

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 149: Chapter 16, Verses 17-20

(March 10 – March 16, 2021)

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ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

TRANSLITERATION

आत्मसम्भाविताः स्तब्धा धनमानमदान्विताः ।

ātma-sambhāvitāḥ stabdhā dhana-māna-madānvitāḥ

यजन्ते नामयज्ञैस्ते दम्भेनाविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ १६-१७ ॥

yajante nāma-yajñais te dambhenāvidhi-pūrvakam

अहंकारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः ।

ahankāraṁ balaṁ darpaṁ kāmam krodhaṁ cha
sanśhritāḥ

मामात्मपरदेहेषु प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यसूयकाः ॥ १६-१८ ॥

mām ātma-para-deheṣhu pradviṣhanto 'bhyasūyakāḥ

तानहं द्विषतः कुरान्संसारेषु नराधमान् ।

tān ahaṁ dviṣhataḥ krūrān sansāreṣhu narādhamān

क्षिपाम्यजस्रमशुभानासुरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥ १६-१९ ॥

kṣhipāmy ajasram aśhubhān āsurīṣhu eva yoniṣhu

आसुरीं योनिमापन्ना मूढा जन्मनि जन्मनि ।

āsurīm yonim āpannā mūḍhā janmani janmani

मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधमां गतिम् ॥ १६-२० ॥

mām aprāpyaiva kaunteya tato yānty adhamām
gatim

TRANSLATION

- (17)** Such self-aggrandizing (conceited) and pompous people, full of false pride and arrogance due to their wealth, perform ostentatious sacrifices in name only, with no regard to the rules of the scriptures.
- (18)** Blinded by egotism, strength, arrogance, desire, and anger, the demonic people blaspheme Me, who is the soul residing within their own bodies and in the bodies of others.
- (19)** I constantly hurl these cruel and hateful persons--the vile and vicious of humankind--into the wombs of those with similar demoniac natures in the cycle of rebirth in the material world.
- (20)** These ignorant souls take birth again and again in demoniac wombs. Failing to reach me, O Arjun, they gradually sink to the most abominable type of existence.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/15Bc6RN_dMjCgB7Hh27wbCoB1KvqbWMDR/view?usp=sharing

Chapter 16

Verse 17

In this verse, Lord Krishna describes some characteristic features of demoniac people: They are belligerent, haughty, full of vanity, impertinent, pompous, and arrogant, all due to their possessing great wealth and exercising the power and control that great wealth can manipulate. *Sambhavitah* means conceited, self-aggrandizing. The demoniac flatter themselves. *Sthabdah* means impertinent, pompous. Thinking they are the better than anybody else. *Dhana-maana-mada-anvitah* means inebriated and puffed up by wealth, prestige, and power. *Avidhi-purvakam* means the demoniac do pseudo rituals condemned by the Vedas. Lord Krishna says that whatever ritualistic ceremonies the demoniac execute is nothing more than a pretentious display of self-conceit. They make a big show so the public will think that they are pious. Their active engagement looks on the outside as if it is correct, but it is never attuned to devotion unto the Supreme Lord neither does it adhere to the ordinances of the Vedic scriptures. The demoniac possessing arrogance and impertinence due to intoxication of wealth make superficial rituals without faith and void of righteousness only for deceiving the public into regarding them as pious and not due to any spiritual pursuits.

Verse 18

In this verse, Lord Krishna describes some additional qualities and characteristics of demoniac individuals. He says they are vile, malicious, cruel, belligerent and insolent. They enjoy finding faults in everything righteous and in subverting the virtues and attributes of the pious. They totally disregard, disrespect and even despise the Supreme Lord who is situated within their own hearts as *Paramatma*, the omnipresent supreme soul, and in the hearts of all living entities everywhere in creation. The word *ahankara* means egotistic thinking that they are independent of the Supreme Lord. The word *darpa* means insolence, thinking that they are most important. *Pradvishantah* means despise, meaning that they openly despise the Supreme Lord. They determinedly oppose the Supreme Lord at every opportunity in every way they can. They take great pains to degrade moral values, encourage depraved activities and destroy the family unit. Although the demoniac possess no righteous qualities, they still consider themselves superior to others, and cannot tolerate even the slightest insults. The demoniac are full of anger and will not hesitate to use brutal force to maim and kill others. They are inextricably addicted to lust, greed and sense gratification, and when opposed by obstacles, the demoniac become enraged causing intense agony to others as well as to themselves.

Verse 19:

After describing the evil activities and characteristics of those possessing a demoniac nature, Lord Krishna explains in this verse and the next the consequence of such activities. As stated earlier, demoniac are the vilest among created beings. They are evil, diabolical, devilish, cruel, sinful and spiteful. They execute abominable activities that are always opposed to Lord Krishna and the *sanatan dharma*, the path of eternal righteousness. The Supreme Lord who is fully cognizant of every aspect of His creation, permits them to pursue their wishes, while they are being hurled into demoniac wombs birth after birth. He keeps them incessantly revolving in *samsara*, the perpetual cycle of birth and death, and flings them into lower and more degraded forms of life with each successive birth.

Verse 20:

In this verse, Lord Krishna further elaborates on the consequence of evil activities of demoniac people. The words *aprapya eva* means that the demoniac can never attain the Supreme Lord and denotes that they are never imbued with the intelligence to have the consciousness to seek the association of the virtuous people. The words *asurim yonim* means demoniac wombs and refers to birth of those *jivas* or embodied beings that are diametrically opposed to the divine will of the Supreme Lord Krishna. Those of a demoniac nature never have an affinity or even tolerance for the path of righteousness and so they spawn and are hurled into wombs of lower and lower degraded demoniac forms as their reward to enhance their venomous delusion. Locked in ignorance and nescience they are continuously unable to have the slightest spiritual impulse to even approach the devotees of

Lord Krishna and learn from them submissively. Hence, without the mercy of devotees, it is not possible to approach the Supreme Lord, and thus the demoniac are forever barred from attaining the Supreme Lord who is the ultimate bestower of all results.