

**Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 24: Chapter 3, Verses 01-05**

(October 10 –October 16, 2018)

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**ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT**

**TRANSLITERATION**

अथ तृतीयोऽध्यायः

Atha Tritiyodhyayah

अर्जुन उवाच ।

*arjuna uvāca*

ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।

*jyāyasī cet karmaṇas te matā buddhir janārdana*

तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥ ३-१ ॥

*tat kiṁ karmaṇi ghore māṁ niyojayasi keśava*

व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे ।

*vyāmiśreṇeva vākyaena buddhiṁ mohayaśīva me*

तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥ ३-२ ॥

*tad ekaṁ vada niścitya yena śreya 'ham āpnuyām*

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

*śrī bhagavān uvāca*

लोकेऽस्मिन् द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मया नघ ।

*loke 'smin dvi-vidhā niṣṭhā purā proktā mayānagha*

ज्ञानयोगेन साङ्ख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥ ३-३ ॥

*jñāna-yogena sāṅkhyānām karma-yogena yoginām*

न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।

*na karmaṇām anārambhān naiṣkarmyam puruṣo 'śnute*

न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥ ३-४ ॥

*na ca sannyasanād eva siddhiṁ samadhigacchati*

न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।

*na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhaty akarmakṛt*

कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥ ३-५ ॥

*kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma sarvaḥ prakṛti-jair guṇaiḥ*

## TRANSLATION

### Third Chapter

- (01) Arjun said: O Janardan, if you consider spiritual knowledge superior to action, then why do you ask me to wage this terrible war?
- (02) O, Krishna, my spiritual intelligence is becoming confused by your words of conflicting conclusions; therefore, ascertaining one of them, please reveal the path by which I may attain the highest good.
- (03) The Blessed Lord said: O sinless one, the two paths leading to enlightenment were previously explained by me: the path of knowledge, for those inclined toward contemplation, and the path of work for those inclined toward action.
- (04) One cannot achieve freedom from karmic reactions by merely abstaining from work, nor can one attain perfection of knowledge by mere physical renunciation.
- (05) There is no one who can remain without action even for a moment. Indeed, all beings are compelled to act by their qualities born of material nature (the 3 *guṇas*).

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1efTP-gHxOC0WhFE6V7xOO5pSvhDsRVDS>

### Commentary:

#### Verses 01-02:

In chapter two, the Lord Krishna first explained knowledge of the immortal Atman. He then reminded Arjuna of his duty as a warrior, and said that performing it would only result in attaining glory and the celestial abodes. After prodding Arjuna to do his occupational work as a Kshatriya, the Lord then revealed Arjuna the science of *Karma Yoga* and asked Arjuna to detach himself from the fruits of his works. In this way, bondage-creating karmas would be transformed into bondage-breaking karmas. He termed the science of working without desire for rewards as *Buddhi Yoga*, or *Yoga of the intellect*. By this, he meant that the mind should be detached from worldly temptations by controlling it with a resolute intellect; and the intellect should be made unwavering through the cultivation of spiritual knowledge. He did not suggest that actions should be given up, but rather that attachment to the fruits of actions should be relinquished. Arjuna misunderstood Lord Krishna's intention, thinking that if knowledge is superior to action, then why should he perform the ghastly duty of waging this war? Hence, he asks the Lord: "By making contradictory statements, you are bewildering my intellect. I know you are merciful and your desire is not to baffle me, but I am totally confused, so please dispel my doubt by pointing out just one path by which I may attain the highest good."

#### Verse 03:

In Chapter 2, Verse 39, Lord Krishna explained to Arjuna the two paths that lead to spiritual perfection. The first is the acquisition of knowledge through the analytical study of the nature of the soul and its distinction from the body. He refers to this as *Sāṅkhya Yoga*. People with a philosophic bend of mind are inclined toward this path of knowing the self (or the Atman) through

intellectual analysis. The second is the process of working in the spirit of devotion to God, or *Karm Yoga*. Lord Krishna also calls this *Buddhi Yoga*, as explained in the previous verse. Working in this manner purifies the mind, and knowledge naturally awakens in the purified mind, thus leading to enlightenment. Amongst people interested in the spiritual path, there are those who are inclined toward contemplation and then there are those inclined to action. Hence, both these paths have existed ever since the soul's aspiration for God-realization has existed. Lord Krishna touches upon both of them since his message is meant for people of all temperaments and inclinations.

#### **Verse 04:**

The first line of this verse refers to the *Karm Yogi* (follower of the discipline of work), and the second line refers to the *Sāṅkhya Yogi* (follower of the discipline of knowledge). In the first line, Lord Krishna advises that mere abstinence from work does not result in a state of freedom from karmic reactions. The mind continues to engage in thoughts of fruits of action, and since mental work is also a form of karma, it binds one in karmic reactions, just as physical work does. A true *Karma Yogi* must learn to work without any attachment to the fruits of actions. This requires development of knowledge in the intellect. Hence, philosophic knowledge is also necessary for success in *Karma Yoga*. In the second line of Verse 4, Lord Krishna declares that the *Sāṅkhya Yogi* cannot attain the state of knowledge merely by renouncing the world and becoming a monk. One may give up the physical objects of the senses, but true knowledge cannot awaken as long as the mind remains impure. The mind has a tendency to repeat its previous thoughts. Such repetition creates a channel within the mind, and new thoughts flow irresistibly in the same direction. Out of previous habit, the materially contaminated mind keeps running in the direction of anxiety, stress, fear, hatred, envy, attachment, and the whole gamut of material emotions. Thus, realized knowledge will not appear in an impure heart by mere physical renunciation. It must be accompanied by congruent action that purifies the mind and intellect. Therefore, action is also necessary for success in *Sāṅkhya Yoga*. It is said that devotion without philosophy is sentimentality, and philosophy without devotion is intellectual speculation. Action and knowledge are necessary in both *Karma Yoga* and *Sāṅkhya Yoga*. It is only their proportion that varies, creating the difference between the two paths.

#### **Verse 05:**

Lord Krishna considers all activities performed with the body, mind, and tongue as actions. He tells Arjuna that complete inactivity is impossible even for a moment. If we simply sit down, it is an activity; if we lie down, that is also an activity; if we fall asleep, the mind is still engaged in dreaming; even in deep sleep, the heart and other bodily organs are functioning. Thus Lord Krishna declares that for human beings inactivity is an impossible state to reach, since the body-mind-intellect mechanism is compelled by its own make-up of the three *guṇas* (*sattvic*, *rajasic*, and *tamasic*) to perform work in the world.