

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: THE DIVINE AND DEMONIAIC NATURES

[Those who possess demoniac qualities and who live whimsically, without following the regulations of scripture, attain lower births and further material bondage. But those who possess divine qualities and live regulated lives, abiding by scriptural authority, gradually attain spiritual perfection.]

Comments by Srila Prabhupada on this Chapter:

In this Sixteenth Chapter the Lord explains both the transcendental nature and its attendant qualities and the demoniac nature and its qualities. He also explains the advantages and disadvantages of these qualities.(16.1 Purport)

[A. TRANSCENDENTAL AND DEMONIAIC QUALITIES (16. 1-6)

1. Twenty-six godly qualities are mentioned, some of which are purification, cultivation of spiritual knowledge, charity, self-control, study of the Vedas, austerity, simplicity, freedom from anger, renunciation, aversion to fault-finding, compassion, determination, vigor, forgiveness, cleanliness, and freedom from envy and the passion for honor. (1-3)]

TEXT 1-3

sri-bhagavan uvaca
abhayam sattva-samsuddhir
jnana-yoga-vyavasthitih
danam damas ca yajnas ca
svadhyayas tapa arjavam

ahimsa satyam akrodhas
tyagah santir apaisunam
daya bhutesv aloluptvam
mardavam hrih acapalam

tejah ksama dhrtih saucam
adroho nati-manita
bhavanti sampadam daivim
abhijatasya bharata

sri-bhagavan uvaca--the Supreme Personality of Godhead said; abhayam--fearlessness; sattva-samsuddhih--purification of one's existence; jnana--in knowledge; yoga--of linking up; vyavasthitih--the situation; danam--charity; damah--controlling the mind; ca--and; yajnah--performance of sacrifice; ca--and; svadhyayah--study of Vedic literature; tapah--austerity; arjavam--simplicity; ahimsa--nonviolence; satyam--truthfulness; akrodhas--freedom from anger; tyagah--renunciation; santih--tranquillity; apaisunam--aversion to fault-finding; daya--mercy; bhutesu--towards all living entities; aloluptvam--freedom from greed; mardavam--gentleness; hrih--modesty; acapalam--determination; tejah--vigor; ksama--forgiveness; dhrtih--fortitude;

saucam--cleanliness; adrohah--freedom from envy; na--not; ati manita--expectation of honor; bhavanti--are; sampadam--the qualities; daivim--the transcendental nature; abhijatasya--of one who is born of; bharata--O son of Bharata.

TRANSLATION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Fearlessness; purification of one's existence; cultivation of spiritual knowledge; charity; self-control; performance of sacrifice; study of the Vedas; austerity; simplicity; nonviolence; truthfulness; freedom from anger; renunciation; tranquillity; aversion to faultfinding; compassion for all living entities; freedom from covetousness; gentleness; modesty; steady determination; vigor; forgiveness; fortitude; cleanliness; and freedom from envy and from the passion for honor--these transcendental qualities, O son of Bharata, belong to godly men endowed with divine nature.

(cn) In the Purport to this verse, Srila Prabhupada explains: "In the beginning of the Fifteenth Chapter, the banyan tree of this material world was explained. The extra roots coming out of it were compared to the activities of the living entities, some auspicious, some inauspicious. In the Ninth Chapter, also, the devas, or godly, and the asuras, the ungodly, or demons, were explained. Now, according to Vedic rites, activities in the mode of goodness are considered auspicious for progress on the path of liberation, and such activities are known as daiviprakṛti, transcendental by nature. Those who are situated in transcendental nature make progress on the path of liberation. For those who are acting in the modes of passion and ignorance, on the other hand, there is no possibility of liberation. Either they will have to remain in this material world as human beings, or they will descend among the species of animals or even lower life forms. In this Sixteenth Chapter the Lord explains both the transcendental nature and its attendant qualities and the demoniac nature and its qualities. He also explains the advantages and disadvantages of these qualities."

In the 13th Chapter the basic principle of transmigration is explained in that verse: karanam guna-sango'sya/ sad-asad-yoni- janmasu, 'according to one's association with the modes of material nature, one transmigrates meeting good and bad in different species of life'. Then in 14th Chapter, the nature of the forces of material nature that carry one and condition one within the body are described. In 15th Chapter, (if we remember the Vedic tree of the material world), how the living entity in the reflected portion of the material world, the nature of his transmigration from branch to branch is described. And the purpose of this transmigration and the purpose of the Vedic scriptures has been given as to bring us to the unperverted, to the reality where real existence takes place - in the spiritual world. It takes place through surrender to Kṛṣṇa. But most of the verses were leading us to that point and explain a lot about transmigration.

