

Texts from Hinduism on Work and Workers¹

Bhagavad Gita 3.4

Not by merely abstaining from work can one achieve freedom from reaction, nor by renunciation alone can one attain perfection.

Bhagavad Gita 5.3

One who neither hates nor desires the fruits of his activities is known to be always renounced. Such a person, free from all dualities, easily overcomes material bondage and is completely liberated, O mighty-armed Arjuna.

Bhagavad Gita 12.10

If you cannot practice the regulations of bhakti-yoga,² then just try to work for Me, because by working for Me you will come to the perfect stage.

Bhagavad Gita 18.26

One who performs his duty without association with the modes of material nature, without false ego, with a great determination and enthusiasm, and without wavering success or failure is said to be a worker in the mode of goodness.

Bhagavad Gita 18.27-28

The worker who is attached to work and the fruits of work, desiring to enjoy those fruits, and who is greedy, always envious, impure, and moved by joy and sorrow, is said to be in the mode of passion.

The worker who is always engaged in work against the injunctions of the scripture, who is materialistic, obstinate, cheating and expert in insulting others, and who is lazy, always morose and procrastinating is said to be a worker in the mode of ignorance.

Bhagavad Gita 18.42-47

Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, knowledge, wisdom and religiousness — these are the natural qualities by which the brahmanas work.

Heroism, power, determination, resourcefulness, courage in battle, generosity and leadership are the natural qualities of work for the ksatriyas.

Farming, cow protection and business are the natural work for the vaisyas, and for the sudras there is labor and service to others.

By following his qualities of work, every man can become perfect. Now please hear from Me how this can be done.

By worshiping of the Lord, who is the source of all being and who is all-pervading, a man can attain perfection through performing his own work.

It is better to engage in one's own occupation, even though one may perform it imperfectly, than to accept another's occupation and perform it perfectly. Duties prescribed according to one's nature are

1 Translations taken from *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, trans. A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (Los Angeles: International Society for Krishna Consciousness, 1983, 1996).

2 One of the Hindu spiritual paths.