

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 16: Daivāsura-Sampad-Vibhāga-Yoga

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Divine Qualities that Uplift and Demonic Traits that Destroy: Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Warning Against Ego, Desire, and Ignorance, and His Call to Live by the Guidance of Śāstra

Chapter 16 of the Bhagavad Gītā is **Daivāsura Sampad Vibhāg Yoga - The Yoga of the Division between the Divine and the Demonic Qualities.**

The session commenced with deep prajwalan, the customary lighting of the lamp, prayers to the Supreme, and salutations to all the Gurus.

**Sadashiva Samarambham, Shankaracharya Madhyamam,
Asmad Acharya Paryantam, Vande Guru Paramparam**

As the second part of the sixteenth chapter begins, a thought arises before every seeker: *Does one wish to become the hero of life's story, or the villain?* Naturally, all aspire to be the hero. In the Mahābhārata, figures such as Arjuna, Yudhiṣṭhira, and Bhīma stand as heroes. Even more so, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme hero of that great epic.

In truth, each individual life is but a smaller reflection of the Mahābhārata itself. Each day brings fresh challenges and struggles. At times, one encounters people like Karṇa and other antagonists, and at other times, one finds support from noble heroes like Arjuna or Śrī Kṛṣṇa. All these elements—heroes, villains, battles, and trials—exist in miniature within everyone's daily journey.

A well-known bhajan of Gītā Parivar expresses this truth beautifully, portraying life itself as a battlefield (*raṇa-bhūmi*), where ultimate victory must be attained. But victory is possible only if one becomes a hero. Just as in every play, novel, or film, the hero triumphs in the end, so too in life, the one who embodies the qualities of the hero emerges victorious.

According to the Bhagavad Gītā, the hero is the one who manifests the twenty-six **daivī-sampadā**—the divine qualities. Wherever these virtues dwell, that person shines as the true hero.

The first three verses of this chapter enumerate these divine traits.

śhrī-bhagavān uvāca
abhayaṁ sattva-saṁśuddhir jñāna-yoga-vyavasthitiḥ
dānaṁ damaśh cha yajñaśh cha svādhyāyas tapa ārjavam
ahinsā satyam akrodhas tyāgaḥ śhāntir apaīśhunam
dayā bhūteśhv aloluptvaṁ mārḍavaṁ hrīr achāpalam
tejaḥ kṣhamā dhṛitiḥ śhaucham adroho nāti-mānitā
bhavanti sampadaṁ daivīm abhijātasya bhārata (16.1 - 16.3)

Having described them, Bhagavān next turns to the **āsurī-sampadā**, the demonic qualities—the traits of the villains.

Why must these also be understood? Because to become a hero, one must not only cultivate divine qualities but also consciously avoid demonic tendencies. Thus, from the fourth verse onward, the Gītā explains the marks of the villain, so that seekers may remain free from such traits.

16.4

dambho darpo'bhimānaśca, krodhaḥ(ph) pāruṣyameva ca,
ajñānaṁ(ñ) cābhijātasya, pārtha sampadamāsurīm 16.4

Hypocrisy, arrogance, pride and anger, sternness and ignorance too - these are the marks of him, who is born with demoniac properties.

He begins with the quality of dambha—hypocrisy. Commentators like Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, and other great Vedānta teachers explain this in depth. In the traditional paramparā, those who have composed authoritative commentaries on the **prasthāna-trayī**—the Brahmasūtras, the Upaniṣads, and the Bhagavad Gītā—are regarded as the true ācāryas of Vedānta. Their words provide clarity.

Śaṅkarācārya explains that **dambha** is the outward show of dharma without inner substance. The root *dhvaj* means flag; thus, one who merely waves the flag of dharma externally while lacking true righteousness within is called dambhī. Such a person may wear a tilak, speak in sweet tones, visit temples, perform rituals, and distribute alms—but only for display before society, not from genuine devotion.