The top portion, closer to the spiritual world, the births in that realm are high in the modes of material nature - first class cells in the material world - bodies affected by the mode of goodness. In the lower portions of the tree, downwards, are those bodies very much affected by ignorance. This Chapter describes to the two extreme aspects of transmigration - and ungodly or demoniac. The benefit of a godly birth which is infused with the quality of

goodness is the ability further than goodness and go to that spiritual world where one's going one never returns. That is the benefit of godly birth.

But here in this Chapter, both extremes are painted into the picture of transmigration.

In Section A of this Chapter a basic introduction to the divine, those qualities in the mode of goodness which lead to liberation is given. And then a very concise explanation of the demoniac nature. Then in Section B a more detailed description of the demoniac nature is given. And in Section C, the point of it all: how to escape from demoniac life and therefore elevate oneself and go back home back to Godhead.

The conclusion is the basic difference between divine life and demoniac life: that the divine soul follows the sastra and therefore go up and demoniac do not follow the sastra and therefore the result of their life is horrible for themselves and for others. These two conclusions: avoiding the demoniac by giving up the three gates to hell and accept the process of elevation through following the sastras.

The first three verses describe those who are going up - the divine qualities. Then next text describes those of a different nature.

TEXT 4

dambho darpo 'bhi manas ca
krodhah parusyam eva ca
ajnanam cabhijatasya
partha sampadam asurim

dambhah--pride; darpah--arrogance; abhimanah--conceit; ca--and; krodhah--anger; parusyam--harshness; eva--certainly; ca--and; ajnanam--ignorance; ca--and; abhijatasya--of one who is born of; partha--O son of Prtha; sampadam--the qualities; asurim--the demoniac nature.

TRANSLATION

Pride, arrogance, conceit, anger, harshness and ignorance--these qualities belong to those of demoniac nature, O son of Prtha.

(cn) In his Purport Srila Prabhupada says: "In this verse, the royal road to hell is described. The demoniac want to make a show of religion and advancement in spiritual science, although they do not follow the principles. They are always arrogant or proud in possessing some type of education or so much wealth. They desire to be worshiped by others, and demand respectability, although they do not command respect. Over trifles they become very angry and speak harshly, not gently. They do not know what should be done and what should not be done. They do everything whimsically, according to their own desire, and they do not recognize any authority. These demoniac qualities are taken on by them from the beginning of their bodies in the wombs of their mothers, and as they grow they manifest all these inauspicious qualities.

TEXT 5

daivi sampad vimoksaya
nibandhayasuri mata
ma sucah sampadam daivim
abhijato 'si pandava

daivi--transcendental; sampat--assets; vimoksaya--meant for liberation; nibandhaya--for bondage; asuri--demoniac qualities; mata--are considered; ma--do not; sucah--worry; sampadam--assets; daivim--transcendental; abhijatah--born of; asi--you are; pandava--O son of Pandu.

TRANSLATION

The transcendental qualities are conducive to liberation, whereas the demoniac qualities make for bondage. Do not worry, O son of Pandu, for you are born with the divine qualities.

TEXT 6

dvau bhuta-sargau loke 'smin
daiva asura eva ca
daivo vistarasah prokta
asuram partha me srnu

dvau--two; bhuta-sargau--created living beings; loke--in the world; asmin--this; daivah--godly; asurah--demoniac; eva--certainly; ca--and; daivah--the divine; vistarasah--at great length; prokta--said; asuram--the demoniac; partha--O son of Prtha; me--from Me; srnu--just hear.

TRANSLATION

O son of Prtha, in this world there are two kinds of created beings. One is called the divine and the other demoniac. I have already explained to you at length the divine qualities. Now hear from Me of the demoniac.

[B. THE DEMONIAIC NATURE (16. 7-20)

1. The demoniac activities are unclean and improper. They say the world is unreal and is produced only of sex desire. Taking shelter of lust, pride, and conceit, their acts aim to destroy the world. Thinking sense gratification the goal of life, their anxieties are unlimited. Bound by thousands of desires, they secure money by illegal means. Scheming to increase their wealth, they brand competitors as enemies and plot to kill them. Thinking themselves perfect, powerful and happy, they surrounded themselves with their relative perform sacrifices and give charity to increase their happiness. (7-15)]

TEXT 7

pravrttim ca nivrttim ca
jana na vidur asurah
na saucam napi cacaro
na satyam tesu vidyate

pravrttim--acting properly; ca--also; nivrttim--not acting improperly; ca--and;
janah--persons; na--never; viduh--know; asurah--of demoniac quality; na--never;
saucam--cleanliness; na--nor; api--also; ca--and; acarah--behavior; na--never; satyam--truth;
tesu--in them; vidyate--there is.

