



CLASS THREE: THE PROBLEM OF IGNORANCE AND THE MENTAL AFFLICTIONS (BhG 3.36-43; 7.27-29; 16.7-24)

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषाः ।

atha kena prayukto'yam pāpaṁ carati pūruṣāḥ।

अनिच्छन्नपि वाष्णेय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥

anicchannapi vārṣṇeya balādiva niyojitaḥ॥

What compels a person, seemingly against his will, to do wrong things as if commanded by an outside power, Krishna? (3.36)

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।

kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajoguṇasamudbhavaḥ।

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणं ॥

mahāśano mahāpāpmā viddhyenamihā vairiṇam॥

(Krishna said:) Know it is desire and anger, which arise from the quality of activity, that is the real enemy here, voracious and very evil. (3.37)

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथाऽऽदर्शो मलेन च ।

dhūmenāvriyate vahniryathā"darśo malena ca।

यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥

yatholbenāvṛto garbhastathā tenedamāvṛtam॥

Just as fire is concealed by smoke, a mirror by dirt, and an embryo by the amnion, so too is this (wisdom) covered by that. (3.38)



आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।

āvṛtaṁ jñānametena jñānino nityavairiṇā ।

कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ॥

kāmarūpeṇa kaunteya duṣpūreṇānalena ca ॥

Wisdom is obscured by the perpetual enemy of the wise which comes in the form of desire, Arjuna, as insatiable as fire. (3.39)

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।

indriyāṇi mano buddhirasyādhiṣṭhānamucyate ।

एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥

etairvimohayatyeṣa jñānamāvṛtya dehinam ॥

It is said to reside in the senses, the mind, and the understanding, and through these it obscures wisdom and bewilders the embodied self. (3.40)

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।

tasmāttvamindriyāṅyādaū niyamyā bharatarṣabha ।

पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनं ॥

pāpmānaṁ prajahi hyenaṁ jñānavijñānanāśanaṁ ॥

Therefore you should restrain your senses and so forth, Arjuna, and then vanquish this evil, the destroyer of wisdom and knowledge. (3.41)



इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।

indriyāṇi parāṅyāhurindriyebhyaḥ param manaḥ ।

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥

manasastu parā buddhiryo buddheḥ paratastu saḥ ॥

They say that the senses are superior (to the objects of senses), and the mind is superior to the senses. The intellect is superior to the mind, and That One is superior to the intellect. (3.42)

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।

evaṁ buddheḥ param buddhvā saṁstabhyātmānamātmanā ।

जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामारूपं दुरासदं ॥

jahi śatruṁ mahābāho kāmārūpaṁ durāsadaṁ ॥

Understanding what is superior to the intellect, with the self strengthened by the self, slay the enemy so difficult to conquer, Arjuna – the one who comes in the guise of desire. (3.43)

इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्वमोहेन भारत ।

icchādvēṣasamutthena dvandvamohena bhārata ।

सर्वभूतानि सम्मोहं सर्गे यान्ति परन्तप ॥

sarvabhūtāni sammohaṁ sarge yānti parantapa ॥

Arjuna, from birth all beings fall into complete delusion, due to the arising of desire and hatred and because of the deceptive appearance of duality. (7.27)



येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणां ।

yeṣāṁ tvantagataṁ pāpaṁ janānāṁ puṇyakarmaṇāṁ ।

ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां दृढव्रताः ॥

te dvandvamohanirmuktā bhajante mām dṛḍhavratāḥ ॥

But those people of meritorious actions, for whom negativity has come to an end, who are liberated from the deceptive appearance of duality, who have kept their vows stringently – they worship me. (7.28)

जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये ।

jarāmaraṇamokṣāya māmāśritya yatanti ye ।

ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलं ॥

te brahma tadviduḥ kṛtsnamadhyātmaṁ karma cākhilam ॥ 7.29

Taking refuge in me, they endeavor to liberate themselves from old age and death. They thoroughly know ultimate reality, the real essence of things, and karma. (7.29)

