

# Srimad Bhagavad Gita

Chapter 16  
Daivaasura Sampad Vibhhaaga Yogah:  
Yoga of the Division between  
The Divine and the Demoniactal Traits

Transliterated Sanskrit Text

Free Translation

&

Brief Explanation

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Preamble

In this Chapter the entire mankind has been classified as the divinely (Good-Deva) and the diabolical (Fallen-Asura). It enumerates their respective qualities and ways of conduct.

The demoniac always live contrary to scriptural injunctions in agitation, sorrow and bondage. With endless desires they go through the cycles of birth and death. The divine conquer their desires. They live in peace and happiness until they reach the goal of Enlightenment.

The purpose of this Chapter is that one may adopt the divine qualities and reject the demoniac qualities after fully understanding their nature in the journey towards God-realization. Hence this Chapter is designated as “Yoga of the Division between the Divine and the Demoniactal Traits”. Lord Krishna brings out quite clearly the intimate connection between ethics and spirituality, between a life of virtue and God realization and liberation.

Listing two sets of qualities of opposite kinds, the Lord urges us to eradicate the latter and cultivate the divine qualities. What kind of nature should one develop? What conduct must one follow? What way should one live and act if one must attain God and obtain divine bliss? These questions are answered with perfect clarity and very definitely.

The Text

TRAITS OF DIVINE NATURE

**sri bhagavaan uvaacha**  
**abhayam sattwasamshuddhih jnaanayogavyavasthitih**  
**daanam damashcha yajnashcha swaadhyayastapa aarjavam // 16.1 //**

*Sri Bhagavan said*

*Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and Yoga, charity, control of the senses, sacrifice, study of scriptures, austerity and straightforwardness,*

The Lord had earlier described in Chapter 13 verses 7-11 twenty values of life. Here He enumerates the nobler traits in a cultured man who lives those twenty values of life.

Fearlessness - abhayaam - comes first in these Divine Qualities. Fear is the expression of ignorance and when there is knowledge there is fearlessness.

Purity of heart - honesty of intentions and purity of motives.

Steadfastness in Knowledge and Yoga - Ethical purity can not be brought about when the mind is turned outward. Only when it is turned inward it can renounce worldly desires. Devotion to knowledge is the positive way to persuade the mind to leave all low temptations and make it aware to the joys of the Self.

Charity, Restraint of the Senses and Sacrifice - These are the techniques by which steady devotion to knowledge is cultivated. Oneness between the giver and the recipient is the basis of real charity. It is the capacity to restrain one's instinct of acquisition and attachment to wealth and replacing it with the spirit of sacrifice and sharing. Charity can be at the level of head and heart also and need not be merely at the material level. Sharing with others our sympathy and kindness and to distribute one's knowledge are also charities. Restraint of the sense organs is the saving of energy for the higher purposes of meditation.

Study of the scriptures - It implies not only the regular study of scriptural texts but also the practice of their teachings.

Austerity - It means the denial of sensual requirements and concentrating on the divine.

Straightforwardness - Avoidance of crookedness in thoughts, words and actions.

These ethical qualities, if pursued sincerely, will contribute to the discovery of the Divine in oneself.

**ahimsaa satyamakrodhas tyaagah shaantirapaishunam  
dayaa bhooteshvaloluptwam maardavam hreerachaapalam // 16.2 //**

*Harmlessness, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, peacefulness, absence of crookedness, compassion towards beings, uncovetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness.*

Harmlessness - This connotes not as much physical non-injury as avoidance of injury in the thought process itself because in the world of living physical injury in some form or the other to another can not be avoided. But in so living one can always maintain pure and clean motives in which case the harm caused is not an injury.

Truth is explained under straightforwardness in the previous verse.

Absence of anger - It is the capacity to check anger as it arises and manifests in actions under its influence.

Renunciation - Without renunciation an even temper can not be maintained.

Peacefulness - Keeping a balance in the midst of stormy conditions of life.

Absence of crookedness - Honesty of conviction and avoiding double-talk, full of devotion, love and sincerity to others.

Compassion towards beings - Recognising the imperfections in others and loving them.

Uncovetousness - Remaining in self-control over sense enjoyments.

Gentleness and modesty - This is the result of an individual's good training.

Absence of fickleness - Economy of physical energy in any activity.

