

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 16: Daivāsura-Sampad-Vibhāga-Yoga

2/2 (Ślōka 2-24), Saturday, 09 May 2026

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Daivī and Āsurī Sampadā: The Noose of Desire and the Path to Paramātmā

The 16th Adhyāya of the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā is called **Daivāsura Sampad Vibhāga Yoga: the Yog that differentiates between Daivī Sampad (divine virtues) and Āsurī Sampad (demonic tendencies)**. This chapter guides seekers in recognizing and cultivating righteous qualities while overcoming negative traits.

The discourse commenced with the traditional lighting of the divine lamp, a symbol of wisdom and enlightenment. As its gentle flame flickered, heartfelt prayers were offered at the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān, filling the atmosphere with profound reverence and spiritual serenity.

**Vasudevasutam Devam, Kamsacāṇūramardanam
Devakīparamānandam, Krsnam Vande Jagadgurum
Yogeśam Saccidānandam, Vasudevam Vrajapriyam
Dharmasamsthāpakam Vīram, Krsnam Vande Jagadgurum**

श्री गुरु चरण कमलेभ्यो

"At the lotus feet of the revered Guru."

By the supremely auspicious grace of Bhagavān, such blessed fortune has awakened in us that we have become inclined toward the contemplation, study, learning, memorization, and assimilation of the Bhagavad Gītā into our lives. This is not an ordinary matter. Who knows what meritorious actions of this birth, what noble deeds from previous births, what accumulated merits of the ancestors, or perhaps the compassionate glance of some saintly Mahāpuruṣa in some lifetime has borne fruit, due to which such fortune has arisen that we have become engaged with the Bhagavad Gītā in our lives.

Last week, among the 26 divine qualities described in the 16th chapter, contemplation was done on 8 qualities, and the sacred story of Mātā Śābarī was also heard.

Here, Bhagavān is describing 26 daivī guṇas, divine qualities. For those who consider themselves

seekers, virtuous, or sāt̥tvika, Bhagavān is providing a checklist. The Kṛṣṇa of the Gītā is entirely rational and scientific. HE does not accept anyone's claim merely because they say, "I am like this." Rather, HE asks: "What are you truly like?" HE instructs that this should not be asked of others. Instead, one should examine oneself, prepare one's own assessment chart, and evaluate where one truly stands.

And all the checklists that Bhagavān gives are meant solely for self-examination, never for judging others. They are not meant to determine whether another person is divine or demonic, nor to analyze which divine or demonic qualities others possess. Bhagavān has not provided this checklist for examining others. It is exclusively and solely for examining oneself.

Many times during question-and-answer sessions, it becomes somewhat amusing when people ask, "What should one do if the other person is tāmāsika?" or "What should one do if the other person is filled with demonic qualities?" But how lacking in discrimination it is to decide that another person is tāmāsika or filled with āsurī qualities. The very moment one declares another person demonic or tāmāsika, one has already issued oneself a certificate of being divine and sāt̥tvika.

Merely because another person's opinions do not match one's own, or because they do not like oneself, or because one does not like them, or because there are emotional conflicts or disagreements, or because they do not wish to accept one's words, none of this makes them demonic or tāmāsika. Such evaluations are entirely flawed. They are fundamentally incorrect.

Therefore, whenever an assessment is to be done, Bhagavān has provided all these checklists only for self-assessment. Throughout the entire Gītā, Bhagavān has given many such frameworks for introspection. In the second chapter, HE described the characteristics of the sthita-prajña. In the twelfth chapter, HE described the qualities of a devotee. In the thirteenth chapter, HE described the marks of a jñānī. In the fourteenth chapter, HE described the signs of one who has transcended the guṇas. And in the sixteenth chapter, Bhagavān presented the list of divine and demonic qualities.

All these characteristics have been given by Bhagavān solely for people to examine themselves.

In 16.1, Bhagavān declares

**अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।
दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥**

Bhagavān said: examine within yourself how many of these qualities are present. If someone considers oneself a seeker, then one should introspect deeply.

There is another important point. It was also mentioned previously that none of these qualities are ever completely absent in anyone, nor can any of them exist in someone at a full 100%. Therefore, while examining oneself, the question is not whether fearlessness exists or not, whether charity exists or not, whether self-control exists or not. Some amount of each quality is certainly present in everyone.

The real question is: how much is present?

If it is 10%, then it should become 12%. If it is 18%, then it should become 20%. If it is 70%, then it should rise to 75%, in order to improve and better themselves.

One must examine which quality within oneself is poor and by how much it can be increased. This is the proper perspective from which these twenty-six qualities should be contemplated.

Nothing within is absolutely 0, and nothing is absolutely 100. When this understanding is firmly grasped, then true self-assessment becomes possible.

No one can truthfully say, “There is absolutely no fearlessness within me,” or “I have never performed charity at all.” Perhaps one gives charity once a year, or once in six months, or occasionally when an opportunity arises. Perhaps one is able to give something to someone every day in some form. Then gradually the habit of charity develops.

If one has reached the stage where one can give something daily in some way or another, then the habit of charity has become reasonably established. One may then consider oneself somewhat steady in that regard.

But if one gives only when compelled, only when circumstances force it, or only when someone extracts it unwillingly, then one should recognize that the tendency of charity within is still extremely weak, perhaps only 2% or 5%. If someone can receive something from such a person only by forcefully dragging it out, while otherwise the person never gives voluntarily, then yes, charity is still there, but it exists at a very low level. It needs to be increased.

This is the manner in which these 26 qualities should be contemplated.

Now Bhagavān proceeds further into the next verse and continues describing the remaining characteristics.

16.2

ahiṃsā satyamakrodhaḥ(s), tyāgaḥ(ś) śāntirapaiśunam, dayā bhūteṣvaloluptvaṃ(m), mārđavaṃ(m) hrīr acāpalam 16.2

Non-violence in thought, word and deed, truthfulness and geniality of speech, absence of anger even on provocation, disclaiming doership in respect of actions, quietude or composure of mind, abstaining from slander, compassion towards all creatures, absence of attachment to the objects of senses even during their contact to the objects of senses, mildness, a sense of shame in transgressing the scriptures or social conventions, and abstaining from frivolous pursuits;

Divine Qualities in the Bhagavad Gītā

Bhagavān speaks of **ahiṃsā** - non-violence. One who considers oneself a seeker must carefully examine whether suffering is being caused to anyone through *manasā*, *vācā*, *karmaṇā*, through thought, speech, or action. A seeker should observe whether, knowingly or unknowingly, others experience pain because of oneself.

Many people mistakenly treat harshness as a virtue. They constantly criticize others, search for faults, notice deficiencies everywhere, and dwell on the defects of people around them. This itself is violence. Even mentally thinking, “Bhagavān, teach this person a lesson,” is a form of mental violence. Violence first begins in the mind, then enters speech, and eventually manifests through actions. Therefore, the best place to stop violence is at the level of thought itself.