In śāstra, intention (*bhāva*) holds greater weight than action. One must not judge merely by external deeds but by the inner motive. A person going to a temple does not necessarily act from sattva. If the intent is only to impress others, then such worship is nothing but hypocrisy. Therefore, **dambha** is a mark of the āsurī-sampadā. Though all carry some trace of it, seekers must strive to reduce and ultimately remove it, cultivating instead genuine sincerity within.

Next comes **darpa** (arrogance) and **abhimāna** (pride). Both express forms of inflated self-importance.

Darpa arises when one takes pride in possessions—wealth, knowledge, health, family, or influence. This sense of “*this is mine, therefore I am great*” stems from attachment to external belongings (*mamatā*). Such pride is āsurī in nature.

Abhimāna is the pride of identity, the “I”-ness (*ahaṅkāra*). “*I am rich, I am powerful, I am intelligent, I am prime minister*”—such assertions reflect abhimāna.

Bhagavān instructs that both these tendencies must be shed, for they belong to the demonic temperament.

Then is mentioned **krodha**—anger. All are familiar with it, but its expressions differ. Some shout, fight, or act violently. Others, lacking physical or mental strength, manifest anger by crying uncontrollably. Whether through rage or tears, it is still anger, and anger is destructive.

The heat of anger burns none but the one who harbors it. Just as a lamp's flame first scorches its own wick, so anger consumes the heart and mind of the angry person. In the second chapter, Bhagavān has already warned that one lost to anger is as good as dead, for memory and discrimination (*viveka-śakti*) vanish. Without clarity of right and wrong, one acts blindly, like an insane person. Decisions made in anger invariably lead to ruin.

Therefore, when anger arises, one should not react outwardly. Silence is the best remedy. To speak or act in that state only causes harm. It is better to remain still, calm oneself gradually, and only then re-engage with others.

Another quality listed is **pāruṣya**—harshness of speech. Some speak rudely, not always with ill intent, but their rough words wound deeply. To cultivate inner softness, one must begin with gentle speech. As speech softens, gradually the heart too becomes tender. Thus, the practice of sweetness in words is the first step toward genuine inner transformation.

The next is **ajñāna**—ignorance, the darkness of unawareness. To understand it, one may recall the character of Kumbhakarna. For six months at a stretch, he would remain asleep, oblivious to dharma and to the realities of life. Even the smallest awareness would teach that such endless slumber yields nothing of value, yet ignorance kept him in a state of inertia and emptiness. He was lost in darkness, unable to perceive right from wrong. Such is the nature of ajñāna.

All these—**dambha, darpa, abhimāna, krodha, pāruṣya, and ajñāna**—are the marks of the demonic. A seeker must consciously strive to keep away from them.

Having completed the description of divine and demonic qualities, the Gītā makes a subtle point. The **daivī-sampadā** were explained in depth, while the **āsurī-sampadā** are outlined briefly. Why is this so? Because noble qualities should be contemplated again and again, filling the mind with their fragrance, whereas negative traits should be spoken of only in passing. Human beings tend to become what they dwell upon—thus one must think and speak more of virtue, and less of vice.

Bhagavān affirms this in the next verse.

16.5

**daivī sampadvimokṣāya, nibandhāyāsurī matā,
mā śucaḥ(s) saṃpadaṃ(n) daivīm, abhijāto'si pāṇḍava 16.5**

The divine endowment has been recognized as conducive to liberation, and the demoniac one as leading to bondage. Grieve not, Arjuna, for you are born with the divine propensities.

"The divine qualities lead to liberation, while the demonic qualities bind. But do not grieve, O Pāṇḍava, for you are born with the daivī-sampadā."

This statement also reveals why Bhagavān chose Arjuna as the recipient of the Gītā's wisdom. He did

not turn to anyone else, for Arjuna was endowed with all twenty-six divine qualities. In the true Mahābhārata, composed by Vedavyāsa, the character of Arjuna shines far deeper than what is often portrayed in popular retellings or dramatizations. As expounded in the kathās of revered saints, the nobility and tenderness of Arjuna’s nature are such that even narrators are moved to tears. These very qualities made him worthy of receiving the Gītā directly from Bhagavān.

Bhagavān then continues.

