

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते
karmanyevādhikāraṣte
 in action alone the jurisdiction of thee,

मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
mā phaleṣu kadācana
 never in fruits at any time,

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्
mā karmaphalahetur bhūr
 never action-fruit motive should arise,

मा ते सङ्गोऽस्तु अकर्मणि ॥
mā te saṅgo 'stuv akarmaṇi.
 never of thee attachment let there be in
 inaction.

**Your right is to action alone;
 Never to its fruits at any time.
 Never should the fruits of action be
 your motive;
 Never let there be attachment
 to inaction in you.**

karmaṇi (n. loc. sg.), in action, in deeds.
eva, alone, indeed (often used as a rhythmic
 filler).
adhikāras (m. nom. sg.), jurisdiction, author-
 ity, prerogative, office, claim, privilege.
te (gen. sg.), of thee, thy.
mā (prohibitive), not, never.
phaleṣu (n. loc. pl.), in fruits, in results.
kadācana, (adv.), at any time, at any time
 whatsoever.
mā (prohibitive), not, never.
karmaphala (n.), fruit of action, result of ac-
 tion.
hetus (m. nom. sg.), motive, cause.
(karma-phala-hetus, m. nom. sg. TP cpd.,
motive in fruit-of-action.)
bhūs (3rd sg. aorist subjunctive $\sqrt{bhū}$), it
 should be, it should arise.
mā (prohibitive), not, never.
te (gen. sg.), of thee, thy.
saṅgas (m. nom. sg.), attachment.
astu (3rd sg. imperative act. \sqrt{as}), let there
 be!
akarmaṇi (n. loc. sg.), in inaction, in non-
 action.

* Acting without regard or desire for the fruits of action is one of the most constant teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā. It refers to “disinterested action,” which is not to be confused with irresponsible or careless action. According to the law of *karma* an individual is responsible for his actions throughout eternity, or until he achieves *nirvāna*. The “fruits” (usually translated in the plural, though the singular *phalam* is used in the Sanskrit) mean the results of action, and they are of three kinds: those of obligatory action, those of action prompted by desire, and those that arise from delusion (see XVIII 23, 24, 25). The first of these is really action without desire for the fruits, i.e. action which is a duty. The second and third are related to desire, and the elimination of desire for the fruits of action is basic to the Gītā’s teaching. The last line, about “inaction” is an injunction against sloth – one of the evils associated with the *guṇa* of *tamas*, or darkness. Action prompted by delusion (see above) is also associated with *tamas*. Thus, action prompted by greed, desire for wealth, desire for power, or desire for fame is not advised.