Violence through speech occurs when harsh words are used against others. Some even take pride in saying, “I spoke so strongly that the person will never forget it.” But causing pain that remains in another person’s heart for years is not an achievement, it is a grave wrongdoing.

Violence through action appears in many subtle forms as well. Even people who consider themselves

sāttvika often casually destroy living beings out of convenience. Bhagavān has created this world for all creatures, not for human beings alone. Maintaining cleanliness and protecting one's home is understandable, but cruelty born from the mentality that "only I have the right to live comfortably" hardens the heart. Ahimsā gradually develops compassion, gentleness, and sensitivity within a person.

Many misunderstand the Bhagavad Gītā by assuming Bhagavān simply taught people to fight against injustice. Personal dharma and rāja-dharma are different. In personal life, tolerance and forbearance are often superior virtues. The war of the Mahābhārata was not a personal quarrel but a matter of royal duty. Yet ordinary people fight endlessly over small issues, property disputes, and ego conflicts, believing they alone are right. Such reactions often arise more from attachment and pride than from true dharma.

After ahimsā, Bhagavān speaks of **satya**, truthfulness. Truth is the backbone of all virtues, but truth must be spoken properly. The scriptures declare:

सत्यं ब्रूयात् प्रियं ब्रूयात् न ब्रूयात् सत्यमप्रियम् ॥

"Speak the truth. Speak it pleasantly. Never speak unpleasant truth harshly."

The sages never approved of truthfulness that unnecessarily wounds others. Most people are hurt not by the truth itself, but by the manner in which it is spoken. The same truth, when expressed gently, becomes acceptable. But many people sharpen their words intentionally and then justify themselves by saying, "But I only spoke the truth." Such truthfulness has little spiritual value.

Truth should be spoken where necessary, and even then with compassion, refinement, and care. One is not obligated to reveal every opinion or every fact one knows. Silence is often wiser than unnecessary speech.

A story illustrates this beautifully. An astrologer once told a king, "All your descendants will die before your eyes." The king became furious and imprisoned him. Later, the royal priest examined the same horoscope and said, "Mahārāja, you are greatly blessed. You shall witness four generations before you, and among your entire lineage, you shall live the longest." Both spoke the same truth, but one spoke harshly while the other spoke gracefully. This is why the scriptures emphasize pleasant truthfulness.

Bhagavān then describes **akrodha**, freedom from anger. Anger begins like a small spark. If controlled immediately, it disappears easily. But if allowed to grow, it becomes a destructive fire. Therefore, anger should first be stopped from entering actions, then speech, and finally even thoughts.

Most anger arises from hidden expectations: "Everyone should behave according to my wishes." People rarely admit this openly. Instead, they blame others. Yet almost every person secretly believes, "I alone am truly intelligent." In families, every individual often feels that no one else understands properly. Naturally, conflict arises.

Bhagavān explains in the second chapter:

क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।

स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥

"From anger arises delusion. From delusion comes loss of memory. From loss of memory comes destruction of discrimination. And when discrimination is destroyed, the person falls completely."

When anger arises, judgment becomes clouded. People later regret words and actions they never intended. Thus, anger ultimately harms the person who carries it far more than anyone else.

Then Bhagavān speaks of **tyāga, renunciation**. One whose nature becomes renunciatory rarely remains miserable. Much of human suffering arises not from genuine lack, but from excessive expectations. People often desire far more than their circumstances realistically allow, and this creates frustration and restlessness.

True happiness comes from simplicity. Instead of constantly demanding more, one should ask: “How little do I truly require to live peacefully?” Renunciation begins externally, giving up certain comforts or habits, but higher renunciation becomes natural and effortless. A person quietly accepts when something is unavailable, forgotten, or not offered, without complaint or emotional disturbance.

Real tyāga means giving up insistence, entitlement, and constant expectation from others. A wise saint used to say, “Another person’s duty is not my right.” Much suffering arises because people turn others’ responsibilities into personal demands. When those expectations are not fulfilled, conflict begins. But the world rarely changes according to personal insistence; only inner peace is lost.

Bhagavān says that from tyāga comes **śānti, peace**. Modern life, however, has become deeply restless. Even a brief interruption of mobile internet or social media creates agitation. People have forgotten how to sit quietly with themselves.

True peace requires moments of silence, moments without distractions, conversations, screens, or mental noise. One should regularly sit alone, reflect upon life, remember the grace received from Paramātmā, and cultivate gratitude. There should be moments each day where one simply exists peacefully without doing anything.

Finally, Bhagavān speaks of **apaiśunam**, refraining from slander, gossip, and fault-finding. Gossip is strangely pleasurable, much like scratching a wound that temporarily feels satisfying while ultimately worsening the injury. People know gossip creates harm, yet the mind still enjoys spreading it.

Often one says, “I am telling only you,” while secretly hoping the news spreads further. Bhagavān especially loved in Arjuna the qualities of anagha (sinlessness) and anasūya (freedom from fault-finding and envy). Arjuna did not indulge in criticizing others.

Ordinary people, however, constantly discuss neighbors, relatives, friends, and acquaintances. The moment some information is heard, the mind becomes eager to share it. Bhagavān declares this tendency deeply undivine.

If someone’s fault becomes known, it should not be revealed unnecessarily. Unless truly required, one should avoid discussing another person’s shortcomings altogether. And if speaking becomes necessary, it should be done gently, truthfully, and only for a meaningful purpose, never for entertainment, gossip, or criticism.

Bhagavān teaches **Dayā Bhūteṣu**, that a seeker must cultivate compassion toward all beings. True compassion is not merely an outward display or performance of kindness; it must become a natural disposition of the heart. Most people often create the appearance of compassion, but genuine dayā arises when the heart naturally softens upon seeing the suffering of another. Whatever Paramātmā has given to a person has not been given solely for personal enjoyment. If someone is in need and another possesses the ability to help, then help should be offered naturally and without hesitation. A seeker should not become excessively occupied with judging whether someone is worthy or unworthy of compassion. The essential point is that the heart itself should become tender, generous, and compassionate.

When another person experiences pain, the heart of a seeker should melt with sympathy. If one possesses something that is not personally necessary and another genuinely requires it, it should be given freely and gracefully. Such giving should not carry the feeling of superiority or obligation. One should never think, “I have performed a great favor,” or “I have changed this person’s life.” Instead, the understanding should remain simple and humble: Paramātmā had entrusted certain resources temporarily, and when someone in need appeared, those resources were simply passed onward where they were required. In this spirit, giving becomes pure and egoless.