16.6

**dvau bhūtasargau loke'smin, daiva āsura eva ca,
daivo vistaraśaḥ(ph) prokta, āsuram(m) pārtha me śṛṇu 16.6**

There are only two types of men in this world, Arjuna, the one possessing a divine nature and the other possessing a demoniac disposition. Of these, the type possessing divine nature has been dealt with at length; now hear in detail from Me about the type possessing demoniac disposition.

“In this world, there are two fundamental dispositions—divine and demonic. Of the divine, I have spoken at length. Now, O Pārtha, hear from Me about the demonic.”

Here begins a striking section of the Gītā. Having already described the divine qualities in detail, Bhagavān turns to the demonic ones. What follows in the coming verses is at once profound and, for many listeners, even humorous, for these descriptions so often mirror the flaws and follies present within ordinary human life. Readers find themselves smiling, sometimes even laughing, when they recognize traces of these qualities in their own behavior.

This too is the compassion of Bhagavān—teaching not only through lofty ideals but also by holding up a mirror, so that all may see clearly what must be discarded on the path to freedom.

16.7

**pravṛttiṃ(ñ) ca nivṛttiṃ(ñ) ca, janā na vidurāsurāḥ,
na śaucaṃ(n) nāpi cācāro, na satyaṃ(n) teṣu vidyate 16.7**

Men possessing a demoniac disposition know not what right activity is, and what right abstinence from activity is. Hence they possess neither purity (external or internal) nor good conduct nor even truthfulness.

Bhagavān then draws a clear distinction between two directions of life — what to undertake and what to renounce — and notes that those of demonic temper do not understand this difference:

Here **pravṛtti** indicates that which ought to be pursued in action — the daily disciplines such as morning and evening pūjā, dāna, and dutiful living. **Nivṛtti** denotes restraint — what must be avoided: killing, quarrelling, backbiting, and other harmful deeds. The āsurāḥ do not discern these paths. They lack **śauca** (cleanliness or purity), they have no proper **ācāra** (conduct, etiquette), and truth (**satya**) is absent from their lives.

Bhagavān continues by describing the worldview of such people.

16.8

**asatyamapraṭiṣṭhaṃ(n) te, jagadāhuraṇīśvaram,
aparasparasambhūtaṃ(ñ), kimanyatkāmahaitukam 16.8**

Men of demoniac disposition say this world is without any foundation, absolutely unreal and Godless, brought forth by mutual union of the male and female and hence conceived in lust; what else than this?

Those of demonic outlook declare that there is no abiding truth, that the world is without īśvara (support or supreme controller), and that it arises merely through mutual contact — “male and female unite, and thus the world comes into being.” For them, the universe has no higher cause beyond sensual desire. This is the typical stance of the nāstika argument: the universe is a blind sequence of causes and effects grounded only in passion.

Bhagavān then warns of the consequence of such a view.

16.9

**etāṃ(n) dṛṣṭimavaṣṭabhya, naṣṭātmāno'lpabuddhayaḥ,
prabhavantyugrakarmāṇaḥ, kṣayāya jagato'hitāḥ 16.9**

Clinging to this false view, these slow-witted men of vile disposition and terrible deeds, are enemies of mankind, bent on destruction of the world.

Having embraced this outlook, such persons are spiritually ruined — **naṣṭa-ātmā** (souls gone astray), **alpabuddhayaḥ** (of limited discrimination). They become the authors of violent, destructive deeds; by their harsh actions, they bring about harm to the world and hasten its decay.

Bhagavān paints their character further.

16.10

**kāmamāśritya duṣpūraṃ(n), dambhamānamadānvitāḥ,
mohādgrhītvāsadgrāhān, pravartante'śucivratāḥ 16.10**

Cherishing insatiable desires and embracing false doctrines through ignorance, these men of impure conduct move in this world, full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance.

These people are consumed by unending desire (**kāmaṃ āśritya**), burning with passions that are never satisfied (**duṣpūraṃ**). Desire only breeds another desire; fulfilment gives birth to yet more craving — an endless chain. Alongside this lust there is **dambha** (pretense), **māna** (pride), and intoxication with ego (**madānvitāḥ**). Seized by moha (delusion), they seize what is improper (**asad-grāhān**) and live by impure vows (**aśuci-vratāḥ**). In short, hypocrisy, pride, boundless appetite, and delusion characterize their conduct.