**tejah kshamaa dhritih shauchamadroho naatimaanitaa  
bhavanti sampadam daiveem abhijaatasya bhaarata // 16.3 //**

*Vigor, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, and absence of pride - these belong to the one born in a Divine State, O Bharata.*

Vigor - This is not of the physical structure of the body but the brilliance of the seeker's intellect, his peaceful nature, quietitude in his activities and his love for all.

Forgiveness - It implies unruffled serenity even in the face of powerful oppositions and provoking situations in life.

Fortitude - Strength of faith, conviction of the goal, consistency of purpose, vivid perception of the ideal and the spirit of sacrifice in the task undertaken.

Purity - Purity of thoughts and motives, purity of environments, cleanliness of habits and personal belongings.

Non-hatred - It implies not only absence of hatred but also absence of even a vague desire to injure any living creature.

Absence of pride - Leaving the sense of one's own over exaggerated pride and notions of self honor and importance.

The twenty six qualities described above give a complete picture of the man of Divine State. They serve as a guide to all those who are in search of a right way of living and endeavor to become perfect.

Sri Krishna now starts the description of a man of demoniac (Asuric) nature in the following verses. It should, however, be born in mind that human race is not divided into two exclusive categories; many beings partake of the natures of both. Nothing is wholly good or wholly evil.

## DEMONIAC TRAITS

**dambho darpo'bhimaanashcha krodhah paarushyameva cha  
ajnaanam chaabhijaatasya paartha sampadamaasureem // 16.4 //**

*Hypocrisy, arrogance, self-conceit, anger and also harshness and ignorance, belong to one who is born in a demoniacal state, O Partha.*

Hypocrisy - Pretending to be righteous but living in unrighteous way of life.

Arrogance - Pride in one's learning, wealth, social status or family connections thereby living in imagined self-importance. This leads to self-conceit.

Anger - When a person of self-conceit looks at the world and finds that its estimate of him is totally different from his own he becomes angry over everything around him which leads to audacity.

All these qualities arise from one's own self-assessment out of self-delusion and ignorance about the scheme of life in the world around him. This ignorance of oneself and his relationship with the world around is the cause of his revolt against his environment and the resultant eccentric actions. These types of people are called demoniac or asuric in contrast to the Daivic or Divinely described earlier. The effect of these two types is discussed now.

## THEIR RESPECTIVE RESULTS

**daivee sampadvimokshaaya nibhandhaayaasuree mataa  
maa shuchah sampadam daiveem abhijaato'si paandava // 16.5 //**

*The divine nature leads to liberation and the demoniacal for bondage. Grieve not, O Arjuna, for you are born with divine properties.*

After hearing the features of the Divine and Demoniac natures Arjuna starts wondering where he stands. Hence The Lord assures him that he is born with Divine qualities.

He reiterates that Divine nature is for liberation - liberation from the psychological entanglements through living these healthy values of righteousness. As a contrast to this Demoniac nature leads to confusion and sorrow preventing one from rising high in the spiritual and moral fields.

Sri Krishna analyses the diabolically fallen or people of demoniac nature in more details in the following verses.

## NATURE OF THE DEMONIAC PEOPLE

**dwau bhootasargau loke'smin daiva aasura eva cha  
daivo vistarashah proktah aasuram paartha me shrinu // 16.6 //**

*There are two types of beings in this world - the divine and the demoniac; the divine has been described at length; hear from Me, O Arjuna, of the demoniac.*

**pravrittim cha nivrittim cha janaa na viduraasurah  
na shaucham naapi chaachaaro na satyam teshu vidyate // 16.7 //**

*The demoniac do not know about the way of action or the way of renunciation ; neither purity nor right conduct nor truth is found in them.*

**asatyamapratishtham te jagadaahuraneeshwaram  
aparaspasambhootam kimanyat kaamahaitukam // 16.8 //**

*They say 'this Universe is without truth, without a (moral) basis, without a God, brought about by mutual union with lust for its cause, what else' ?*

The devilish personality is incapable of deciding about the actions to be pursued and those to be avoided. He does not possess outer cleanliness or inward harmony. Good conduct is absent in him. He can not maintain truthfulness in his words.

