

॥ Shri Hari ॥

Sixteenth Chapter

INTRODUCTION

Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the fifteenth verse of the seventh chapter, explained in brief, the traits of a person possessing the demoniac nature, by declaring that those evil-doers who are foolish and who have embraced the demoniac nature, do not, worship Him. In the sixteenth verse, He explained in brief that those possessing divine nature such virtuous men, worship Him. In the beginning of the eighth chapter, Arjuna put seven question based on the last two verses of the seventh chapter. The Lord answered those questions, in the whole of eighth chapter.

The Lord at the beginning of the seventh chapter, had promised that He would unfold to him the knowledge, together with realization. So He started the ninth chapter. In the twelfth verse of the ninth chapter, He explains that senseless persons, with vain hopes, futile actions and fruitless knowledge, embrace a nature which is demoniac, while in the thirteenth verse He declared that great souls, who know Him as the prime cause of creation and worship Him, constantly with undivided mind, possess a divine nature. Then the Lord, upto the eleventh verse of the tenth chapter, described the topic of knowledge and of realization.

After the eleventh verse of the tenth chapter, the Lord should have described the divine and demoniac natures in detail, but Arjuna having been influenced by His grace, offered praises to Him and prayed to Him to tell him of His divine glories. While explaining His divine glories, the Lord in the last verse of the tenth chapter declared, "What need is there, O Arjuna, for detailed knowledge? I stand supporting the whole universe

with a single fragment of Myself." So Arjuna, at the beginning of the eleventh chapter, out of curiosity prayed to the Lord, to reveal to him, that cosmic form.

Having revealed to Arjuna His cosmic form, the Lord in the fifty-fourth and the fifty-fifth verses of the eleventh chapter, explained the merits of exclusive devotion, and the traits of such a devotee. So, in the first verse of the twelfth chapter, Arjuna inquired "Who are considered to be superior, those who are properly engaged in Your devotional service, or those who worship the Imperishable and the Unmanifested?" Therefore, the Lord, in the twelfth chapter, described the devotees, who are properly engaged in His devotional service, and described the attributeless, supreme Brahma, in the thirteenth chapter and upto the twentieth verse of the fourteenth chapter. In the twenty-first verse of the fourteenth chapter, Arjuna asked, "What are the marks of him, who has risen above the three guṇas (modes)? What is his conduct like? How does he transcend the three modes?" In response to his questions, the Lord explained about exclusive devotion, the means to rise above the three modes i.e., He gave a hint of divine nature, through exclusive devotion and of demoniac nature, through adulterated devotion. He started the fifteenth chapter, in order to explain how to develop that exclusive devotion.

In the third verse of the fifteenth chapter, there is a mention of cutting down Pīpala tree with a weapon of detachment (i.e., renunciation of attachment) which is a mark of divine nature. In the fourth verse, there is description of divine nature in the expression "I seek refuge, in the Primal Person." It means, that those who do not seek refuge in Him, are of demoniac nature. In the nineteenth verse, there is a description of divine nature, when the Lord declares, "The undeluded person who thus knows Me as Supreme Person, worships Me with his whole being." It means, that those who do not worship Him, are of demoniac nature.

Thus, Lord Kṛṣṇa, could not get an opportunity to explain in greater detail, the divine and demoniac natures, because Arjuna went on putting questions. Now He gets an opportunity to explain the divine and demoniac natures in detail, so He starts the topic.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।

दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥ १ ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca

abhayaṁ sattvasaṁśuddhirjñānayogavyavasthitiḥ
dānaṁ damaśca yajñaśca svādhyāyastapa ārjavam

The Blessed Lord said:

Fearlessness, purity of mind and heart, steadfastness in yoga, for knowledge, charity, self-control, sacrifice (yajña), study of the scriptures (svādhyāya), austerity (tapa) and straightforwardness. 1

Comment:—

[The Lord, in the nineteenth verse of the fifteenth chapter, declared, "The undeluded person, who thus knows Me as the Supreme Person, worships Me with his whole being." It means, that he worships the Lord, with exclusive devotion. Thus when a devotee has only the aim of God-realization, divine nature is revealed in him, naturally. Therefore, the Lord in the first three verses, describes divine nature pertaining to sentiment, conduct and glory.]

'Abhayam'*—Nervous excitement, caused by the thought of losing something which is agreeable, and meeting with something, which is undesirable, is called fear. Total absence of this sort of fear, is fearlessness.

* The Lord mentions fearlessness as the first quality because he who worships the Lord with his whole being by taking refuge in Him becomes totally fearless (Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa 6/18/33).

Fear can be of two types—(1) External (2) Internal.

(1) External:— (a) A man is afraid of thieves, robbers, lions, and snakes etc., because he identifies himself with his body. But when he realizes, that he is different from the perishable body, he has no fear.

Fear caused in giving up bad habits, of smoking and drinking and leaving the company of friends addicted to vice, is because of one's own cowardly nature. This fear, is removed by abandoning cowardice.

(b) A person is afraid, lest he should act against the will of parents, teachers and saints and against the ordinance of scriptures. In reality, this is no fear. This fear, leads to fearlessness. Actually this sort of fear, is desirable for a striver, because it leads him to spiritual progress.

(2) Internal:— (a) When a man, wants to perform forbidden actions, which involve sin, injustice and atrocity etc., he is full of fear. He performs such evil deeds, so long as, he assumes his affinity with the body, and wants to maintain the body and to gain honour, pleasure and prosperity etc.* But, when he realizes, that the only aim of human life is God-realization† he is freed from evil deeds, and forbidden actions, and he becomes totally free, from fear.