Because of this, their lives are filled with **ananta-cintā** — endless anxieties. The root of this ceaseless worry is **kāma**, desire itself. The measure of desire within a person is the very measure of his or her anxiety. The more desires there are, the more expectations from people and circumstances, the greater the burden of worry.

Bhagavān says that such people are chained by anxiety for their entire lifetime.

16.11

**cintāmaparimeyāṃ(ñ) ca, pralayāntāmupāśritāḥ,
kāmapabhogaparamā, etāvaditi niścītāḥ 16.11**

Cherishing insatiable desires and embracing false doctrines through ignorance, these men of impure conduct move in this world, full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance.

Their **cintā** (worry) is **aparimeyā** — immeasurable. It endures **pralayāntām** — until death itself. For them, death is the end of existence, so their anxiety clings to them until the very last breath. Their firm conviction remains: *“I must fulfill all my desires. I must enjoy everything. This alone is certain, this alone is the goal.”* Thus they live entirely for **kāmapabhoga** — the enjoyment born of desire.

But these desires are never-ending. Just as one rope binds a person, countless ropes of hope bind such beings.

16.12

**āśāpāśasatairbaddhāḥ(kh), kāmakrodhaparāyaṇāḥ,
ihante kāmabhogārtham, anyāyenārthasañcayān 16.12**

Held in bondage by hundreds of ties of expectation and wholly giving themselves up to lust and anger, they strive to amass by unfair means hoards of money and other objects for the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures.

Here **āśā** means hope, and **pāśa** means rope. A person bound by hundreds of ropes of hope (**śatairbaddhāḥ**) becomes enslaved to desire and anger (**kāma-krodha-parāyaṇāḥ**). All thoughts, all energy, all pursuits are directed only toward the fulfillment of desire. And when such desires are not fulfilled, they erupt as anger (**krodha**).

Bhagavān earlier, in the ninth and eleventh chapters, advised: *“Man-manā bhava”* — *“Offer your mind, your thoughts, your intellect to Me.”* But the āsurī manas does not turn to Bhagavān. Instead, it surrenders completely to **kāma** and **krodha**. Thus, their very mind and intellect are offered to passion and wrath.

The Gītā makes clear: the root cause of anger, anxiety, and every form of inner disturbance is **kāma**. When desires remain unfulfilled, they manifest as **krodha**; when they are fulfilled, they multiply into further desires. This endless cycle is the seedbed of negativity. Hence, to transcend negative thoughts, one must address the root itself — desire.

How may one rise above desire? By nurturing **sāttvika** tendencies. Immersion in **sāttvika** activities gradually weakens the force of **rājoguṇa**, which is the source of attachment, expectation, and endless craving. As **rājoguṇa** diminishes, desires and anxieties lose their grip.

The way to cultivate such **sattva** is through **Bhagavad Gītā** itself. To read it, to teach it, and to spread its wisdom creates a sāttvika environment. Even if one’s outer surroundings appear worldly or restless, sharing this knowledge transforms the atmosphere. Where many gather to study and live by the Gītā, the air itself becomes pure and elevating.

Bhagavān then turns again to describe the state of the demonic.

16.13

**idamadya mayā labdham, imaṃ(m) prāpsyē manoratham,
idamastīdamapi me, bhaviṣyati punardhanam 16.13**

They say to themselves, “This much has been secured by me today and now I shall realize this ambition. So much wealth is already with me and yet again this shall be mine”.

They think: “*This much I have already acquired. That much more I will surely obtain. I have gained wealth now, and more wealth shall be mine again.*” Thus, their mind is filled with constant claims of “*this is mine, that too shall be mine.*” Their whole consciousness is soaked in **mamatā** (mine-ness).