An especially important teaching is emphasized regarding compassion: the moment of suffering is not the proper moment for preaching. When a person is passing through pain, grief, helplessness, or emotional difficulty, advice often acts like salt upon a wound. At such times, people frequently say things like, “I warned you earlier,” or “You did not listen, and now you are suffering.” But this is not compassion; it only deepens another person’s pain. A hungry person requires food, not philosophy. A grieving person requires sympathy, not lectures. Many people may not genuinely help others, yet they become highly skilled at giving advice. Such behavior becomes a subtle form of harshness rather than compassion.

Therefore, when someone is distressed, weak, or suffering, a seeker should first offer comfort, reassurance, and practical help with gentleness and affection. If guidance becomes necessary, it may be offered later when the person’s mind has regained stability and openness. During moments of pain, what is most needed is warmth, understanding, and support. One should help with the quiet attitude that nothing extraordinary has been done — what belonged to that person had simply been entrusted elsewhere for a time and has now been returned.

Bhagavān then speaks of **acāpalam**, steadiness and freedom from restlessness. A restless nature prevents the mind from becoming stable. Such a person cannot remain peacefully settled because even the eyes constantly wander from one thing to another. One who cannot keep the gaze steady also struggles to sit quietly with inner calm. Restlessness of the body reflects restlessness of the mind.

An example is given of the revered saint Mahant Śrī Kṣamārām Jī Śāstrī from Sīkar, who used to recite the Rāmāyaṇa alongside the deeply revered Śrī Rāmsukhdās Jī Mahārāja. Even today, recordings of his discourses on the Mahābhārata and Bhāgavata Purāṇa remain available. During Rāmāyaṇa recitations lasting six or even eight hours, He would remain seated in a single posture with extraordinary steadiness. Throughout the entire recitation, He would not look around to observe who had arrived or departed, whether the gathering was large or small, or what was happening around him. His voice remained calm and even throughout. There was no fidgeting, adjusting of clothes, scratching, or unnecessary movement. He remained seated with the stillness of a sacred murti.

By contrast, most people struggle to sit peacefully even for a few minutes. One person constantly adjusts clothing, another repeatedly touches the hair, another scratches absentmindedly, while others continue making small restless movements without awareness. Remaining seated steadily in one posture becomes difficult because inner agitation constantly seeks expression through the body.

This is cāpalya, instability, agitation, and restlessness. Bhagavān teaches that a seeker should gradually reduce this tendency and cultivate stillness, composure, dignity, and inner steadiness. Spiritual life deepens when a person learns to remain peaceful, quiet, and inwardly settled.

16.3

tejaḥ kṣamā dhṛtiḥ(ś) śaucam, adroho nātimānitā, bhavanti saṃpadaṃ(n) daivīm, abhijātasya bhārata 16.3

Sublimity, forgiveness, fortitude, external purity, bearing enmity to none and absence of self-esteem, these are, O Arjuna, the marks of him, who is born with divine endowments.

Bhagavān says that a seeker's life should possess **tejaḥ**, inner radiance, brilliance, and spiritual vitality. In the traditional understanding of the body, the sages speak of the transformation of nourishment through the seven subtle stages of refinement. The food one consumes first becomes rasa (essence), from rasa comes rakta (blood), from blood comes māṃsa (flesh), from flesh comes majjā (marrow), from marrow comes asthi (bone), from bone comes vīrya (vital energy), from vīrya arises ojas, and from ojas emerges tejaḥ. Thus, the quality of one's food gradually shapes the quality of one's life itself.

A person constantly consuming excessively stimulating, restless, and rajasic food finds it difficult to develop spiritual radiance. One's diet, conduct, thoughts, and virtues all contribute toward the manifestation of tejaḥ. Some individuals enter a gathering and naturally stand apart without making any effort. Their face carries brightness, their presence carries dignity, and their speech carries force and clarity. When they speak, others naturally listen. Their words possess weight, and even a simple indication from them inspires people to act. Such radiance is not merely physical beauty; it is the expression of inner purity, discipline, and noble qualities. The more a person lives with sattva, self-restraint, and virtue, the more this divine brilliance manifests naturally.

Bhagavān then speaks of **kṣamā**, forgiveness. Forgiveness appears outwardly simple, yet in reality it is among the most difficult virtues to practice. Everyone wishes to receive forgiveness for personal mistakes, yet very few truly wish to grant forgiveness to others. When one personally commits an error, the expectation immediately arises that others should think, "It is alright, mistakes happen." But when another person commits a mistake, the mind quickly becomes harsh and judgmental: "How many times should such behavior be tolerated? How often should this person be excused?"

Human beings often become judges for others while acting as lawyers for themselves. True forgiveness begins when this tendency is reversed, when one becomes a lawyer for others and a judge for oneself. If another person makes a mistake, a compassionate heart says, "It is alright. Usually this person acts properly. Today perhaps an error happened." One learns to reduce the weight of others' faults rather than magnifying them. Even if others insist that someone committed a very serious mistake, the forgiving person naturally responds, "Is it truly so great? Such things happen to everyone sometimes."

Real forgiveness also requires forgetting. Many times people claim to forgive outwardly but continue reminding the other person about the mistake for years afterward. Parents sometimes repeatedly tell children, "Remember that day when HE behaved badly and still nothing was said?" The child may silently feel that hearing about the incident repeatedly is worse than having been corrected once at the beginning. This is not genuine forgiveness.

Often someone says proudly, "20 years ago, HE made a mistake, but nothing was ever said." Yet if the incident is still being repeated 20 years later, then forgiveness never truly occurred. True forgiveness means both forgiving and forgetting. The beautiful English expression captures this perfectly: "Forgive and forget." Real forgiveness exists only when the memory itself no longer carries bitterness. The person no longer even remembers having forgiven someone. That is authentic kṣamā.

Bhagavān next speaks of **dhṛti**, steadiness, patience, and the ability to hold firmly to what is right. In

the modern age, one of the greatest losses has been patience. Everyone desires everything immediately. Even during pilgrimage, many people seek “VIP darśana” so they need not wait even half an hour after traveling for eighteen hours. The mind increasingly loses the ability to wait peacefully.

An example is often seen among parents comparing their children with others: “Another child began speaking earlier,” or “Another child walks already, but mine does not.” Yet every child unfolds according to a unique rhythm. Growth takes time. Just as pouring a hundred buckets of water on a tree cannot force fruit to appear instantly, many things in life mature only when the proper season arrives.

The saints beautifully say:

धीरे-धीरे रे मना, धीरे सब कुछ होय ।
माली सींचे सौ घड़ा, ऋतु आए फल होय ॥

“Slowly, slowly, O mind, everything unfolds in its own time.

Even if the gardener pours a hundred pots of water, fruit comes only in the proper season.”

Patience is especially important in relationships. People may behave wrongly for years, then act correctly for a single day and immediately expect complete acceptance and forgiveness. Yet healing and trust often require time. A seeker must develop endurance and avoid the constant search for shortcuts.

