

Bhagavad Gita

Chapter 3

अर्जुन उवाच

Arjuna said,
arjuna uvāca

ज्यायसी चेत् कर्मणस्ते

If better than karma, you
jyāyasī cet karmaṇas te

मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।

consider knowledge to be, O Krishna,
matā buddhir janārdana

तत् किं कर्मणि घोरे मां

then why, into this gruesome deed,
tat kiṁ karmaṇi ghore māṁ

नियोजयसि केशव ॥१॥

do you compel me, O Krishna.
niyojayasi keśava

व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन

With apparently contradictory words
vyāmiśreṇeva vākyaena

बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे ।

you seem to confuse my intellect.
buddhiṁ mohayasīva me

तदेकं वद निश्चित्य

Tell me certainly that one (path)
tad ekaṁ vada niścitya

येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥२॥

by which I shall gain the highest good.
yena śreyo 'ham āpnuyām

श्रीभगवानुवाच

The Blessed Lord said,
śrī-bhagavān uvāca

लोकेऽस्मिन् द्विविधा निष्ठा

In this world are two paths
loke 'smin dvi-vidhā niṣṭhā

पुरा प्रोक्ता मयानघ ।

described by me long ago, O Arjuna –
purā proktā mayānagha

ज्ञानयोगेन साङ्ख्यानां

jnana-yoga for renunciates
jñāna-yogena sāṅkhyānām

कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥३॥

and karma-yoga for aspirants.
karma-yogena yoginām

न कर्मणामनारम्भान्

By refraining from action
na karmaṇām anārambhān

नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।

a person does not gain actionlessness.
naiṣkarmyam puruṣo 'śnute

न च संन्यासनादेव

Nor by renunciation alone
na ca samnyāsanād eva

सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥४॥

can one attain perfection.
siddhim samadhigacchati

न हि कश्चित् क्षणमपि

No one, even for a moment,
na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api

जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।

ever remains without action
jātu tiṣṭhaty akarma-kṛt

कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म

because all are compelled to perform action
kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma

सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥५॥

by the qualities of nature.
sarvaḥ prakṛtijair guṇaiḥ

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य

While restraining the organs of action,
karmendriyāṇi saṁyamya

य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।

one who sits with his mind dwelling
ya āste manasā smaran

इन्द्रियार्थान् विमूढात्मा

upon sense objects is deluded.
indriyārthān vimūḍhātmā

मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥६॥

He is called a hypocrite.
mithyācāraḥ sa ucyate

यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा

But one who restrains his senses with his mind,
yas tv indriyāṇi manasā

नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।

O Arjuna, practicing
niyamyārabhate 'rjuna

कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगम्

karma-yoga with his organs of action,
karmendriyaiḥ karma-yogam

असक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥७॥

that detached person is superior.
asaktaḥ sa viśiṣyate

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं

You must perform action that is ordained
niyataṁ kuru karma tvam

कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।

because action is better than inaction.
karma jyāyo hy akarmanah

शरीरयात्रापि च ते

Even the maintenance of your body
śarīra-yātrāpi ca te

न प्रसिद्धयेदकर्मणः ॥८॥

is not possible without action.
na prasiddhyed akarmanah

यज्ञार्थात् कर्मणोऽन्यत्र

Except for action done as a sacrifice,
yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra

लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।

mankind is bound by karma.
loko 'yam karma-bandhanaḥ

तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय

O Arjuna, as a sacrifice
tad-arthaṁ karma kaunteya

मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥९॥

perform action without attachment.
mukta-saṅgaḥ samācara

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा

Having created people along with sacrifice,
saha-yajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā

पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।

the Creator said in the beginning:
purovāca prajāpatiḥ

अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वम्

"By this (sacrifice) shall you multiply.
anena prasaviṣyadhvam

एष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥१०॥

May this (sacrifice) be a wish-fulfilling cow for you."
eṣa vo 'stv iṣṭa-kāma-dhuk