16.14

**asau mayā hataḥ(ś) śatruḥ(r), haniṣye cāparānapi,
īśvaro'hamahaṃ(m) bhogī, siddho'haṃ(m) balavānsukhī 16.14**

“That enemy has been slain by me and I shall kill those others too. I am the Lord of all, and enjoyer of all power. I am endowed with all occult powers, and am mighty and happy.”

They declare: “*This enemy has been slain by me. Others too will be destroyed by me. I am īśvara, the sole enjoyer, the perfected one (siddhaḥ). I am strong (balavān), I am happy (sukhī).*”

But in reality, such people are neither powerful nor happy. For one who kills lives with the constant fear of being killed. Those who accumulate enemies must forever remain on guard. How can such a person be truly **sukhī**? And yet, blinded by delusion, they imagine themselves to be the happiest of all.

Their arrogance extends even into charity. At times, they adopt acts of giving — dāna, distribution of food and wealth — but only to display their greatness. Their thought is expressed in the next verse.

16.15

**ādhyo'bhijanavānasmi, ko'nyosti sadṛśo mayā,
yakṣye dāsyāmi modiṣya, ityajñānavimohitāḥ 16.15**

“I am wealthy and own a large family; who else is equal to me? I will sacrifice to Gods, will give alms, I will make merry.”

Bhagavān here describes the deluded mindset of the asuric beings. Even when they perform acts of charity or ritual, pride does not leave them. Sometimes, when they give wealth or alms to the poor, they immediately think, “*I have given so much. I am such a generous person.*” But true seekers must remember—nothing truly belongs to them. To harbor the thought “*I am the giver*” is itself **ahaṅkāra**. The moment ahaṅkāra arises in the heart, destruction follows without fail.

Such beings live under constant delusion. Their minds are clouded with wrong notions and misconceptions. They remain attached to endless desires and indulgence in sense objects. Bound by these cravings, they move steadily towards **naraka**.

The **Purāṇas** vividly describe the reality of hell. In the **Garuda Purāṇa**, for example, twenty-eight different types of narakas are mentioned—*Tāmisra*, *Andhatāmisra*, *Raurava*, *Mahāraurava*, and so on—each meant for the punishment of specific sins. The descriptions are not merely of the afterlife; even while living, one can experience glimpses of *naraka*. A person who is joyful today may suddenly fall into grief tomorrow—life changes in a moment.

Therefore, the wise always strive to walk the path of dharma, choosing good actions. Across all cultures, all societies, and all ages, great thinkers and realized beings have proclaimed the same eternal truth: *as you sow, so shall you reap*. Whether called *karma theory* or by another name, it is universally accepted. Even those steeped in sin expect loyalty and goodness from others. This itself proves the inner longing for dharma in every being.

Hence, one must always act with goodness, for whatever we offer to the world—good or bad—will certainly return to us in due course.

16.16

**anekacittavibhrāntā, mohajālasamāvr̥tāḥ,
prasaktāḥ(kh) kāmabhogeṣu, patanti narake'sucau 16.16**

Thus deluded by ignorance, enveloped in the mesh of delusion and addicted to the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures, their mind bewildered by numerous thoughts, these men of devilish disposition fall into the foulest hell.

Their minds are endlessly distracted, entangled in illusions, and shrouded by the dense net of **moha**. Ever attached to desires and pleasures, they fall into the lowest, impure realms.

Such people think themselves superior to all others. Wealth, status, and power fill them with pride. They see others as insignificant, possessing lesser virtues, while they consider themselves the highest in every way. Outwardly, they perform yajñas and rituals, but only for show—for name, for title, for display.

True yajña requires purity of intent, the correct observance of time, place, and process, and the sincere chanting of mantras. Yet such persons neglect all ordinances of the śāstras. They summon a priest, hurry through a few mantras, and consider the ritual complete—because it is too hot, or they lack time, or they wish only to appear in the newspaper, on social media, or before ministers. Such hollow actions, devoid of inner connection, are termed **ādhidaivika yajñas**—external and superficial, undertaken only for vanity.

16.17

**ātmasaṃbhāvitāḥ(s) stabdhā, dhanamānamadānvitāḥ,
yajante nāmayaज्ञाiste, dambhenāvidhipūrVākam 16.17**

Intoxicated by wealth and honour, those self-conceited and haughty men perform sacrifices only in name for ostentation, without following the sacred rituals.

