such कर्म is यज्ञ कर्म in daily life.

There is also another reason why every human being should naturally do यज्ञ कर्म.

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।

अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वं एषवोऽस्तु इष्टकामधुक् ॥

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सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा - Having created प्रजा mankind, along with यज्ञ कर्मs

पुरा उवाच प्रजापतिः - the प्रजापति ईश्वर as the creator

उवाच - said, which means ईश्वर revealed through the Vedas and Upanishads, what?

अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वं, एषः वः अस्तु इष्टकामधुक्

अनेन यज्ञेन - by doing the नियतं कर्म as धर्म कर्म and यज्ञ कर्म

प्रसविष्यध्वं - may you multiply and grow up to maturity

एष वः अस्तु - Let the यज्ञ कर्म be for you

इष्टकामधुक् - the bestower of all that you desire, whether it is धर्म, अर्थ, काम or मोक्ष, depending on your spiritual maturity.

In each cycle of creation, the creator - the ईश्वर having created people, who are meant to do कर्मs, who are meant to perform actions, declared through the words of the Vedas "performing कर्मs as यज्ञकर्म, may you all multiply, grow up, mature, and gain whatever पुरुषार्थ - the Goal of life that you seek".

That is वेद वाक्य - Vedic statement. One can understand the above statement in terms which are appropriate to one's own spiritual maturity.

यज्ञ कर्म is ईश्वर अर्पित कर्म - totally dedicated to परमेश्वर, which by its very nature means मुक्त संगः - free from attachment to कर्म फल - fruits of action.



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Even if one's कर्म is a काम्यकर्म, a कर्म prompted by one's राग-द्वेष forces, forces of likes and dislikes, so long as that कर्म is done as a यज्ञकर्म, that काम्यकर्म also cannot bind a person, cannot cause any obstruction to one's spiritual progress. That is the glory of यज्ञकर्म.

In our tradition, Vedas are looked upon as ब्रह्मणो मुखः - as Revelations by परमेश्वर. One need not be skeptical about this concept. It is a perfectly valid concept, because knowledge does not belong to any body. Knowledge is Ever existent. The knowledge about creation was there even before creation.

There can be no creation without prior knowledge. Knowledge is the very nature of ईश्वर. ईश्वर is ज्ञानस्वरूपं - All knowledge; any knowledge comes from ईश्वर. That is why we worship ईश्वर as knowledge, as Saraswati, as ज्ञानलक्ष्मि - as Goddess Uma.

ईश्वर manifests as creation, as human beings, indeed, as all beings, as actions – कर्मs. Through कर्मs - actions, human beings enjoy all that is in this creation, realize their oneness with the creation, and realize their oneness with परमेश्वर Itself.

That is the Vedic vision of कर्म, जीव, जगत् and ईश्वर.

Focusing attention on this Vedic vision of existence, our Vedas say (so says भगवान्)

देवान् भावयत अनेन, ते देवाः भावयन्तु वः ।
परस्परं भावयन्तः, श्रेयः परं अवाप्स्यथ ॥

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देवान् भावयत अनेन

अनेन means अनेन यज्ञेन - By performing actions as यज्ञकर्म - as dedication to परमेश्वर, देवान् भावयत - recognize and express your sense of appreciation and gratitude to all the देवताs and the functionaries of ईश्वर, इन्द्र, अग्नि, वायु, चरुण - etc., all presiding deities of the laws of nature.

By worshipping the various देवताs in a यज्ञकर्म, by saying "Thank you" to all the presiding deities of the unchanging laws of nature, you recognize the ईश्वर behind all



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the देवताs, behind all the laws of nature and natural phenomenon in this creation. Thus, through the यज्ञकर्म - by touching the देवताs, you touch परमेश्वर Itself.

The word भावयत here refers to the देवता आराधन we do in any यज्ञकर्म, in any ceremonial ritual wherein we propitiate the देवताs by offering oblations to them. It is simply a way of expressing our deep sense of appreciation and gratitude to them for the parts that they play in this creation.

Whether one says "Thank You" or not, the sun rises, the rain rains and the wind blows. But by recognizing their functions in this creation, and by expressing one's deep appreciation and gratitude to them, one recognizes the true nature of one's own function in this creation, one becomes an active participant in this creation, and one progressively identifies oneself with the creation and the creator - The परमेश्वर Itself.

When you express your appreciation and gratitude to the देवताs, what do the देवताs do to you?

ते देवाः भावयन्तु वः - Having been properly propitiated,

ते देवाः - may those देवताs,

भावयन्तु वः - protect you, nourish you, by their own functions.

Thus, may all the laws of nature - by their own natural functions, uplift you by being an asset to you in your endeavors for gaining your overriding पुरुषार्थ of life, namely मोक्ष.