Modern life has become deeply attached to *jugāḍ*, finding quick fixes and shortcuts for everything. But spiritual life does not unfold through shortcuts. Rushing only creates more confusion and entanglement. Things should be done in the proper manner and in the proper time. Life becomes peaceful when actions are performed steadily rather than hurriedly.

Another meaning of *dhṛti* is “holding” or “retaining.” It is not enough merely to appreciate a good teaching emotionally. People often say after listening to spiritual discourse, “Wonderful explanation! It felt very inspiring.” But true *dhāraṇā* begins only when a person decides, “This teaching is valuable, and from today it will be practiced in life.” Appreciation alone changes nothing unless the teaching is actually absorbed into conduct.

Bhagavān then speaks of **śauca**, purity, cleanliness, and sacredness. Śauca combines physical cleanliness, inner purity, and spiritual sanctity. External cleanliness alone is incomplete without purity of thoughts and conduct.

Traditional spiritual life placed immense importance upon purity in daily conduct. Before worshipping Bhagavān, one first purifies oneself. There is a beautiful principle in worship:

देवं भूत्वा देवं यजेत् ॥

“One should become divine before worshipping the Divine.”

This is why, during worship, one first applies tilaka to oneself before offering tilaka to Bhagavān. One purifies the body, performs *ācamana*, washes the hands repeatedly, steadies the breath through *prāṇāyāma*, and then approaches worship with reverence and sacredness. The principle is clear: before touching the Divine, one must strive to become inwardly and outwardly pure.

Bhagavān next teaches **adroha**, absence of malice. Even if someone causes harm, loss, or insult, a seeker should not nourish thoughts of revenge or misfortune toward them. People often say, “Bhagavān will punish this person,” or “HE will suffer for what HE did.” Such thoughts reflect inner hostility. A divine heart instead prays for the welfare even of one who caused harm. One thinks,

“Perhaps this was connected to past karma. Let Paramātmā bless that person as well.” Freedom from hatred and resentment is a true divine quality.

Finally, Bhagavān speaks of **nātimānitā**, freedom from excessive pride or superiority. Modern society often encourages people to display status through possessions, brands, and external appearances. People become obsessed with wearing only certain labels, owning expensive devices, or displaying luxury items as symbols of superiority. There is nothing wrong with using good things appropriately, but the madness of deriving self-worth from possessions reflects deep insecurity.

True greatness comes from qualities, not objects. A person should not seek superiority through clothing, watches, phones, or brands, but through humility, character, compassion, and wisdom. A seeker remains simple inwardly. Even if praised greatly by others, such a person naturally feels, “Nothing extraordinary exists here. Everything belongs to Paramātmā.”

Bhagavān concludes by saying that these are the qualities of one born with divine wealth, daivī sampad. These 26 qualities together form the foundation of a truly spiritual life. A seeker must continually reflect upon them, examine oneself honestly, and gradually cultivate them more deeply within life. After describing the divine qualities, Bhagavān then begins explaining the qualities of āsurī sampad, the demoniac tendencies that bind the mind in suffering and ignorance.

16.4

dambho darpo'bhimānaśca, krodhaḥ(ph) pārūṣyameva ca, ajñānaṃ(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.

Dambha, Darpa, Abhimāna, Krodha, Pārūṣya, and Ajñāna — The Marks of Āsurī Sampad

After describing the divine qualities, Bhagavān begins explaining the nature of āsurī sampad, the demoniac tendencies that bind a person in ignorance and suffering. Bhagavān tells Arjuna that qualities such as dambha, darpa, abhimāna, krodha, pārūṣya, and ajñāna are the characteristics of one born with demoniac tendencies.

Bhagavān first speaks of dambha, darpa, and abhimāna. Though these words appear similar, each carries a distinct meaning.

Abhimāna refers to pride regarding oneself. Whenever a person constantly thinks, “I am intelligent, beautiful, healthy, superior, capable, or extraordinary,” this self-centered pride becomes abhimāna. It is attachment to an inflated self-image and constant admiration of one’s own qualities.

Darpa refers to pride regarding possessions, relationships, status, or achievements connected to oneself. A person says, “My son achieved the highest rank,” “My factory is the largest in the industrial area,” “I own the most expensive phone,” “I possess costly ornaments,” or “My family is superior.” Pride directed toward what belongs to oneself becomes darpa. Thus, pride in “I” is abhimāna, while pride in “mine” is darpa.

Then comes **dambha**, hypocrisy, pretension, and false display. In dambha, neither the quality nor the greatness actually exists, but one still wishes to appear impressive before others. Someone may stand beside an expensive car in a shopping mall and take photographs as though it belongs to them. When asked whether they purchased it, they avoid answering directly and merely smiles mysteriously so others may assume it is theirs. This is dambha.

Similarly, perhaps daily worship normally lasts only ten minutes, but when guests arrive, suddenly the worship becomes elaborate and lengthy. The āraṭi is sung loudly, the bell is rung forcefully, and everything is done in such a way that visitors notice how “devotional” the person appears. The purpose is not devotion to Bhagavān but display before people. Dambha means presenting oneself as something one truly is not.

Bhagavān declares that **dambha, darpa, and abhimāna** are all forms of āsurī tendencies because they strengthen ego and disconnect the heart from simplicity and truth.

Bhagavān then speaks of **krodha**, anger. Anger arises when ego, desire, attachment, or expectation becomes disturbed. Whenever personal wishes are obstructed, the mind reacts violently. Thus, anger does not arise merely because of external situations; it arises because inner ego and craving feel threatened.

Next, Bhagavān describes **pāruṣya**, harshness and cruelty. This is the opposite of gentleness and tenderness. A harsh person speaks painfully, behaves rigidly, and possesses a heart that rarely melts with compassion. Such a person can say hurtful things easily, can behave insensitively toward others, and remains unaffected by another person’s suffering. This lack of softness and humanity is an āsurī quality.

Finally, Bhagavān speaks of **ajñāna**, ignorance. Merely not knowing something is not the real problem, because every human being is limited in knowledge. The real danger arises when a person does not know, yet believes they knows everything. Such ignorance becomes deeply destructive. Speaking confidently without understanding, making assumptions without wisdom, and clinging stubbornly to false understanding, these are marks of ajñāna.

Bhagavān tells Arjuna that these qualities together form the nature of āsurī sampad, the demoniac disposition. A seeker must therefore observe these tendencies carefully within oneself and gradually replace them with humility, gentleness, truthfulness, compassion, and wisdom.

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.

Bhagavān tells Arjuna that the two types of inner wealth, daivī sampad and āsurī sampad, lead human life in entirely different directions. Daivī sampad, the divine qualities, lead toward liberation, freedom, and spiritual upliftment. They gradually free the mind from bondage and move the seeker toward mokṣa. By contrast, āsurī sampad, the demoniac tendencies, bind the individual more deeply into the cycle of worldly suffering, attachment, ego, and repeated bondage within saṃsāra.