These asuric beings are arrogant, intoxicated with wealth and pride, and perform yajñas not for spiritual elevation, but for social recognition. They act without following scriptural injunctions, merely to proclaim—“*See what I have done.*”

Their false power, their deluded pride, their endless **kāma** (desires), **krodha** (anger), and envy remain ever with them.

Bhagavān reminds in the eighteenth chapter:

īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṃ hṛd-deśe'rjuna tiṣṭhati |
—“*The Supreme dwells in the heart of every being.*”

If one hates another, it is not merely hatred towards that person—it is hatred towards the very presence of Bhagavān within them. To despise another is, in truth, to despise Bhagavān Himself.

16.18

**ahaṅkāraṁ(m) balaṁ(n) darpaṁ(ñ), kāmaṁ(ñ) krodhaṁ(ñ) ca saṁśritāḥ,
māmātmāparadeheṣu, pradviṣanto'bhyasūyakāḥ 16.18**

Given over to egotism, brute force, arrogance, lust and anger etc., and calumniating others, they despise Me (the in-dweller), dwelling in their own bodies, as in those of others.

ahaṅkāraṁ – ego; **balaṁ** – strength (power); **darpaṁ** – arrogance, pride, **kāmaṁ** – desire, lust; **krodhaṁ** – anger; **ca saṁśritāḥ** – taking refuge in, resorting to; **mām** – Me (Bhagavān); **ātma-para-deheṣu** – in their own and in others' bodies; **pradviṣantaḥ** – hating, being hostile; **abhyasūyakāḥ** – envious, malicious

Bhagavān says: Those who are dominated by **ego, power, pride, desire**, and **anger** become hostile towards the Divine. Out of envy and malice, they despise the Divine presence not only in themselves but also in others. Their inner attitude of hatred blinds them to the reality of divinity pervading all beings.

16.19

**tānaḥ(n) dviṣataḥ(kh) krūrān, saṁsāreṣu narādhamān,
kṣipāmyajasRāmaśubhān, āsurīṣveva yoniṣu 16.19**

Those haters, sinful, cruel and vilest among men, I cast again and again into demoniacal wombs in this world.

tān – them; **ahaṁ** – I; **dviṣataḥ** – those who hate; **krūrān** – cruel, harsh-hearted; **saṁsāreṣu** – in worldly existence; **narādhamān** – lowest among men; **kṣipāmi** – I hurl, cast; **ajasram** – perpetually, repeatedly; **aśubhān** – inauspicious, impure; **āsurīṣu** – demonic; **eva yoniṣu** – indeed into wombs (births)

Bhagavān declares: Such hateful, cruel-hearted beings — the lowest among men — are perpetually hurled by Him into demonic wombs. Their negative tendencies and actions bind them to repeated births in **āsurī yoni** (ungodly or demonic states of existence), where they continue to suffer due to their own inner impurities.

16.20

**āsurīm(ṡ) yonimāpannā, mūḍhā janmani janmani,
māmaprāpyaiva kaunteya, tato yāntyadhamām(ñ) gatim.16.20**

Failing to reach Me, Arjuna, those stupid persons are born life after life in demoniac wombs and then verily sink down to a still lower plane.

Bhagavān reveals the destiny of those who persist in asuric tendencies. The deluded ones, **mūḍhāḥ**, take birth after birth in degraded wombs—**āsurīm yonim āpannāḥ**. They remain bound in the cycle of 8.4 million yonis, wandering endlessly without attaining Him. The human birth, *manuṣya-yoni*, is itself extremely rare and precious. To be blessed with this form, endowed with intellect and consciousness, is to be most fortunate.

In this age, humanity even possesses powers that past generations could never imagine—extraordinary tools of science and technology. To hold in one hand modern advances, and in the other, the eternal wisdom of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, is indeed a rare privilege. For this reason alone, one must live with gratitude towards Bhagavān for the opportunity of human birth.