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः ।

pravṛttiṁ ca nivṛttiṁ ca janā na vidurāsurāḥ ।

न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ॥

na śaucam nāpi cācāro na satyaṁ teṣu vidyate ॥

People who are like demons do not know what to give up and what to take up. In them there is no purity, no good conduct, and no truth. (16.7)



असत्यमप्रतिष्ठं ते जगदाहुरनीश्वरं ।

asatyamapraṭiṣṭhaṁ te jagadāhuraniśvaram।

अपरस्परसम्भूतं किमन्यत्कामहैतुकम् ॥

aparasparasambhūtaṁ kimanyatkāmahaitukam।

They say there is no truth and there is nothing in the world which is fixed; that there is no Lord; that no cause other than pure desire brings things into being one after another. (16.8)

एतां दृष्टिमवष्टभ्य नष्टात्मानोऽल्पबुद्धयः ।

etāṁ dṛṣṭimavaṣṭabhya naṣṭātmāno'lpabuddhayah।

प्रभवन्त्युग्रकर्माणः क्षयाय जगतोऽहिताः ॥

prabhavantyuḡrakarmāṇaḥ kṣayāya jagato'hitāḥ॥

Clinging to this worldview, these lost souls of meagre understanding arise as enemies whose terrible acts destroy the world. (16.9)

कममाश्रित्य दुष्पूरं दम्भमानमदान्विताः ।

kamamāśritya duṣpūraṁ dambhamānamadānvitāḥ।

मोहाद्गृहीत्वासद्राहान्प्रवर्तन्तेऽशुचिव्रताः ॥

mohādgṛhītvāsadrāhānpravartante'śucivratāḥ॥

Driven by insatiable desire, filled with hypocrisy, pride, and arrogance, holding to untruths because of delusion, they act out of impure resolve. (16.10)



चिन्तामपरिमेयां च प्रलयान्तामुपाश्रिताः ।

cintāmaparimeyāṁ ca pralayāntāmupāśritāḥ ।

कामोपशोगपरमा एतावदिति निश्चिताः ॥

kāmopāśogaparamā etāvaditi niścittāḥ ॥

Certain that the gratification of desire is all there is, they are tormented by countless anxieties and brought to the brink of destruction. (16.11)

आशापाशशतैर्बद्धाः कामक्रोधपरायणाः ।

āśāpāśāśatairbaddhāḥ kāmakrodhaparāyaṇāḥ ।

ईहन्ते कामभोगार्थमन्यायेनार्थसञ्चयान् ॥

īhante kāmabhogārthamanyāyenārthasañcayān ॥

Bound by hundreds of the chains of expectation, filled with desire and anger, they try to obtain wealth by any means at all to satisfy their desires.

इदमद्य मया लब्धमिमंप्राप्त्ये मनोरथं ।

idamadya mayā labdhamimamprāpsyē manoratham ।

इदमस्तीदमपि मे भविष्यति पुनर्धनम् ॥

idamastīdamapi me bhaviṣyati punardhanam ॥

[Those deluded by ignorance say things like:] “Today I’ve acquired this thing, and I now will obtain that thing – whatever I fancy. All this money is mine, and there will be plenty more coming in soon. (16.13)



असौ मया हतह् शत्रुर्हनिष्ये चापरानपि ।

asau mayā hatah śatrurhaniṣye cāparānapi ।

ईश्वरोऽहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवन्सुखी ॥

īśvaro'hamahaṁ bhogī siddho'haṁ balavansukhī ।।

It was I who single-handedly killed that enemy, and I'll kill lots of others in the future. I am the master of my destiny. I am the enjoyer. I am successful, strong, and happy. (16.14)