TRANSLATION

Those who are demoniac do not know what is to be done and what is not to be done. Neither cleanliness nor proper behavior nor truth is found in them.

(cn) These naturally follows the information about the modes because these qualities are coming from the modes of passion and ignorance. Their realizations are:

TEXT 8

asatyam apratistham te
jagad ahur anisvaram
aparaspara-sambhutam
kim anyat kama-haitukam

asatyam--unreal; apratistham--without foundation; te--they; jagat--the cosmic manifestation;
ahuh--say; anisvaram--with no controller; aparaspara--without cause; sambhutam--arisen;
kim anyat--there is no other cause; kama-haitukam--it is due to lust only.

TRANSLATION

They say that this world is unreal, with no foundation, no God in control. They say it is produced of sex desire and has no cause other than lust.

TEXT 9

etam drstim avastabhya
nastatmano 'lpa-buddhayah
prabhavanty ugra-karmanah
ksayaya jagato 'hitah

etam--this; drstim--vision; avastabhya--accepting; nasta--having lost; atmanah--themselves; alpa-buddhayah--the less intelligent; prabhavanti--flourish; ugra-karmanah--engaged in painful activities; ksaya--for destruction; jagatah--of the world; ahitah--unbeneficial.

TRANSLATION

Following such conclusions, the demoniac, who are lost to themselves and who have no intelligence, engage in unbeneficial, horrible works meant to destroy the world.

TEXT 10

kamam asritya duspuram
dambha-mana-madanvitah
mohad grhitvasad-grahan
pravartante 'suci-vratah

kamam--lust; asritya--taking shelter of; duspuram--insatiable; dambha--of pride; mana--and false prestige; mada-anvitah--absorbed in the conceit; mohat--by illusion; grhitva--taking; asat--nonpermanent; grahan--things; pravartante--they flourish; asuci--to the unclean; vratah--avowed.

TRANSLATION

Taking shelter of insatiable lust and absorbed in the conceit of pride and false prestige, the demoniac, thus illusioned, are always sworn to unclean work, attracted by the impermanent.

TEXT 11-12

cintam aparimeyam ca
pralayantam upasritah
kamopabhoga-parama
etavad iti niscitah

asa-pasa-satair baddhah
kama-krodha-parayanah
ihante kama-bhogartham
anyayenartha-sancayan

cintam--fears and anxieties; aparimeyam--immeasurable; ca--and; pralaya-antam--unto the point of death; upasritah--having taken shelter of; kama-upabhoga--sense gratification; paramah--the highest goal of life; etavat--thus; iti--in this way; niscitah--having ascertained; asa-pasa--entanglements in a network of hope; sataih--by hundreds; baddhah--being bound; kama--of lust; krodha--and anger; parayanah--always situated in the mentality; ihante--they

desire; kama--lust; bhoga-- enjoyment; artham--for the purpose of; anyayena--illegally; artha--of wealth; sancayan--accumulation.

TRANSLATION

They believe that to gratify the senses is the prime necessity of human civilization. Thus until the end of life their anxiety is immeasurable. Bound by a network of hundreds of thousands of desires and absorbed in lust and anger, they s money by illegal means for sense gratification. (cn) It is quite interesting how in the 2nd Chapter Krsna recommends tha tolerates his desires if he wants to become peaceful and h Just like the ocean is undisturbed although is fed by countless rivers, similarly one should tolerate the rivers of desires that enter in his consciousness. But here the binding of the living entities is described as a network of hundreds of thousands of desires. One who in not fixed in Krsna consciousness will be always many-branched, filled with all these desires and therefore his determination cannot be strong.

Here show the demoniac bound by their desires. They take their minds seriously, identify with their minds' desires and they are lost.