Therefore, Bhagavān lovingly tells Arjuna: “Do not grieve.”

Bhagavān reassures Him that these teachings about the twenty-six divine qualities are not meant to discourage Him. Rather, Bhagavān declares that Arjuna is already born endowed with these divine tendencies.

Bhagavān Himself gives this extraordinary assurance regarding Arjuna, that he is naturally endowed

with all 26 divine qualities.

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.

Bhagavān then explains a profound truth about human nature: “In this world, the created beings are broadly of two kinds, divine and demoniac.”

People commonly classify human beings externally as rich or poor, fair or dark, educated or uneducated, successful or unsuccessful. But Bhagavān says that at the deepest level there are fundamentally only two dispositions: the divine nature and the demoniac nature.

Bhagavān says that the divine qualities have already been described in detail. Now the characteristics of the demoniac disposition must also be understood carefully. Bhagavān begins describing how negative-minded individuals think, behave, and live.

At the same time, an important understanding is emphasized: in reality, no ordinary person is entirely divine or entirely demoniac. Human beings usually contain mixtures of both tendencies within themselves. Wherever these āsurī qualities appear within one’s own conduct, speech, or thoughts, one should honestly recognize that those tendencies still exist within oneself.

These teachings are therefore not meant for judging others. They are meant for self-examination. Wherever anger, hypocrisy, pride, harshness, jealousy, cruelty, or ego arise within oneself, one should understand that those are traces of āsurī sampad. And wherever compassion, truthfulness, forgiveness, peace, humility, patience, and purity arise, one should recognize the presence of daivī sampad.

The purpose of Bhagavān’s teaching is not condemnation, but awakening, so that a seeker may honestly observe oneself and consciously strengthen the divine qualities while gradually reducing the demoniac tendencies within.

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 says that people dominated by āsurī tendencies do not understand properly what should be done and what should be avoided. They lack clarity regarding pravṛtti and nivṛtti, right action and restraint from wrong action. Their inner compass becomes confused, and therefore they live according to impulse, convenience, ego, or desire rather than dharma and wisdom.

Bhagavān further says that such people possess neither purity, nor noble conduct, nor truthfulness.

Their lives lack **śauca**, both external and internal purity. Often people create clever excuses to avoid discipline and purity. Someone jokingly says, “Did lions ever wash their faces?” or compares oneself to powerful animals in order to justify laziness, impurity, or carelessness. During cold weather people avoid bathing and then casually say, “Bhagavān understands everything.” Certainly Bhagavān understands everything, but that does not mean discipline, cleanliness, and purity should be abandoned.

Such tendencies slowly weaken refinement in life. Purity is not merely physical cleanliness; it reflects respect toward oneself, toward life, and toward Paramātmā. A seeker gradually develops sensitivity toward both outer cleanliness and inner sanctity.

Bhagavān says that people of āsurī nature also lack **ācāra**, noble conduct. Their behavior does not arise from restraint, dignity, humility, or dharma. They may speak or act according to convenience without concern for refinement or righteousness.

Nor do they remain established in satya. Truthfulness is absent because their life becomes centered around ego, pretension, self-interest, and manipulation. Such people may speak according to advantage rather than according to sincerity and dharma.

Thus, Bhagavān explains that where purity, proper conduct, and truthfulness are absent, the influence of āsurī tendencies becomes visible. These teachings are meant for self-reflection. Whenever impurity, carelessness, dishonesty, or undisciplined conduct appear within oneself, a seeker should recognize those tendencies honestly and work gradually toward greater purity, discipline, and truthfulness in life.

16.8

asatyamapraṭiṣṭhaṃ(n) te, jagadāhuraniśvaram, aparaparasambhūtaṃ(ñ), kimanyatkāmahaitukam 16.8

Men of demonic 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?

Bhagavān says that people dominated by āsurī tendencies do not remain established in truth. They neither speak truthfully nor cultivate the virtues associated with sincerity, purity, and dharma. Their understanding of existence itself becomes distorted.

Such people declare: “They say this world is unreal, without foundation, and without Īśvara.”

According to this mindset, the universe has no divine basis and no higher intelligence governing it. They claim that no Paramātmā exists, that human beings merely invented Bhagavān, created temples, and imagined forms of worship for psychological comfort. They argue, “Who has ever seen Bhagavān? Everything simply happened on its own.”

Bhagavān describes how such people believe creation emerged accidentally and mechanically, without any conscious divine principle behind it. They attribute existence solely to material processes and physical interactions. In this view, life is regarded merely as the product of biological evolution and sensual impulse.

Thus Bhagavān says: “They believe the world arises merely from mutual union, driven only by

desire.”

According to this mentality, there is no sacred purpose, no cosmic intelligence, no divine order, only material interaction and desire.

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.

Bhagavān then explains the consequence of such thinking. When a person becomes deeply rooted in false understanding and denial of higher truth, the intellect gradually loses refinement and balance. Such people become disconnected from dharma, humility, sacredness, and responsibility.

Their intelligence becomes narrow because it remains confined only to material perception. As a result, destructive tendencies increase. Bhagavān describes them as people inclined toward harmful and aggressive actions that disturb society rather than uplift it.

The speaker emphasizes that such individuals often become attracted to agitation, conflict, destruction, and hostility. Rather than contributing toward harmony and welfare, they repeatedly create division, anger, violence, and suffering. Their actions frequently damage both themselves and others.

Bhagavān, therefore, says that such tendencies ultimately move toward the destruction of harmony within the world. These individuals neither attain true welfare themselves nor allow peace and welfare to flourish around them. Instead of creating, healing, protecting, or serving, their energy becomes centered upon criticism, denial, agitation, and destruction.

The essential teaching is not directed toward condemning any external group of people, but toward helping a seeker recognize dangerous tendencies within the human mind itself. Whenever one becomes excessively cynical, arrogant, destructive, dismissive of dharma, or disconnected from sacredness and responsibility, traces of āsurī thinking begin to arise.

Bhagavān's purpose is to awaken discernment so that a seeker may move steadily toward truth, humility, devotion, compassion, and reverence for the divine order underlying existence.

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.

Human beings take shelter in desires that can never truly be fulfilled. Deluded by false ideas and inflated ego, they adopt impure lifestyles and distorted values. Desire itself has no endpoint. One fulfilled desire immediately gives rise to another.

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.

Such people become consumed by endless anxieties lasting until death. They conclude that sense enjoyment alone is the purpose of life. They believe temporary pleasure is the highest truth and live only for immediate gratification.

They become unconcerned with dharma, character, discipline, family harmony, or spiritual growth. The mentality becomes: "Enjoy now; the future can be dealt with later." But this constant chase for pleasure never produces peace.