आढ्योऽभिजनवानस्मि कोऽन्योऽस्ति सदृशो मया ।

ādhyo'bhijanavānasmi ko'nyo'sti sadṛśo mayā ।

यक्षये दास्यामि मोदिष्य इत्यज्ञानविमोहिताः ॥

yakṣaye dāsyāmi modiṣya ityajñānavimohitāḥ ।।

I am rich and from a good family. Who is equal to me? I will sacrifice and give and celebrate!" So say those deluded by ignorance. (16.15)

अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ता मोहजालसमावृताः ।

anekacittavibhrāntā mohajālasamāvṛtāḥ ।

प्रसक्ताः कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ ।

prasaktāḥ kāmabhogeṣu patanti narake'śucau ।

Bewildered by ceaseless mental chatter, enveloped in the web of delusion, addicted to the gratification of desires, they fall into a stinking hell. (16.16)



आत्मसम्भाविताः स्तब्धा धनमानन्दान्विताः ।

ātmasambhāvitāḥ stabdhā dhanamānamdānvitāḥ ।

यजन्ते नामयज्ञैस्ते दम्भेनाविधिपूर्वकम् ॥

yajante nāmayajñāiste dambhenāvidhipūrvakam ॥

Conceited and stubborn, filled with the arrogance and pride that comes from wealth, they offer religious rituals in name only, hypocritically and disregarding proper decorum. (16.17)

अहङ्कारं बलं दुर्प कामं क्रोधम् च संश्रिताः ।

ahaṅkāraṁ balaṁ durpaṁ kāmaṁ krodham ca saṁśritāḥ ।

मामात्मपरदेहेषु प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यसूयकाः ॥

māmātmaparadeheṣu pradviṣanto'bhyaśūyakāḥ ॥

Resorting to egoism, power, conceit, desire, and anger, these malicious people hate me, whether it is the “me” that is in their own bodies or who is embodied in others. (16.18)

तानहं द्विषतः क्रुरान्संसारेषु नराधमान् ।

tānahaṁ dviṣataḥ krurānsamsāreṣu narādhamān ।

क्षिपाम्यजस्रमशुभानासुरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥

kṣipāmyajasramashubhānāsuriṣveva yoniṣu ॥

These lowest of people in samsara, these hateful, cruel ones, I repeatedly hurl into the unpleasant wombs of demonic beings. (16.19)



आसुरीं योगिमापन्ना मूढा जन्मनि जन्मनि।

āsurīm yogimāpannā mūḍhā janmani janmani ।

मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधमां गतिम्॥

māmaprāpyaiva kaunteya tato yāntyadhamāṁ gatim ।।

These deluded ones, having entered a demonic womb in birth after birth and not ever reaching me, go from there to an even lower state, Arjuna. (16.20)

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः।

trividhaṁ narakasyedaṁ dvāraṁ nāśanamātmanaḥ ।

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत्॥

kāmaḥ krodhastathā lobhastasmādetatrayaṁ tyajet ।।

There is a soul-destroying triple gate to hell: desire, anger, and greed. So abandon these three! (16.21)

एतैर्विमुक्तः कौन्तेय तमोद्वारैस्त्रिभिर्नरः।

etairvimuktaḥ kaunteya tamodvāraistribhirnaraḥ ।

आचरत्यात्मनः श्रेयस्ततो याति परां गतिम्॥

ācaratyātmanaḥ śreyastato yāti parāṁ gatim ।।

A man who is liberated from these three gates of darkness, Arjuna, does the best possible thing for himself and attains the highest state. (16.22)



यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।

yaḥ śāstravidhimutsṛjya vartate kāmakārataḥ ।

न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥

na sa siddhimavāpnoti na sukhaṁ na parāṁ gatim ।।

One who rejects the guidance of scripture and just follows his own inclinations does not attain perfection, happiness, or the highest state.

(16.23)

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।

tasmācchāstraṁ pramaṇaṁ te kāryākāryavyavasthitau ।

ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥

jñātvā śāstravidhānoktaṁ karma kartumihārhasi ।।

Therefore let scripture be your guide as to what you should do and not do. Knowing what is enjoined in scripture, you should perform action here.

(16.24)