TEXT 13-15

idam adya maya labdham
imam prapsye manoratham
idam astidam api me
bhavisyati punar dhanam

asau maya hatah satruh
hanisye caparan api
isvaro 'ham aham bhogi
siddho 'ham balavan sukhi

adhyo 'bhijanavan asmi
ko 'nyo 'ti sadrso maya
yaksye dasyami modisyā
ity ajnana-vimohitah

idam--this; adya--today; maya--by me; labdham--gained; imam--this; prapsye--I shall gain; manah-ratham--according to my desires; idam--this; asti--there is; idam--this; api--also; me--mine; bhavisyati--it will increase in the future; punah--again; dhanam--wealth; asau--that; maya--by me; hatah--has been killed; satruh--enemy; hanisye--I shall kill; ca--also; aparan--others; api--certainly; isvarah--the lord; aham--I am; aham--I am; bhogi--the enjoyer; siddhah--perfect; aham--I am; bala-van--powerful; sukhi--happy; adhyah--wealthy; abhijana-van--surrounded by aristocratic relatives; asmi--I am; kah--who; anyah--other; asti--there is; sadrsah--like; maya--me; yaksye--I shall sacrifice; dasyami--I shall give charity; modisyē--I shall rejoice; iti--thus; ajnana--by ignorance; vimohitah--deluded.

TRANSLATION

The demoniac person thinks: "So much wealth do I have today, and I will gain more according to my schemes. So much is mine now, and it will increase in the future, more and more. He is my enemy, and I have killed him, and my other enemies will also be killed. I am the lord of everything. I am the enjoyer. I am perfect, powerful and happy. I am the richest man, surrounded by aristocratic relatives. There is none so powerful and happy as I am. I shall perform sacrifices, I shall give some charity, and thus I shall rejoice." In this way, such persons are deluded by ignorance.

[2. Their demoniac mentality binds them into illusion, perplexes them with anxieties, and attaches them to sense gratification. Thus they fall down into hell. Self complacent, impudent, and deluded by wealth, pride, strength and anger, they perform sacrifice without following rules and regulations. Bewildered, they envy the Supreme Lord within their own bodies as well as within the bodies of others and blaspheme real religion. (16-18)]

TEXT 16

aneka-citta-vibhranta
moha-jala-samavrtah
prasaktah kama-bhogesu
patanti narake 'sucan

aneka-numerous; citta-by anxieties; vibhrantah--perplexed; moha--of illusions; jala--by a network; samavrtah--surrounded; prasaktah--attached; kama-bhogesu--to sense gratification; patanti--they glide down; narake--into hell; asucan--unclean.

TRANSLATION

Thus perplexed by various anxieties and bound by a network of illusions, they become too strongly attached to sense enjoyment and fall down into hell.

TEXT 17

atma-sambhavitah stabdha
dhana-mana-madanvitah
yajante nama-yajnaish te
dambhenavidhi-purvakam

atma-sambhavitah--self-complacent; stabdha--impudent; dhana-mana--of wealth and false prestige; mada--in the delusion; anvitah--absorbed; yajante--they perform sacrifice; nama--in name only; yajnaish--with sacrifices; te--they; dambhena--out of pride; avidhi-purvakam--without following any rules and regulations.

TRANSLATION

Self-complacent and always impudent, deluded by wealth and false prestige, they sometimes proudly perform sacrifices in name only, without following any rules or regulations.

TEXT 18

ahankaram balam darpam
kamam krodham ca samsritah
mam atma-para-dehesu
pradvisanto 'bhyasuyakah

ahankaram--false ego; balam--strength; darpam--pride; kamam--lust; krodham--anger; ca--also; samsritah--having taken shelter of; mam--Me; atma--in their own; para--and in other; dehesu--bodies; pradvisantah--blaspheming; abhyasuyakah--envious.

TRANSLATION

Bewildered by false ego, strength, pride, lust and anger, the demons become envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is situated in their own bodies and in the bodies of others, and blaspheme against the real religion.

(cn) After describing the mentality and activities of those demons, Krsna describes the results:

[3. Krsna casts these mischievous demons into repeated births in demonic, abominable species. (19-20)]

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TEXT 19

tan aham dvisatah kruran
samsaresu naradhaman
ksipamy ajasram asubhan
asurisv eva yonisu

tan--those; aham--I; dvisatah--envious; kruran--mischievous; samsaresu--into the ocean of material existence; nara-adhaman--the lowest of mankind; ksipami--I put; ajasram--forever; asubhan--inauspicious; asurisu--demoniac; eva--certainly; yonisu--into the wombs.

TRANSLATION

Those who are envious and mischievous, who are the lowest among men, I perpetually cast into the ocean of material existence, into various demoniac species of life.

