



The Yoga of Action

The Bhagavad Gita
“The Song of the Lord”



3:27 The qualities of nature (calmness, restlessness, inertia) do all that is done.

(Gunas: sattva, rajas, tamas)

But because the mind is clouded by ego, a person thinks:

I am the doer.

3:28 Arjuna, one may intuit the relationship between nature's qualities (*gunas*) and action (*karma*).

Whoever does so knows that nature, as the senses, merely abides with nature, as the sense objects.

He identifies with neither, and thus does not become entangled.

3:29 Those still deluded by nature's qualities become attached to nature's functions.

But one of perfect understanding should not disturb the mind of someone who does not know better.

3:30 Dedicate all your actions to me.

Then your mind will rest in the Self (*Atman*)

free of the wishing and selfishness fever,

and you can engage in battle.

3:3 | Whoever lives by these teachings with faith

and without complaining

will transcend *karma*

(will be freed from the bondage of actions).

3:32 Those who don't live by these teachings,
however,

but look instead to criticize them,
misunderstand everything.

They have no discrimination (*viveka*)
and are ruined.

3:33 Even a wise person follows his or her own nature,

as all beings follow their own natures.

Why try to force anything to be otherwise?

3:34 It is natural for the senses
to be attracted or repulsed
by various sense objects.

But don't for a moment come under their
domination,
or surely they will be your enemies.

3:35 It is better to follow your own calling

(do your own duty or *dharma*)

even imperfectly,

than someone else's *dharma* perfectly.

Even better to die in your *dharma* than in
another's

which brings great fear.

Commentary

- Is this a little confusing?
- What is your *dharma* and what is someone else's *dharma*?
- What you're truly called to do is your own *dharma*;
- it fits your aptitude,
- your capabilities
- and your natural inclinations.

- Constitutionally, your *dharma* — physical and mental — is to walk.
- Look at a snake.
- If you try to crawl like that, it's not your *dharma*.
- It might look cute, but remember you're created to walk.
- Don't try to imitate a crawling species.

- This is just a rough example.
- But often we come across this situation,
- for example, in the name of equality:

- “I must do everything he does.
- Only then am I equal to him.
- If he jumps, I should jump.
- If he flies, I should fly.
- If he drives a tractor, I should drive a tractor.
- Only then am I equal.”

- That attitude is terribly wrong.
- Remember, even science has shown that there is no duplication in creation.
- No two snowflakes are exactly the same.
- As such, you are also unique.
- You have been created unique with certain abilities that no other person can do.
- That's your *svadharma*, your individual duty.

- Find out what your *svadharma* is.
- Ask yourself, “How do I feel when doing certain things?”
- Does something come easily?
- Is it natural for me or am I trying to imitate somebody?”
- First, take stock of your natural inclinations and your capability,
- which is your taste, temperament and capacity.

- With some things it's so natural.
- You're like a fish in the water.
- You just know: "Ahh, that's what I'm meant to do."
- In Sanskrit it is called your *svadharma*.

- But remember, *svadharma* is different from *karma*.
- *Karma* is just an action based on a selfish interest.
- *Svadharma* is something righteous.
- It's something completely natural to you that you could do to benefit others.

- You can't say: "My svadharma is to steal."
- I feel naturally inclined to take something from somebody's pocket.
- It's to my taste."
- No.
- The word *dharma* always implies the benefit of others.
- There's no personal desire behind it.

- Think what *svadharma* is and try to do it.
- If you're an expert cook, that's *svadharma*.
- It just came to you naturally.
- Good!
- Cook for everybody.
- But if you're naturally inclined
- to work somewhere in the field, then that's your *svadharma* at this time.

- Your *svadharma* may change over the years.
- ...



Om, Shanti