But those who waste it in arrogance and adharma are cast again and again into lower births, condemned never to attain the divine. Instead, they move steadily towards **adhamaṁ gatim**—the most wretched state.

16.21

**trividhaṁ(n) narakasyedaṁ(n), dvāraṁ(n) nāśanamātmanaḥ,
kāmaḥ(kh) krodhastathā lobhaḥ(s), tasmādetattrayaṁ(n) tyajet 16.21**

Desire, anger and greed – these triple gates of hell, bring about the downfall of the soul. Therefore, one must shun all these three.

Bhagavān now discloses the gates to *naraka*. There is no need to expend wealth or effort to secure one's entry; three tendencies alone suffice. These are **kāma** (desire), **krodha** (anger), and **lobha** (greed).

Wherever these three dwell, the path to ruin is certain. They form the three wide gateways leading directly into hell. To indulge in even one of these is to hold a ticket to suffering. Many traditions portray these vividly, even pictorially, as the three dark doors to *naraka*.

Hence, the wise avoid them completely. Whoever renounces *kāma*, *krodha*, and *lobha* walks away from the gates of hell itself.

16.22

**etairvimuktaḥ(kh) kaunteya, tamodvāraistribhirnaraḥ,
ācaratyaātmanaḥ(ś) śreyasḥ(s), tato yāti parāṁ(ñ) gatim 16.22**

Freed from these three gates of hell, man works for his own salvation and thereby attains the Supreme goal ie. God.

The one who becomes free of these three destroyers rises above the darkness. Such a person lives a life of **śreyas**—true well-being—and gradually moves towards **parāṁ gatim**, the supreme goal. This goal is none other than attaining Bhagavān's **parama-dhāma**, His supreme abode.

16.23

**yaḥ(ś) śāstravidhimutsrjya, vartate kāmakārataḥ,
na sa siddhimavāpnoti, na sukhaṁ(n) na parāṁ(ñ) gatim 16.23**

Discarding the injunctions of the scriptures, he who acts in an arbitrary way according to his own sweet will, such a person neither attains occult powers, nor the supreme goal, nor even happiness.

Bhagavān warns that one who disregards the injunctions of the *śāstras* and acts according to mere whim and personal desire never attains **siddhi** (perfection), never finds true **sukha** (happiness), nor reaches the supreme state. Such a life, lived without guidance, is tossed about like a rudderless boat in the storm of *saṁsāra*.

**tasmācchāstraṃ(m) pramāṇaṃ(n) te, kāryākāryavyavasthitau,
Jñātvā śāstravidhānoktaṃ(ñ), karma kartumihārhasi 16.24**

Therefore, the scripture alone is your guide in determining what should be done and what should not be done. Knowing this, you ought to perform only such action as is ordained by the scriptures.

Thus, Bhagavān concludes the sixteenth chapter with an emphatic declaration. The śāstras alone are the authority in determining **kārya** (what is to be done) and **akārya** (what is to be avoided). Therefore, one must study and understand the injunctions of the śāstras, and act accordingly.

To act casually, merely following the mind's impulses, leads only to downfall. To act in harmony with śāstra, however, aligns the individual with dharma and guides the soul towards liberation.

And so, as Arjuna listens, the question naturally arises—what about those who do not know the śāstras, or cannot understand them? This doubt will be voiced at the beginning of the seventeenth chapter, not just on Arjuna's behalf, but for the sake of all seekers. Bhagavān will then reveal the true spirit of *śraddhā* (faith) and its role in human life.

Thus concludes the exposition of the **Ṣoḍaśo'dhyāyaḥ - Daivāsura-Sampad-Vibhāga-Yoga**, the Sixteenth Chapter of the *Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā*.

Questions and Answers

Lata Amin Ji

Q: Which is the oldest religion in the world? And what is the concept of rebirth? Suppose in this birth I am a man—can I be reborn as a woman or even as an animal?

A: Among existing religions, the oldest is **Sanātana Dharma**. Civilizations like the Greek civilization also had religions, but the eternal dharma that continues till today is Sanātana Dharma, which we follow in India.