16.12

āsāpāśasatairbaddhāḥ(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.

Human beings become bound by hundreds of ropes of expectation and desire. Driven by lust, anger, and endless craving, they accumulate wealth through unjust means merely for the sake of enjoyment.

This describes ordinary human life with startling accuracy. As children, almost everyone once said to their parents, "Just give me this one thing, then I will never ask for anything again." Yet after receiving it, another desire appeared, then another, and another endlessly. The list of desires never ended.

Even after achieving far more than once imagined possible, dissatisfaction remains. Attention constantly shifts toward what is still missing.

To illustrate this, a story is told from Russia about a poor farmer. Someone informed him that in Siberia, land was available freely. The village chief told him: "From sunrise until sunset, however much land you can walk around and return back to me before sunset, all of it shall become yours."

The farmer became intoxicated with greed and possibility. He planned the entire night carefully, calculating speed, distance, food, water, and strategy so not a single moment would be wasted. He even avoided sleeping for fear of waking late.

At sunrise he began running enthusiastically. His plan was simple: walk outward until noon, then return safely by evening. But midway he noticed a beautiful lake and thought, "If I include this lake within my boundary, the land will become even more valuable."

Then greed expanded further. Instead of taking a smaller portion of the lake, he wanted the largest possible section. He kept running farther and farther. Eventually he discarded his food and water to move faster.

By afternoon exhaustion overtook him. His heartbeat increased, his body weakened, and yet desire would not let him stop. Even crawling on hands and knees, he kept trying to complete the circle and return before sunset.

Finally, before reaching the endpoint, he collapsed from a heart attack and died.

The story is symbolic of human life itself.

People sacrifice health, sleep, peace, relationships, family, and inner balance while endlessly chasing more wealth, more success, more possessions, more status. In pursuit of future happiness, they destroy present life.

Eventually, a stage comes where wealth has accumulated, but health is gone. Sweets fill the house, but diabetes prevents eating them. Money exists, but energy does not. Comforts exist, but peace has disappeared.

Life becomes exactly like that farmer's race around the lake, endless running without understanding where or why one is running.

Bhagavān, therefore, warns that uncontrolled desire, endless expectation, and obsession with enjoyment bind human beings tightly into suffering. The more one becomes trapped in the ropes of hope and craving, the farther one moves from peace.

True wisdom lies not in endlessly expanding desires, but in understanding limitation, contentment, restraint, and inner fulfillment.

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".

Bhagavān further clarifies the inner mentality of those possessed by āsurī tendencies: "Today I have gained this much. Soon I shall fulfill yet another desire. I already possess this wealth, and in the future my riches and investments will increase even further."

This is the characteristic vision of the āsurī mind, a mind that never arrives at contentment. No achievement becomes sufficient. No possession brings completion. Every attainment immediately creates another ambition, another craving, another anxiety.

Such a mentality gradually carries the human being far away from the supreme peace born of contentment and pushes him instead into the endless and destructive abyss of greed, restlessness, and insatiable desire.

Therefore, it becomes essential for every person to pause amidst this endless race and honestly examine oneself: "Toward what direction is this life actually moving?"

Human life is not meant to be consumed entirely in accumulation, comparison, expansion, and constant agitation. Without self-reflection, the entire journey may pass in pursuit of goals that never

truly satisfy the heart.

Thus Bhagavān's teaching is not merely philosophical; it is deeply practical. He calls the human being to awaken from unconscious chasing, to observe the endless machinery of desire, and to rediscover the peace that comes not from possessing more, but from becoming inwardly free.

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."

Describing further the egoistic and self-destructive mentality of those endowed with āsurī tendencies, Bhagavān says: "That enemy has been destroyed by me, and the others too I shall destroy. I alone am the controller. I alone am the enjoyer. I am perfect, powerful, and happy."

This verse reveals the frightening height of ego into which the human mind can fall when separated from humility, dharma, and awareness of Paramatma.

To understand this tendency clearly, one may remember the famous daitya king Hiraṇyakaśipu. His arrogance had reached such an extreme that he declared there was no Īśvara other than himself. He considered himself supreme, absolute, invincible, and worthy of worship.

The modern human being of āsurī disposition often lives in a similar intoxication. Though perhaps not expressing it openly in words, inwardly he believes:

- "I alone control everything."
- "My intelligence alone has created my success."
- "My power, my wealth, my influence, these are supreme."

Such a person gradually begins to see himself as the center of existence and the sole enjoyer of all pleasures. The heart loses gratitude, humility, surrender, and reverence toward the divine order governing life.

But this mentality is deeply self-destructive. The more ego expands, the more separation, conflict, fear, and inner emptiness increase. One who sees oneself as the supreme controller eventually becomes burdened by constant insecurity, competition, and aggression.

Bhagavān therefore exposes this mentality not merely to criticize it, but to warn the seeker. Whenever the feeling arises

- "I alone am important."
- "I alone am responsible for everything."
- "I alone deserve enjoyment and recognition, "one should recognize that the seeds of āsurī disposition are beginning to grow within the heart.

True spiritual vision moves in the opposite direction: toward humility, gratitude, surrender, compassion, and the recognition that all strength, intelligence, opportunity, and grace ultimately arise through Paramatma alone.

16.15

**āḍhyo'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.”

16.15 writeup

16.16

**anekacittavibhrāntā, mohajālasamāvṛtāḥ,
prasaktāḥ(kh) kāmabhogeṣu, patanti narake'śucau 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.

Describing the mentality of those immersed in false pride arising from material prosperity and noble lineage, Bhagavān says:

“आढ्योऽभिजनवानस्मि कोऽन्योऽस्ति सदृशो मया ।
यक्ष्ये दास्यामि मोदिष्य इत्यज्ञानविमोहिताः ॥

अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ता मोहजालसमावृताः ।
प्रसक्ताः कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ ॥”

“I am extremely wealthy. I belong to a great family and noble lineage. Who else in this world is equal to me? I shall perform grand yajñas, give charity, and enjoy pleasures and celebrations.”

Thus, completely deluded by ignorance, such people remain mentally disturbed by countless imaginations and desires. Entangled in the net of delusion and deeply attached to sense enjoyments, these āsuric individuals ultimately fall into impure and painful states.

To understand this tendency more clearly, one may remember the lives of Duryodhana and Karṇa in the Mahābhārata. During the great war, they repeatedly spoke in this spirit of pride and arrogance. They lived with the mentality:

“Who upon this earth is greater or more powerful than us?”
“Through strength and power, everything can be obtained.”

Such pride gradually clouds discrimination and hardens the heart.

Bhagavān explains that people of this nature even use yajña and dāna merely as displays. Their purpose is not devotion to Paramatma or genuine compassion, but the increase of personal prestige, reputation, and enjoyment.

