



The Yoga of Action

The Bhagavad Gita
“The Song of the Lord”



Exercise

You have a right to your actions,
but never to your actions' fruits
Act for the action's sake,
And do not be attached to inaction.

Self-possessed, resolute, act
without any thought of results,
open to success or failure.
This equanimity is yoga.

3:25 The unenlightened do things with attachment (wanting some results for themselves).

An enlightened person does things with the same zeal, Arjuna, but without attachment, and thus guides others on the path of selfless action (Karma Yoga).

Commentary

- Just as an ordinary person performs actions with selfishness,

the enlightened one also does things,

but without selfishness.
- The only difference:

the ordinary person does things for his or her own benefit;

the enlightened one does things for others' benefit.

- The performance of actions for others is in no way inferior.
- In fact, Lord Krishna says,

the selfless person

should even act a little more carefully

and more efficiently than a selfish person.

- A yogi is acting for everybody's sake,
and should do a little better job.
- Sometimes the attitude is,
“Since I’m not gaining much from this action
— it’s mainly for others —
it doesn’t matter how I do it.
I’ll just let it happen.”

- Probably Lord Krishna knows this attitude is part of human nature.
- So he says,

“Don’t think that because you are acting selflessly

you can get away with something haphazard.

In fact, you should do a better job.”

- Who is a yogi?
- The one who performs actions skillfully and efficiently.
- Why?
- Your interest is to serve others.

- So many people are going to be benefited by your action;

you should do a better job.

- If an ordinary person doesn't do a good job,
then only he loses.

- But if you don't do a good job,
imagine how many people will lose.

..... exercise

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3:26 A wise person will not disturb the mind of an unwise person who is still attached to the fruits of his or her actions.

But by continuously performing perfect (selfless) actions, the wise person influences others in all they do.

Commentary

- Suppose a small child asks his uncle,
- “Who is that man with something hanging around his neck?”
- “He’s a doctor.

That’s a stethoscope around his neck.”

- “Uncle, I want to be a doctor, too.
Buy me a stethoscope.”

- It's easy to copy.
- That's why teachers do things that actually there's no need for them to do.
- Their actions aren't for their own sake, but to set examples for their students.
- If they stop doing these things, the students will immediately follow their example.
- That's what Krishna is saying here.

- And he's also basically answering the question:

how should we work if we are not doing it for personal gain,

but just for the sake of others?
- Should they be grateful for what we're doing?
- Can we do the work any way we want?

- Krishna says no, that's not Karma Yoga then.
- Even an ordinary, greedy person will do things for his or her own benefit.
- We should do things just as well, if not better

- Don't think that because it's a dedicated or karma yoga action,

it doesn't matter how it's done.
- In fact karma yoga actions should be done perfectly,

even neater and tidier because they're offerings.



Om, Shanti