TEXT 20

asurim yonim apanna
mudha janmani janmani
mam aprapyaiva kaunteya
tato yanti adhamam gatim

asurim--demoniac; yonim--species; apannah--gaining; mudhah--the foolish; janmani janmani--in birth after birth; mam--Me; aprapya--without achieving; eva--certainly; kaunteya--O son of Kunti; tatah--thereafter; yanti--go; adhamam--condemned; gatim--destination.

TRANSLATION

Attaining repeated birth amongst the species of demoniac life, O son of Kunti, such persons can never approach Me. Gradually they sink down to the most abominable type of existence. (cn) Then, after presenting what happens with the divine in Section A, and then presenting what is the results, what happens to the demoniac in Section B, Krsna, in the last verses, He gives us our choice, He gives us clear directions about which path we want to take. If one wants to go to hell here are the ways and if one wants to avoid it, which are Krsna's instructions...

[C. THE CHOICE: ESCAPING TO THE SUPREME DESTINATION (16. 21-24)

1. The three gates leading to the soul's degradation are lust, anger, and greed. Every sane man should give these up, act for purification, and attain the supreme destination (21-22)]

TEXT 21

tri-vidham narakasyedam
dvaram nasanam atmanah
kamah krodhas tatha lobhas
tasmad etat trayam tyajet

tri-vidham--of three kinds; narakasya--of hell; idam--this; dvaram--gate; nasanam--destructive; atmanah--of the self; kamah--lust; krodhah--anger; tatha--as well as; lobhah--greed; tasmad--therefore; etat--these; trayam--three; tyajet--one must give up.

TRANSLATION

There are three gates leading to this hell--lust, anger and greed. Every sane man should give these up, for they lead to the degradation of the soul.

TEXT 22

etair vimuktah kaunteya
tamo-dvarais tribhir narah
acaraty atmanah sreyaś
tato yati param gatim

etaih--from these; vimuktah--being liberated; kaunteya--O son of Kunti; tamah-dvaraih--from the gates of ignorance; tribhih--of three kinds; narah--a person; acarati--performs; atmanah--for the self; sreyaś--benediction; tatah--thereafter; yati--he goes; param--to the supreme; gatim--destination.

TRANSLATION

The man who has escaped these three gates of hell, O son of Kunti, performs acts conducive to self-realization and thus gradually attains the supreme destination.

(cn) While transmigrating in the tree of this material world we have some choices in human life: whether one wants to go up or he wants to go down. Kṛṣṇa has given us this choice. If we walk through the gates leading to hell, Kṛṣṇa gives us directions. But for a sane man Kṛṣṇa advises to give up those gates leading to hell: lust, anger and greed. Every sane man should give them up.

Contemporary civilization being demoniac cultivate lust and greed.

And how to perform acts conducive to self-realization?

[2. To obtain that supreme destination, one's activities should all be in accord with śāstra. (23-24)]

TEXT 23

yah śāstra-vidhim utsrjya
vartate kama-karatah
na sa siddhim avapnoti
na sukham na param gatim

yah--anyone who; śāstra-vidhimn--the regulations of the scriptures; utsrjya--giving up; vartate--remains; kama-karatah--acting whimsically in lust; na--never; sah--he; siddhim--perfection; avapnoti--achieves; na--never; sukham--happiness; na--never; param--the supreme; gatim--perfectional stage.

TRANSLATION

He who discards scriptural injunctions and acts according to his own whims attains neither perfection, nor happiness, nor the supreme destination.

(cn) Here the contrast is set up. Starting with the demoniac and Krsna's advises to perform acts beneficial that will elevate us to the supreme destination ...

TEXT 24

tasmac chastram pramanam te
karyakarya-vyavasthitau
jnatva sastra-vidhanoktam
karma kartum iharhasi

tasmac--therefore; chastram--the scriptures; pramanam--evidence; te--your; karya--duty; akarya--and forbidden activities; vyavasthitau--in determining; jnatva--knowing; sastra--of scripture; vidhana--the regulations; uktam--as declared; karma--work; kartum--do; iha--in this world; arhasi--you should.

TRANSLATION

One should therefore understand what is duty and what is not duty by the regulations of the scriptures. Knowing such rules and regulations, one should act so that he may gradually be elevated.

(cn) Whatever position one is, he should give up lust and greed and he should act accordingly to the rules and regulations of the sastras. This is the basic distinction between divine and demoniac existence - the acceptance of the sastras, and a accordingly.

The demoniac are by nature whimsical: 'I do what I want. I am God!'. That is the basic demoniac mentality.

The basic devotee mentality is: 'I am surrendered to higher authority, Krsna!'