They fail to recognize the truth that upholds the Universe i.e. they do not recognize the eternal unchanging Reality behind the ever-changing flux of things. According to them there is no commanding intelligence that orders, regulates, determines and guides the happenings in the world. They believe that the universe is formed as a result of mutual combination of the elements and the driving force that determines the creation is nothing but lust.

**etaam drishtimavashtabhya nashtaatmaano'lpabuddhayah  
prabhavantyugrakarmaanah kshayaaya jagato'hitaah // 16.9 //**

*Holding this view, these ruined souls of small intellects and fierce deeds, come forth as enemies of the world for its destruction.*

Believing that the world has no substratum, that there is no controlling power and that it exists and continues on the basis of lust, the devilish people with selfish sense-gratifying intellect and ruined soul i.e. ignorant of their own Divine nature perform fierce deeds. They carry out all sorts of licentious acts to the detriment of the world at large ultimately leading to the destruction of the world itself. They bring about a discordant note of disharmony in the community and plunge the world into disaster.

**kaamamaashritya dushpooram dambhamaanamadaanvitaah  
mohaadgriheetvaasadgraahaan pravartante shuchivrataah // 16.10 //**

*Filled with insatiable desires, full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance, holding evil ideas through delusion, they work with impure resolves.*

Given to desire - Yielding to desires devilish persons lead a life of perpetual suffering and endless disturbances in and around them as all their desires are insatiable. They are full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance. They are the victims of their own delusion because they forget their divine nature by identifying themselves with the unreal things and values of life.

When all these negative tendencies rule over the demoniac people their actions in the world can not but be the cause for disaster and destruction to others.

**chintaamaparimeyaam cha pralayaantaamupaashritaah  
kaamopabhogaparamaa etaavaditi nishchitaah // 16.11 //**

*Giving themselves over to immeasurable cares ending only with death, regarding gratification of lust as their highest aim and feeling sure that it is all.*

**aashaapaashatairbaddhaah kaamakrodhaparaayanaah  
eehante kaamabhogaartha manyaayenarthasanchayaan // 16.12 //**

*Bound by hundreds of ties of desire, given over to lust and anger, they strive to amass by unjust means hoards of wealth for sensual enjoyment.*

This materialistic doctrine which states

*“yavad jivet sukham jivet rnam krtva ghrtam pibet |  
bhasmibhutasya dehasya punar aagamanam kutah //*

“Eat, drink and be merry, for death is certain and there is nothing beyond”.

Such desperate men with all anxieties and cares lead a futile life. Struggling to acquire the desired objects and to be anxious for preserving what is acquired are all the cares of their lives. Satisfaction of lust is their highest goal. Their firm conviction is that there is nothing beyond this in life. They do not know what is peace, harmony and joy in life. According to them sorrows and cares alone are the contents of life. Ultimately they end in miserable death, exhausted and disappointed.

Entangled by insatiable desires, the energies of demoniac persons get dissipated. They become restless and impatient with their surroundings and lose their sense of judgment.

Irritated and constantly unhappy with their environment, they become angry over unfulfilled desires. They ceaselessly try to acquire more and more wealth to satisfy their sensual hunger losing sight of a diviner principle of existence.

**idamadya mayaa labdhamimam praapsye manoratham  
idamasteedamapi me bhavishyati punardhanam // 16.13 //**

*This has been gained by me today; this desire I shall obtain; this is mine and this wealth shall also be mine in future.*

**asau mayaa hatah shatrur hanishye chaaparaanapi  
eeshwarohamham bhogee siddhoham balavaan sukhee // 16.14 //**

*That enemy has been slain by me and others also I shall slay. I am the Lord; I enjoy; I am perfect, powerful and happy.*

**aadhyobhijanavaanasmī konyosti sadriṣho mayaa  
yakshye daasyaami modishya ityajnaanavimohitaah // 16.15 //**

*I am rich and born in a noble family. Who else is equal to me? I will sacrifice. I will give charity. I will rejoice - thus deluded by ignorance.*

**anekachittavibhraantaah mohajaalasamaavritaah  
prasaktaah kaamabhogeshu patanti narake'shuchau // 16.16 //**

*Bewildered by many a fancy, entangled in the meshes of delusion, addicted to the gratification of lust, they fall into a foul hell.*

Such persons live in constant consciousness of what has been acquired and always exert to acquire more and more wealth of the world. As desires are insatiable, they remain in perpetual disappointment and thirst for unlimited possessions.