By doing every कर्म as यज्ञकर्म totally dedicated to परमेश्वर, everything in this creation becomes an asset to you for your own upliftment in life, for your own true progress in life, for a life of non-binding, everlasting prosperity, success and happiness, leading ultimately to श्रेयस् - मोक्ष - Total Fulfillment in life.

Therefore, the वेद says

परस्परं भावयन्तः, परं श्रेयः अवाप्स्यथ

परस्परं भावयन्तः - Mutually interacting with each other,

परं श्रेयः अवाप्स्यथ may you reap the supreme good, may you gain श्रेयस्, may you gain मोक्ष.



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In terms of Vedic life, ceremonial यज्ञ is a नित्यकर्म. Offering oblations to देवताs as an expression of appreciation and gratitude to them is a daily activity. This is what one does in any Havan. By doing Havans often, one learns to do all कर्मs in one's life - professional life, social life and private life as यज्ञकर्मs.

All the देवताs function naturally as they should, whether we appreciate them or not. The Vedic advice is NOT for the देवताs. It is for us human beings.

The Vedic advice is - Remember the देवताs every day. Express your appreciation and gratitude to them properly. By so doing, you will be protected and uplifted by them.

What about the person who never says a prayer, who has no sense of gratitude, but only wants to enjoy whatever he can get out of this world? About that person. the Veda says:

इष्टान् भोगान् हि वो देवाः दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।
तैः दत्तान् अप्रदाय एभ्यः, यः भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥

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यज्ञभाविताः, देवाः दास्यन्ते च इष्टान् भोगान् - हि

हि - certainly

यज्ञ भाविताः - interacted by your expressions of appreciation and gratitude in the यज्ञकर्म that you do,

देवाः दास्यन्ते च इष्टान् भोगान् - the देवताs give you, bless you with all the desired enjoyments of life. On the other hand,

तैः दत्तान् भोगान् अप्रदाय एभ्यः, यः भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः

अप्रदाय एभ्यः - Without offering them a sincere expression of appreciation and gratitude

यः भुङ्क्ते तैः दत्तान् भोगान् - the one who enjoys the pleasures of life by the blessings given to the person by the देवताs

स्तेन एव सः - that person is only a thief.

The one who enjoys all the blessings of daily life without even a sincere expression of gratitude to परमेश्वर who made all such enjoyments possible, that person is indeed a



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thief. That is also the meaning of the Upanishad word मा गृधः कस्य सिद्धनं - never be a thief.

Thus in the Vedic view, every human being is कर्मणि अधिकृतः - meant for action as a participant in this creation. Every one's destination is the same, namely श्रेयस् - मोक्ष. One reaches this destination by doing one's कर्म with the attitude of कर्मयोग - which is धर्म कर्म and यज्ञ कर्म in ONE - कर्म as one's duty and a total dedication to परमेश्वर. Further,

यज्ञ-शिष्ट-अशिनः सन्तः, मुच्यन्ते सर्व किल्बिषैः।
भुञ्जते ते तु अघं पापाः ये पचन्ति आत्मकारणात् ॥

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यज्ञ-शिष्ट-अशिनः सन्तः - Those who have the habit of eating food only after offering it to परमेश्वर, those who habitually and naturally eat only ईश्वर प्रसाद food, मुच्यन्ते सर्व किल्बिषैः - they are liberated from all sins committed by thought, word and deed, unconsciously or unintentionally, or through indifference or carelessness in daily life, which means, from all unavoidable sins.

The Vedic culture is sensitive to all beings in this creation. Those who develop no such sensitivity, those who do not care either for the देवताs, Rishis, the sun, the moon, the earth, the wind, etc. in this creation, or for one's own kith and kin, or for other people in the society and community, or for those in whose surroundings one lives, including animals and the plant kingdom - talking about such people भगवान् says,

ये पचन्ति आत्मकारणात् - those people who cook food only to satisfy their own needs, which means those who use their fortunes for their own pleasures only, they are ते पापाः - they are sinners. They cannot escape the many sins of daily life. They only create for themselves pains, sorrows and distress of various kinds.

Since they have no sense of gratitude for all their fortunes

तु - indeed

ते अघं भुञ्जते - they eat only sin when they eat their food. When they enjoy their fortunes with no expression of gratitude, they only get enslaved to their fortunes, and they initiate for themselves only sorrows and distress in daily life.



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So says Sri Krishna.

Let us briefly stop here to reflect on what we have been reading.

Sri Krishna unfolds कर्मयोग in a two-fold manner.

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं - Perform your नियतं कर्म - the कर्म that has come to you naturally as धर्म कर्म, as a duty to be done. At the same time, यज्ञार्थं मुक्त संगः कर्म समाचर - Do that धर्म कर्म as a यज्ञ कर्म - as a कर्म totally dedicated to परमेश्वर with no attachment whatsoever, either for the कर्म or the कर्म फल.