Some Buddhists claim that Buddhism is the oldest, but historically, Buddhism came much later with **Bhagavān Buddha**. The ideology of **sūnya** (void) might have existed earlier in thought, but as a formal tradition, Buddhism arose with Buddha himself. Before that, the **Vedic dharma** was always there. Over time, impurities entered the practice of the Vedas, and Bhagavān Buddha came to reform and purify certain practices. Still, the **Vedic dharma** is eternal, whereas Buddhism has a beginning in history.

Regarding rebirth: yes, if in this life you are a man, in the next you may be born as a woman, or even as an animal. This depends on **sattva, rajas, and tamas**, as explained in Chapter 14 of the Gītā, along with other karmic factors. All these become filters that determine the next birth.

Deepak Ji

Q: In the first shloka, the word *satva* appears. What is the meaning of it?

A: *Satva* in this context means the **mind** (*manas*). At different places in the Gītā, the word *satva* appears with different meanings. Sometimes it is used as *sattva-guṇa* (the quality of goodness), and sometimes as *mind*. In this shloka, it refers to the mind, the inner current (*antaḥkaraṇa**). We can increase our *satva*—here meaning purification of mind—through practice (*abhyāsa*).

So, note the distinction:

- *sattva-guṇa* = one of the three guṇas (sattva, rajas, tamas).
- *satva* in this shloka = mind (*manas*).

Balachandar Ji

Q: In verse 13, the second line seems to describe a demonic quality. Can you explain it?

A: Yes. The verse shows how the demonic person thinks: *"This wealth is mine. That which I don't yet have will also become mine in the future."* This shows his endless greed. He goes on acquiring one thing after another, never satisfied, always claiming ownership of more. The Gītā beautifully reveals how such tendencies manifest within us, too, since each person is a mixture of both divine and demonic qualities.

Sarla Ji

Q: What discipline should be followed while learning the Bhagavad Gītā? Suppose sometimes suddenly I feel like reading a shloka, but I haven't taken a bath or even brushed—can I still read?

A: During the learning process, you may read and chant anytime, anywhere. No restriction is there. But while performing daily **pūjā** or rituals, one should keep a separate Gītā book and observe discipline like cleanliness.

Q: What about people who eat non-vegetarian food—can they also read or learn the Gītā?

A: Yes, they can. Learning the Gītā is open to everyone, regardless of diet.

Praveen Ji

Q: In daily life, we face tensions, like financial problems, and we often express our anger towards family members. How to control anger?

A: At the very beginning stage of anger, one can practice **deep breathing***, count numbers in reverse (99, 98, 97...), or close the eyes and calm down. Since you are learning the Gītā, another way is to recite shlokas in reverse order. This practice diverts the mind, and gradually anger subsides.

Q: I read Gītā shlokas daily but cannot recite them without looking at the book. How can I learn them by heart?

A: You can get the PDFs provided or purchase a Gītā book. For memorization, daily *pāṭha* (recitation practice) is essential. For example, if you want to memorize Chapter 12, dedicate one month to reciting it daily. Repeated chanting—50 times or so—helps to fix the verses in memory. Consistency is key: morning, afternoon, evening, whenever possible.

Shyamala Ji

Q: During different times—like in the Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, and now—do the standards of *dharma* and *adharma* change?

A: The **essence of dharma** never changes—truth is truth in all ages. But its **expression** adapts to circumstances. For example, the same truth can be expressed as *"the glass is half full"* or *"the glass is half empty."* Both are true, but context decides the expression.

In terms of quality, in Tretā-yuga (Rāmāyaṇa period), there were fewer demonic people. In Dvāpara-yuga (Mahābhārata period), there were more. In Kali-yuga, demonic tendencies are increasing further. So the **quantity** of *adharma* changes, but the essence of *dharma* remains eternal.

The session concluded with a heartfelt prayer followed by the chanting of the Hanumān Chālīsā.

**om tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu
brahmavidyāyām(ṁ) yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde
daivāsurasampadvibhāgayogo nāma ṣoḍaśo'dhyāyaḥ.**



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Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar – Creative Writing Department

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