They always raise the cry of success claiming themselves to be the lord and victor of all their enemies. They boast themselves to be perfect, powerful, healthy, wealthy and happy.

They look down upon the world with conceit, vanity and contempt and entertain the hope of rejoicing in the world. Sri Krishna says that these people are deluded by their ignorance.

In short, such people fall into hell because of a) their fanciful egocentric ideas b) their judgment and discrimination getting eclipsed by delusion and false values and c) their addiction to sense gratification.

**aatmasambhaavitaah stabdhaa dhanamaanamadaanvitaah  
yajante naamayajnaiste dambhenaavidhipoorvakam // 16.17 //**

*Self-conceited, stubborn, filled with the pride and intoxication of wealth, they perform sacrifices in name, out of ostentation, contrary to scriptural ordinances.*

**ahankaaram balam darpam kaamam krodham cha samsritaah  
mam aatmaparadeheshu pradvishanto'bhyasooyakaah // 16.18 //**

*Given over to egoism, power, and pride and also to lust and anger, these malicious people hate Me in their own bodies and those of others.*

**taanaham dwishatah krooraan samsareshu naraadhamaan  
kshipaamyajastram ashubhaan aasureeshweva yonishu // 16.19 //**

*These cruel haters, the worst among men in the world - I hurl these evil doers for ever into the wombs of demons only.*

Sri Krishna describes the characteristics of the demoniac people. He states that the spirit of selfless effort in the service of mankind is the greatest Yagna i.e. work is to be considered as worship. The Demoniac people because of their very personality are incapable of selfless service and whatever they do as sacrifice is merely an act influenced by their sensuality, arrogance and false values of life. As a result of this sorrow only ensues. Such men continue to fall lower and lower each day. They are full of egoism, brute strength, arrogance, passion and anger. A person of this kind of attitude would ignore the sanctity of life, become malignant and because of egoism would hate The Lord Himself or the Paramatman in his own body and those of the others. They will hate to seek the Self.

These people are called as the worst among the men in the world. They are malicious against the dignity of themselves and cruel to the people around. Hence Sri Krishna assuming the role of the Law of Action and Reaction orders such people again and again to be born in the Asuric environments till such time as they realize their follies.

**aasureem yonimaapannaa moodhaa janmani janmani  
maamapraapyaiva kaunteya tato yaantyaadhamaam gatim // 16.20 //**

*Entering into demoniacal wombs and deluded in birth after birth, not attaining Me, they thus fall, O Kaunteya, into a condition still lower than that.*

THE TRIPLE GATE OF HELL

**trividham narakasyedam dwaaram naashanamaatmanah  
kaamah krodhastathaa lobhastasmaadetattrayam tyajet // 16.21 //**

*Triple is the gate of this hell, destructive of the Self -lust, anger and greed- therefore, one should abandon these three.*

**etairvimuktah kaunteya tamodwaaraistribhirnarah  
aacharatyaatmanah shreyas tato yaati paraam gatim // 16.22 //**

*A man who is liberated from these three gates to darkness, O Kaunteya, practices what is good for him and thus goes to the Supreme goal.*

Sri Krishna says that an individual having repeatedly reached the Asuric environments, life after life, fails to realize the Infinite Self. They never climb higher in their culture and sink to the bottom most level in their evolution and thus complete their fall.

The Lord advises how even the one who has fallen so hopelessly can improve his spiritual evolution. He says that there are three gateways to hell viz. desire, anger and greed. These characteristics are corollary to each other. He emphasizes that these three evils must be abandoned if one wants to rise up in the ladder of spirituality.

The Lord says that the one who has abandoned these three gateways to darkness will steadily progress towards the life's goal. He will be practicing what is good for him; good in the sense that which not only brings happiness to the practitioner but also contributes much to the well being of the others around him. Progressing thus in the right direction such an individual goes to the Supreme, reaches the goal of life.

SCRIPTURES, THE CANON FOR DUTY

**yah shaastravidhimutsrija vartate kaamakaaratah  
na sa siddhimavaapnoti na sukham na paraam gatim // 16.23 //**

*He, who has cast aside the ordinances of the scriptures, acts under the impulse of desire, attains neither perfection nor happiness nor the Supreme goal.*

Scriptures need not mean the ritualistic ones but they mean the texts discussing the theory of Truth - *Brahma Vidya*. A seeker should renounce desire, anger and greed. Anger is the result when fulfillment of desire is obstructed and greed is the consequence of satisfaction of one desire.