That is कर्म योग. Thus कर्म योग attitude is both धर्म कर्म attitude and यज्ञ कर्म attitude in ONE. We must understand that धर्म कर्म attitude and यज्ञ कर्म attitude are not mutually exclusive. They are, in fact, inseparable, both being rooted in God-consciousness.

There can be no sense of duty without God-consciousness, and there can be no sense of dedication to परमेश्वर without God-consciousness. Therefore, cultivation of कर्म योग attitude really means cultivation of God-consciousness at all times - मच्चित्तः सततं भव - as Sri Krishna says in chapter 18, which we will see later.

It is only such God-consciousness - the धर्म कर्म यज्ञ कर्म consciousness at all times, that ultimately makes God-Realization - Self-Realization possible.

The one who is Duty -conscious at all times is called धर्मज्ञः, and the one who is यज्ञ- conscious at all times is called कृतज्ञः (because यज्ञ is a क्रिया - performance of action). When a person matures in being such धर्मज्ञ and कृतज्ञ, that person matures in being in कर्म योग, which leads one naturally to ज्ञान योग, and ultimately to श्रेयस् - मोक्ष.

Consequently, at maturity, a person who is both धर्मज्ञ and कृतज्ञ is indeed the very embodiment of परमेश्वर. That is the potential of such doing - doing every कर्म as धर्म कर्म and यज्ञ कर्म at all times, and the Glory of such Being, being धर्मज्ञ and कृतज्ञ.



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It is the very realization of That Glory of Being धर्मज्ञ and कृतज्ञ that prompted the Rishi Valmiki to ask sage Narada a question, which resulted in the emergence of Valmiki Ramayan as we have it today. This is how the Valmiki Ramayan begins. Please listen.

तपस् स्वाध्यायनिरतं, तपस्वी चाग्विदां चरं ।
नारदं परिपप्रच्छ, वाल्मीकिर्मुनिपुंगवम् ॥
कोन्वस्मिन् सांप्रतं लोके, गुणवान् कश्च वीर्यवान् ।
धर्मज्ञश्च कृतज्ञश्च, सत्यवाक्यो दृढव्रतः ॥

Please note the very first word in Valmiki Ramayan – तपस् स्वाध्यायनिरतं - Rishi Valmiki is rooted in तपस् - discipline. What discipline? स्वाध्याय निरतं - Deep devotion to the Vedic advice स्वाध्यायात् मा प्रमदः - Never neglect the study and assimilation of Teachings of the Vedas and Upanishads - That is the discipline in which Rishi Valmiki is rooted. It is this discipline, and the consequent realization of the Glory of Being धर्मज्ञ and कृतज्ञ that inspired Rishi Valmiki to ask, eagerly and earnestly, the Enlightened sage Narada the following question. The question is:

कोन्वस्मिन् सांप्रतं लोके गुणवान् कश्च वीर्यवान् ।
धर्मज्ञश्च कृतज्ञश्च सत्यवाक्यो दृढव्रतः ॥

अस्मिन् लोके - In this world,

सांप्रतं at this time, just now

कः नु - is there any one who is

गुणवान् - a person of highest moral character

वीर्यवान् - a person of highest physical and spiritual strength

धर्मज्ञः च कृतज्ञः च - a person who is ever धर्म conscious and यज्ञ conscious, a person who is ever God-conscious

सत्यवाक्यः - a person who is ever truthful in thought, word and deed and

दृढव्रतः - a person of highest resolve, self-discipline, etc.

Is there any such person in this world right now" asks Rishi Valmiki.

The Enlightened Sage Narada replies "Yes indeed, there is, just now, such a person in this world



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ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

इक्ष्वाकुप्रभवो, रामो नाम जनैः श्रुतः - That person is well known to people as Rama, who is born in the family of इक्ष्वाकु, etc." Saying this, sage Narada unfolds the story of Rama briefly to Rishi Valmiki who then realizes intuitively the entire Ramayana as we have it today.

We worship श्रीमद्वाल्मीकि रामायण and Sri Rama at this Temple. Let us do नमस्कार to Rishi Valmiki and Sri Rama before we conclude.

कूजन्तं राम रामेति मधुरं मधुराक्षरम् ।
आरुह्यकविताशाखां चन्दे वाल्मीकि कोकिलम् ॥

श्री राघवं दशरथात्मजमप्रमेयं , सीतापतिं रघुकुलान्वयरत्नदीपम् ।
आजानुबाहुमरविन्ददलायताक्षं , रामं निशाचरविनाशकरं नमामि ॥

वैदेहीसहितं सुरद्रुमतले हैमे महामण्डपे
मध्येपुष्पकमासने मणिमये वीरासने सुस्थितं
अग्रे वाचयति प्रपञ्जनसुते, तत्त्वं मुनिभ्यः परं
ब्याख्यान्तं, भरतादिभिः परिवृतं, रामं भजे श्यामलम् ॥

हरि : ॐ

We will continue next time