Outwardly, they may appear religious, charitable, or generous, but inwardly the desire remains centered around recognition, superiority, and self-glorification. Their minds remain absorbed in enjoyment, luxury, and worldly pleasure.

Being covered by ignorance and trapped in countless delusions, such people become increasingly attached to kāma-bhoga, sensual enjoyment and worldly indulgence. Bhagavān says that this attachment ultimately leads them toward suffering and spiritual downfall.

The teaching here is deeply important: wealth, status, or social position are not themselves the problem. The danger begins when they give rise to arrogance, vanity, and the feeling of superiority over others.

True dharma brings humility. True charity remains free from display. And true spiritual maturity turns the mind toward gratitude, simplicity, and remembrance of Paramatma.

16.17

ātmasaṃbhāvitāḥ(s) stabdhā, dhanamānamadānvitāḥ, yajante nāmayajñaiste, 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.

Bhagavān describes those who abandon the discipline of śāstra and perform religious acts merely according to personal desire and ego.

Such people consider themselves superior, remain filled with arrogance, and become intoxicated by wealth, status, and prestige. Outwardly they perform yajñas and acts of worship, but these are only nominal rituals, performed with hypocrisy and without adherence to śāstric principles.

When viewed in the present context, this tendency can often be observed during sacred festivals such as Navarātri and Gaṇeśotsava. Certainly, not all celebrations are of this nature, but in a large number of cases, śāstric discipline and spiritual sanctity have gradually disappeared.

Many such events lack proper ritual procedure, qualified brāhmaṇas capable of authentic mantra recitation, or genuine arrangements for anna-dāna and service to the needy. Instead of devotion becoming central, display and publicity become the focus.

At times, enormous photographs of organizers, sponsors, or political leaders are displayed more prominently than the sacred mūrtis of Bhagavān themselves. In the name of religious celebration, vulgar film songs and inappropriate dancing are introduced into spaces meant for worship and spiritual elevation.

One must honestly reflect: what śāstric foundation supports such behavior?

Bhagavān says that when religious activity becomes disconnected from humility, sanctity, discipline, and devotion toward Paramatma, it slowly turns into mere showmanship, ego, and hypocrisy.

The external form may still appear religious, but inwardly the purpose becomes prestige, influence, entertainment, and social display rather than worship. True yajña is not performed for self-glorification. True devotion does not seek public admiration. And true worship remains guided by reverence, purity, humility, and śāstric maryādā.

16.18

ahaṅkāraṃ(m) balaṃ(n) darpaṃ(ñ), kāmaṃ(ñ) krodhaṃ(ñ) ca saṃśritāḥ, māmātmaparadeheṣu, 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.

Bhagavān says: Those who are completely given over to ego, power, arrogance, desire, and anger, and who constantly criticize and condemn others, become hateful toward HIM who dwells as the indwelling Paramatma within their own body and within the bodies of all beings.

Overpowered by ahaṅkāra, kāma, and krodha, such people begin troubling, insulting, and hurting others. In their delusion, they forget a most essential spiritual truth, that the same Paramatma resides within every being as the inner witness and indwelling consciousness.

Therefore, to insult, torment, or hate another person is not merely an offense against an individual; it becomes opposition toward the very divine presence residing within that being.

Bhagavān explains that when the heart becomes filled with arrogance and anger, a person loses the vision of unity and sacredness in life. Instead of seeing living beings as manifestations sustained by Paramatma, such individuals begin seeing others only as competitors, enemies, obstacles, or objects of criticism.

This is why fault-finding and constant condemnation are considered deeply dangerous tendencies in spiritual life. The more a person delights in humiliating or criticizing others, the more the heart becomes hardened and separated from compassion.

Thus, Bhagavān teaches that harming others outwardly ultimately reflects an inner alienation from the divine presence itself.

16.19

tānaḥaṃ(n) dviṣataḥ(kh) krūrān, saṃsāreṣu 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.

Describing the ultimate consequence of the āsuric disposition, Śrī Bhagavān says: “Those hateful, sinful, and cruel people, I repeatedly cast into the cycle of worldly existence only among āsuric births.”

Bhagavān clearly explains that such people may try to present themselves before society as powerful, successful, influential, or superior, yet the law of creation remains unwavering and impartial. Divine justice does not operate according to outward appearance, wealth, influence, or public image. The cosmic order functions with complete fairness.

Thus, those who choose the path of cruelty, hatred, violence, and hostility inevitably experience the results of those tendencies. A person who repeatedly nourishes anger, harshness, and destructive conduct gradually becomes bound more deeply to the same āsuric nature.

Therefore, Bhagavān declares that such beings are again born into environments that strengthen those very tendencies. They take birth in families, communities, circumstances, and cultures where

āsuric qualities dominate, where anger, ego, conflict, selfishness, violence, and spiritual ignorance continue to flourish.

The teaching here is not merely about punishment, but about the natural continuation of one's inner tendencies. Whatever qualities a person constantly cultivates eventually shape both their inner condition and future direction. Divine justice operates through this unfailing law of karma and saṁskāra.

Thus, Bhagavān's message is a warning as well as guidance: one should carefully guard the mind from hatred, cruelty, and arrogance, and instead cultivate divine qualities such as compassion, humility, truthfulness, forgiveness, and devotion to Paramātmā.

16.20

**āsurīṃ(ṅ) 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 here reveals the final and frightening consequence of an āsuric life. A person who lives absorbed in arrogance, selfish desire, hatred, violence, and spiritual ignorance gradually moves farther away from Paramātmā. Though such a life may appear outwardly successful for some time, its inner direction ultimately leads toward degradation and suffering.

For the sake of temporary pleasure, egoistic satisfaction, and worldly domination, a person may choose unrighteous paths. Yet those very choices slowly bind the individual more deeply to ignorance and lower tendencies. As these tendencies become stronger over repeated births, the soul continues to revolve within painful states of existence and remains unable to attain the grace and proximity of Bhagavān.

Thus, Bhagavān teaches that the āsuric path is not merely a moral error but a dangerous spiritual downfall. What begins as pride, anger, greed, and indulgence eventually leads the soul into deeper bondage, sorrow, and inner darkness.

Therefore, the wise person reflects carefully upon the direction of life and consciously cultivates divine qualities such as humility, compassion, truthfulness, self-restraint, forgiveness, purity, and devotion to Paramātmā. Only through these divine qualities does one gradually move toward liberation, peace, and the attainment of Bhagavān.

16.21

**trividhaṃ(n) narakasyedaṃ(n), dvāraṃ(n) nāśanamātmanaḥ,
kāmaḥ(kh) krodhastathā lobhaḥ(s), tasmādetattrayaṃ(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.

In ordinary worldly life, some degree of desire, anger, and greed exists within almost every human being to varying extents. The real danger, however, lies not merely in their presence but in the violent force and momentum they can acquire within the mind.