Sri Krishna warns that if one were not to obey the life advocated in the scriptures he will live a life of restless agitations and passions. Such a man cannot feel any happiness or attain any cultural development.

**tasmaat shaastram pramaanam te kaaryaakaaryavyavasthitau  
jnaatwaa shaastra vidhaanoktam karma kartumihaarhasi // 16.24 //**

*Therefore, let the scriptures be the authority in determining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. Having known what is said in the ordinance of the scriptures you should act here in this world.*

The seeker should therefore follow the authority of the scriptures in conducting his way of life as to what is to be pursued and what is to be avoided. Sri Krishna concludes with the command that having known the scriptural injunctions regarding the right way of living, one should act here and now without desire, anger or greed.

The drive of desire must be displaced by the knowledge of right action, but when the supreme end of the freedom of spirit is attained, the individual acts not from instinct, not from law but from a deep insight into the spirit of all life.

**om tat sat iti srimadbhagavadgeetaasu upanishatsu brahma vidyaayaam  
yogashaastre sri krishnaarjuna samvaade daivaasura sampad vibhhaaga yogo  
naama shodasho'dhyaayah ||**

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the sixteenth discourse entitled The Yoga of the Division Between the Divine and the Demoniactal Traits.

## Concepts and Issues

Sri Krishna discusses those traits of character that make a person divine or demoniac, since the former leads to liberation whereas the latter leads to bondage. The list of divine traits comprises of 26 qualities, the chief ones being: fearlessness, purity of mind, self control, Scriptural studies, austerity, non-violence, and truth, spirit of renunciation, compassion, forgiveness and absence of pride.

The other list of demoniac traits consists of six vices: hypocrisy, vainglory, egoism, anger, harsh speech and ignorance of higher values.

Then the description of the demoniac persons and their way of life follows. They know neither the performance of good works nor the need to withdraw from the evil ones. They have neither purity nor truth. They consider lust as the sole cause of creation. Being addicted to it, they out of delusion, try to get unholy things. They boast about their wealth or works and take pleasure in destroying their enemies. They dislike The Lord who is the Self of all beings. Such persons are thrown by The Lord into abominable births.

The gateway to hell that ultimately causes self-destruction is threefold: lust, anger and greed. One who is free from these attains the highest abode. But, for this, one has to act according to the scriptures with *Sraddha* or faith.

## Live as the Gita Teaches You to Live

This Chapter teaches that everyone should analyze himself and find out the undesirable traits in one's own character and rectify them then and there with discrimination and introspection. For this one must be true to oneself and be a witness of the mental functions. Then alone one can know whether the thoughts and actions will prove to be instruments of self-development.

### RELEVANCE OF THIS CHAPTER

“In Indian religious symbolism, the distinction between the *devas*, the shining ones, and the *asuras*, the children of darkness is an ancient one. In the Rig Veda we have the struggle between the Gods and the Rakshasas. The Ramayana represents a similar conflict between the representatives of high culture and those of unbridled egoism. The

Maha Bharata tells of the struggle between the Pandavas who are devotees of *dharma*, of law and justice and the Kauravas, who are the lovers of power.

Historically mankind remains remarkably true to type, and we have today as in the period of the Maha Bharata some men who are divinely good, some who are diabolically fallen and some who are damnably indifferent. These are the possible developments of men who are more or less like us. The *devas* and *asuras* are both born of *prajapati*. (Chhandogya Upanishad I.2.i.)". Dr.S.Radhakrishnan.

Is the world we live in at present any different with all its multi-pronged fight against terrorism, scams, man-made disasters, trade wars, territorial aggressions, gross injustice etc.? The guidelines set forth in this Chapter will certainly help us to know where we are heading for and provide us tools to take corrective steps, if one cares to improve himself.

### Points to Ponder

1. Comment on the three vices: Desire, Anger and Greed. Why they have to be conquered?
2. Why one should follow the rules laid down in the scriptures?

**Next time we shall take up Chapter 17**

*HARIH OM*