देवान् भावयतानेन

"Propitiate the gods by this (sacrifice).
devān bhāvayatānena

ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।

May those gods propitiate you.
te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ

परस्परं भावयन्तः

Propitiating each other,
parasparam bhāvayantaḥ

श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥११॥

you shall gain the highest good."
śreyaḥ param avāpsyatha

इष्टान् भोगान् हि वो देवा

The gods will give desired things
iṣṭān bhogān hi vo devā

दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।

when propitiated by sacrifice.
dāsyante yajña-bhāvitāḥ

तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो

Without making offerings, the things given by them—
tair dattān apradāyaibhyo

यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥१२॥

he who enjoys is a thief."
yo bhukte stena eva saḥ

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो

Those who eat food offered as a sacrifice
yajña-śiṣṭāśinaḥ santo

मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।

are freed from all sins.
mucyante sarva-kilbiṣaiḥ

भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा

But those sinners eat sin
bhuñjate te tv agham pāpā

ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥१३॥

who cook only for themselves.
ye pacanty ātma-kāraṇāt

अन्नाद् भवन्ति भूतानि

Living beings are born of food,
annād bhavanti bhūtāni

पर्जन्यादन्नसम्भवः ।

food is born of rain,
parjanyaād anna-sambhavaḥ

यज्ञाद् भवति पर्जन्यो

rain is born of sacrifice,
yajñād bhavati parjanya

यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥१४॥

and sacrifice is born of action.
yajñaḥ karma-samudbhavaḥ

कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि

Know (ritual) action to be born of the Veda
karma brahmodbhavaṁ viddhi

ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।

and the Veda to be born of the imperishable (Ishvara).
brahmākṣara-samudbhavam

तस्मात् सर्वगतं ब्रह्म

Therefore, the all-pervasive Veda
tasmāt sarva-gataṁ brahma

नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥१५॥

always abides in sacrifice.
nityaṁ yajñe pratiṣṭhitam

एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं

The cycle thus set in motion –
evaṁ pravartitaṁ cakram

नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।

one who does not follow it
nānuvartayatīha yaḥ

अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो

is sinful and self-indulgent.
aghāyur indriyārāmo

मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥१६॥

He lives in vain, O Arjuna.
moghaṁ pārtha sa jīvati

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्याद्

But one who revels in atma alone,
yas tv ātma-ratir eva syād

आत्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।

a person satisfied with atma
ātma-tṛptaś ca mānavaḥ

आत्मन्येव च सन्तुष्टस्

and contented with atma alone,
ātmany eva ca santuṣṭas

तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥१७॥

for him there is nothing to be done.
tasya kāryaṁ na vidyate

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो

For him, there is nothing to gain through action
naiva tasya kṛtenārtho

नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।

nor through inaction,
nākṛteneha kaścana

न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु

nor upon all that exists
na cāsya sarva-bhūteṣu

कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥१८॥

has he any dependence.
kaścīd artha-vyapāśrayaḥ

तस्मादसक्तः सततं

Therefore, being detached, always
tasmād asaktaḥ satataṁ

कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।

perform the required action,
kāryaṁ karma samācara

असक्तो ह्याचरन् कर्म

because by performing action with detachment,
asakto hy ācaraṁ karma

परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥१९॥

a person attains the highest.
param āpnoti pūruṣaḥ

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिम्

By action alone, liberation
karmaṇaiva hi saṁsiddhim

आस्थिता जनकादयः ।

Janaka and others attained.
āsthitā janakādayaḥ

लोकसङ्ग्रहमेवापि

Keeping the welfare of mankind
loka-saṅgrahaṁ evāpi

सम्पश्यन् कर्तुमर्हसि ॥२०॥

in view, you should perform action.
sampaśyan kartum arhasi

यद् यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्

Whatever a great person does,
yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas

तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।

that alone other people do.
tat tad evetaro janaḥ

स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते

The standard he sets,
sa yat pramaṇaṁ kurute

लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥२१॥

that mankind will follow.
lokaḥ tad anuvartate

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं

O Arjuna, for me, there is nothing to be done
na me pārthāsti kartavyam

त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।

in the three worlds,
triṣu lokeṣu kiñcana

नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं

nothing to be gained which is not yet gained.
nānavāptam avāptavyam

वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥२२॥

Yet, I remain engaged in action.
varta eva ca karmaṇi

यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं

If I were were not to engage
yadi hy aham na varteyam

जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।

in any action, relentlessly,
jātu karmaṇy atandritaḥ

मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते

people would follow my example
mama vartmānuvartante

मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥२३॥

in all situations, O Arjuna.
manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ

उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका

These people would perish
utsīdeyur ime lokā

न कुर्यां कर्म चेद् अहम् ।

if I were not to perform action.
na kuryām karma ced aham

सङ्करस्य च कर्ता स्याम्

I would be the agent of confusion.
saṅkarasya ca kartā syām

उपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥२४॥

I would destroy these people.
upahanyām imāḥ prajāḥ

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो

Just like the ignorant, who are attached to results,
saktāḥ karmaṇy avidvāṁso

यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।

perform action, O Arjuna,
yathā kurvanti bhārata

कुर्याद् विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्

so too, the wise, who are not attached, would act
kuryād vidvāṁs tathāsaktaś

चिकीर्षुर्लोकसङ्ग्रहम् ॥२५॥

desiring the welfare of mankind.
cikīrṣur loka-saṅgraham

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेद्

One should not sow confusion
na buddhi-bhedam janayed

अज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् ।

for the ignorant who are attached to results.
ajñānām karma-saṅginām

जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि

Encouraging them to perform all actions,
joṣayet sarva-karmāṇi

विद्वान् युक्तः समाचरन् ॥२६॥

the wise should act properly with discipline.
vidvān yuktaḥ samācaran

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि

Due to the qualities of nature,
prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni

गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।

all kinds of actions are performed.
guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ

अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा

Deluded by egotism,
ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā

कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥२७॥

one thinks, "I am the doer."
kartāham iti manyate

तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो

Whereas, O Arjuna, one knowing the truth
tattvavit tu mahā-bāho

गुणकर्मविभागयोः ।

about qualities and actions –
guṇa-karma-vibhāgayoḥ

गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त

"Qualities act in the body and mind" –
guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta

इति मत्वा न सज्जते ॥२८॥

knowing thus, he is not bound.
iti matvā na sajjate

प्रकृतेर्गुणसम्मूढाः

Deluded about the qualities of nature,
prakṛter guṇa-sammūḍhāḥ

सज्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु ।

one is bound to the quality's actions.
sajjante guṇa-karmasu

तानकृत्स्नविदो मन्दान्

Those who are ignorant and foolish –
tān akṛtsna-vido mandān

कृत्स्नविन्न विचालयेत् ॥२९॥

the wise should not disturb.
kṛtsna-vin na vicālayet

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि

Unto me, all actions
mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi

संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।

renouncing with discerning mind,
sannyasyādhyātma-cetasā

निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा

becoming free from desire and possessiveness,
nirāśīr nirmamo bhūtvā

युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥३०॥

you should fight without anger.
yudhyasva vigata-jvaraḥ

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यम्

This doctrine of mine –
ye me matam idaṁ nityam

अनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।

people who constantly follow it,
anutīṣṭhanti mānavāḥ

श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो

full of faith, free from criticism,
śraddhāvanto 'nasūyanto

मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥३१॥

are released from (the bondage) of karma.
mucyante te 'pi karmabhiḥ

ये त्वेतदभ्यसूयन्तो

Whereas those who reject this
ye tv etad abhyasūyanto

नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम् ।

and do not follow my teachings,
nānutīṣṭhanti me matam

सर्वज्ञानविमूढांस्तान्

being confused about all kinds of knowledge,
sarva-jñāna-vimūḍhāṁs tān

विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥३२॥

lacking discrimination, know them as lost.
viddhi naṣṭān acetasaḥ

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः

One acts according to one's own
sadr̥śaṁ ceṣṭate svasyāḥ

प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि ।

nature, even a wise person.
prakṛter jñānavān api

प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि

Beings conform to nature;
prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni

निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥३३॥

what can restraint do?
nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे

Towards every sense object
indriyasyendriyasyārthe

रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।

desire and aversion exist.
rāga-dveṣau vyavasthitau

तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्

One should not fall under their control
tayor na vaśam āgacchet

तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥३४॥

because they are one's enemies.
tau hy asya paripanthinau

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः

Better to follow one's own dharma, even poorly,
śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ

परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

than to follow the dharma of another well.
para-dharmāt sv-anuṣṭhitāt

स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः

Dying while following one's own dharma is better.
sva-dharme nidhanam śreyaḥ

परधर्मो भयावहः ॥३५॥

Following other's dharma invites danger.
para-dharmo bhayāvahaḥ

अर्जुन उवाच

Arjuna said,
arjuna uvāca

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं

Compelled by what
atha kena prayukto 'yam

पापं चरति पूरुषः ।

does a person commit a sin
pāpam carati pūruṣaḥ

अनिच्छन्नपि वाष्णेय

even without wanting to, O Krishna,
anicchann api vārṣṇeya

बलादिव नियोजितः ॥३६॥

as though driven by force?
balād iva niyojitaḥ

श्रीभगवानुवाच

The Blessed Lord said,
śrī-bhagavān uvāca

काम एष क्रोध एष

This desire, this anger,
kāma eṣa krodha eṣa

रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।

born of the quality of passion,
rajo-guṇa-samudbhavaḥ

महाशनो महापाप्मा

is a glutton and great sinner.
mahāśano mahā-pāpmā

विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥३७॥

Know it to be the enemy here.
viddhy enam iha vairiṇam

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्

Like fire is covered by smoke
dhūmenāvriyate vahnir

यथादर्शो मलेन च ।

or a mirror is covered by dust
yathādarśo malena ca

यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्

or a foetus is covered by the womb,
yatholbenāvṛto garbhas

तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥३८॥

so too, this (wisdom) is covered by that (desire).
tathā tenedam āvṛtam

आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन

Wisdom is covered by this –
āvṛtam jñānam etena

ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।

by the relentless enemy of the wise,
jñānino nitya-vairiṇā

कामरूपेण कौन्तेय

by desire, O Arjuna,
kāma-rūpeṇa kaunteya

दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ॥३९॥

by this insatiable fire.
duṣpūreṇānalena ca

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिर्
Senses, mind, and intellect
indriyāṇi mano buddhir

अस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।
are said to be its abode.
asyādhiṣṭhānam ucyate

एतैर्विमोहयत्येष
With these, it (desire) causes confusion
etair vimohayaty eṣa

ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥४०॥
by covering a person's wisdom.
jñānam āvṛtya dehinam

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ
Therefore, at first
tasmāt tvam indriyāṅy ādau

नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।
controlling the senses, O Arjuna,
niyamya bharatarṣabha

पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं
destroy this sinner,
pāpmānaṁ prajahi hy enaṁ

ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥४१॥
the destroyer of wisdom and discrimination.
jñāna-vijñāna-nāśanam

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुर्
They say: the senses are superior,
indriyāṇi parāṅy āhur

इन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।
the mind is superior to the senses,
indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्
the intellect is superior to the mind.
manasas tu parā buddhir

यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥४२॥
But that (atma) is superior to the intellect.
yo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा
Thus knowing that which is superior to the intellect,
evaṁ buddheḥ paraṁ buddhvā

संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।
steadying yourself with the self,
saṁstabhyātmānam ātmanā

जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो
O Arjuna, destroy this enemy
jahi śatruṁ mahā-bāho

कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥४३॥
in the form of desire which is hard to overcome.
kāma-rūpaṁ durāsadam