When intense desire arises, a person becomes willing to break all boundaries and moral restraints in order to fulfill it. In such moments, discrimination weakens and worldly craving dominates the intellect.

Similarly, when a powerful surge of anger overtakes the mind, a person may lose all sense of right and wrong. In that state of inner agitation, one becomes capable of speaking harshly, hurting others, destroying relationships, and even committing actions that later bring deep regret.

In the same way, when greed overwhelms the heart, humanity itself is pushed aside. Compassion, ethics, honesty, and righteousness are sacrificed for personal gain, accumulation, and selfish advantage.

Thus, Bhagavān teaches that the greatest danger is the uncontrolled force of these tendencies. Their unchecked momentum becomes the true enemy of human life. If a person fails to gain mastery over these inner impulses, downfall and spiritual degradation become almost inevitable.

Therefore, anyone seeking higher growth, peace, and spiritual upliftment must carefully restrain and purify these three forces. By reducing desire, calming anger, and overcoming greed, the heart gradually becomes fit for divine qualities, inner peace, and closeness to Paramātmā.

16.22

**etairvimuktaḥ(kh) kaunteya, tamodvāraistribhirnaraḥ,
ācaratyātmanaḥ(ś) śreyah(s), tato yāti parāṃ(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.

Bhagavān teaches that when a person gradually gains mastery over kāma (desire), krodha (anger), and lobha (greed), the inner being becomes purified and peaceful. The mind no longer remains constantly agitated by cravings, hostility, or selfish accumulation.

As the antaḥkaraṇa becomes purified, such a seeker naturally begins engaging only in those actions that support spiritual upliftment, inner growth, and the welfare of others. Actions become more selfless, balanced, compassionate, and aligned with dharma.

A person who is free from these lower impulses does not merely avoid wrongdoing externally; rather, the very tendencies that pull the soul downward begin dissolving from within. This purification gradually turns the mind toward Paramātmā and toward higher spiritual truth.

Such a niṣkāma sādḥaka, whose life becomes guided by purity, restraint, devotion, and righteousness, ultimately attains the supreme state, the divine proximity and realization of Bhagavān Himself.

16.23

**yaḥ(ś) śāstravidhimutsṛjya, vartate kāmakārataḥ,
na sa siddhimavāpnoti, na sukhaṃ(n) na parāṃ(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.

In the practical context of the modern age, these teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā become extremely important. Whenever someone argues, using modern logic, that Sanātana traditions and scriptural disciplines are unnecessary, these words of Śrī Bhagavān become especially relevant.

Bhagavān declares: “One who abandons the injunctions and discipline of the śāstras and acts merely according to personal desire attains neither perfection, nor true happiness, nor the supreme goal.”

Today, many people proudly proclaim ideas such as: “I do not believe in traditional rites like śrāddha. Instead of performing śrāddha, I will simply donate food at an orphanage.”

Or they say: “Why should one offer water upon a Śiva Liṅga? It is better to give that water to a thirsty person.”

Others argue: “Why feed a brāhmaṇa according to scriptural tradition? It is better to feed a poor person instead.”

At an external level, such statements may appear compassionate or rational. However, Bhagavān’s teaching points toward a deeper principle: spiritual life cannot be guided merely by personal opinion, emotional preference, or self-created reasoning. When people reject śāstric guidance and begin inventing their own religious systems according to convenience and personal intellect, they gradually move away from the discipline and wisdom preserved within the Sanātana tradition.

The issue here is not compassion toward the poor or helping others, such acts are themselves noble and necessary. The concern arises when scriptural practices are dismissed with arrogance or replaced solely according to personal logic, as though individual understanding alone were superior to the wisdom of the śāstras.

Therefore, Bhagavān says that such self-willed conduct (kāmakārataḥ) does not lead the soul toward true fulfillment. A person acting merely according to personal preference may perhaps gain temporary emotional satisfaction, but does not attain deep inner peace, spiritual perfection, or the supreme destination.

True spiritual progress requires humility before śāstra, reverence toward dharma, and the willingness to follow sacred disciplines even when the modern mind does not fully grasp their deeper spiritual purpose.

16.24

**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.

When Arjuna developed the natural question of how a human being should decide what actions ought to be performed and what actions ought to be avoided, Śrī Bhagavān concluded this chapter with a profound and decisive teaching: “Therefore, O Arjuna! In determining what is duty and what is not duty, śāstra alone is the authoritative guide. Knowing this, one should act in accordance with the injunctions of the śāstra.”

Bhagavān thus establishes that the ultimate basis for deciding righteous conduct is not personal

opinion, emotional impulse, social trends, or intellectual speculation, but the guidance of śāstra itself.

At this point, a natural question may arise in the mind of an ordinary person: “Most people have not deeply studied the Vedas, Upaniṣads, or the vast body of sacred scriptures. Then how can one know what truly accords with śāstra?”

Certainly, deep study and svādhyāya of the scriptures are noble and highly beneficial paths. However, scriptural wisdom is not accessible only through scholarly study. The sacred traditions that have flowed through generations within Sanātana Dharma are themselves rooted in śāstric principles.

The auspicious customs, disciplines, observances, and cultural practices preserved over centuries did not arise randomly. They were shaped by the wisdom of ṛṣis, saints, and realized beings who understood the essence of dharma. Thus, the teachings given by saints and mahāpuruṣas are regarded as expressions of śāstric truth itself.

For this reason, the tradition accepts both śāstra-vacana (the words of scripture) and āpta-vacana (the trustworthy words of realized sages and noble beings) as authoritative. The enduring traditions and spiritual culture inherited from the ancestors are fundamentally aligned with śāstra.

In the modern age, however, there is often a tendency to reject sacred traditions through superficial logic presented in the name of “modern thinking” or “scientific mentality.” Many people construct clever arguments against Sanātana disciplines without truly understanding their deeper spiritual foundation.

Therefore, Bhagavān’s message is that a person sincerely seeking welfare and upliftment should not become lost in dry intellectual arrogance or endless speculative reasoning opposed to dharma. Instead, one should cultivate reverence, humility, and faith toward śāstric disciplines and live in harmony with sacred tradition.

By following śāstra-supported conduct with sincerity and devotion, both worldly welfare and spiritual upliftment become possible. This stands as the concluding proclamation of Śrī Bhagavān in this teaching.

The session concluded with **Harinām Sankīrtan**, followed by with **Prārthanā (prayer) at the Padakamala (lotus feet) of Śrī Hari** and recitation of the **Hanumān Cālīsā**.

**om tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu
brahmavidyāyāṃ(ṁ) yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṃvāde
daivāsurasampadvibhāgayogo nāma ṣoḍaśo'dhyāyaḥ.**



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You have enjoyed this vivechan writeup! In spite of intense editing and proofreading, errors of grammar, as also of omission and commission may have crept in. We appreciate your forbearance.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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