(b) When a man is engaged in evil deeds, he is full of fear. For example, human beings, gods, demigods and devils, were afraid of Rāvaṇa but when he abducted Sītā, he was filled with

* In mundane pleasures there is fear of diseases, in high family there is fear of downfall, in riches there is fear of the king, in honour there is fear of destitution, in power there is fear of enemy, in beauty there is fear of agedness, in the scriptures there is fear of debate, in virtues there is fear of evil persons and in the body there is fear of death. Thus all the worldly things are full of fear, it is only dispassion which is free from fear (Bhartṛharivairāgyaśatakam).

† The aim of human life is decided before this human life is bestowed upon us. We have to realize that aim, rather than to decide it.

fear. Similarly, there was no effect of the sound of the musical instruments, such as conchs etc., of the eleven Akṣauhiṇī army, of the Kauravas on the Pāṇḍavas army (Gītā 1/13), but, when the musical instruments of the seven Akṣauhiṇī army of the Pāṇḍavas blared forth, their sound rent the hearts of the Kaurava army (Gītā 1/19). It means, that the hearts of those who commit sins, and do injustice, become weak and so they are filled with fear. But, when a person having given up injustice etc., purifies his feelings and conduct, his fear disappears.

(c) So long as a human being, does not do, what is worth doing, does not know, what is worth knowing, and does not gain, what is worth gaining, he cannot be totally fearless, fear subsists in him.

The more, a striver believes in God and the more, he depends on Him, the more fearless, he becomes. He thinks, that he being a fragment of the Lord, is imperishable, and so there is nothing to be afraid of, while the bodies and the worldly objects are decaying and perishing every moment. By having this discrimination, fear perishes and a striver, becomes totally fearless.

By accepting affinity for the Lord, a person, has no attachment to the body and family etc. Having become freed from attachment, a man is not afraid of death, and he becomes fearless.

'Sattvasaṁśuddhiḥ'— Purity of mind, or purity of heart is 'Sattvasaṁśuddhi'. When a person is detached from the world and is attached to the Lord, his heart is purified. As soon as, he decides the aim of his life as God-realization, his heart becomes pure, because, the aim of attainment of perishable things, causes impurity in the form of sin, distraction and obscurity, (ignorance). In the scriptures, actions without desire for their fruit, worship and knowledge respectively, have been said to be, the means to do away with this threefold impurity. The best means, to purify the heart or the mind, is that it should not be regarded, as one's own.

In order to, do away with one's sins, there is no need for

expiation. A striver, should follow, the spiritual path zealously and promptly. By doing so, his sins will perish and his heart, will become pure.

A striver, has a notion that spiritual activities such as devotion and adoration etc., are different from professions, such as business, etc., viz., these are two different divisions. He believes, that foul means, such as falsehood and fraud etc., have to be adopted in practical life, in business etc. This sort of attitude makes the heart very impure. So a striver, does not advance in the spiritual sphere quickly. Therefore a striver, should be cautious, that he does not incur any sin.

When a crime is committed by an error, a striver, holds himself responsible, for it. So his heart, becomes impure. He should determine, never to commit that error again. Similarly, he holds other persons responsible, for doing evil to him. He should forgive those persons voluntarily, and should pray to God to forgive them, because he had received the fruit of his past actions through them, those persons have become only an instrument. By doing so, the heart or the mind, is purified.

'Jñānayogavyavasthitiḥ'—It is inevitable for a striver, to be fixed in Yoga, in order to have true knowledge of God, whether He is endowed with attributes or He is without attribute. Yoga, means equanimity (evenness of mind), in gain and loss, honour and dishonour, praise and blame etc.

'Dānam'— 'Dāna' (charity), consists in giving away (so-called) one's own things in a disinterested manner, as a matter of duty to others, according to place, time and circumstances etc. A piece of land, a cow, a piece of gold, grain and a piece of cloth, can be offered as charity. Out of these the foremost place, goes to the charity of grain. But charity in the form of fearlessness, is superior even to it. It can be divided into two classes.

(1) To make a man fearless, when he is in difficulties and troubles, by helping him according to one's power and resources.

(2) To free an entangled man, from the cycle of birth and death, by narrating the life story of the Lord,* the publication of sacred texts such as the Gītā, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Bhāgavata, their sale at a nominal rate, delivering of divine discourses, to enable him to attain salvation. The Lord, is very much pleased with this sort of service (Gītā 18/ 68-69). Such service, is the best of all the other, charities. But, while holding divine discourses, the speaker should not regard himself, as superior to others. He should think, that the Lord, in the form of audience, is giving him an opportunity, to make proper use, of his time.

A striver, should offer charity with the feeling that the Lord Himself, has offered the charity, by making him a tool. So, he should offer it to the needy persons, with the feeling, that it is his duty to offer gifts, to them.

'**Damaḥ**'—'Dama' consists in controlling one's senses. One should not perform, any forbidden action with senses, body and mind. Actions should be performed, according to ordinance of scriptures, by renouncing selfishness and pride, for the welfare of others. By doing so, senses are controlled, attachment and dependence, come to an end and one's body and senses act, in a pure manner.

When a striver's aim, is sense-control, he discharges his duty by performing actions, which are sanctioned by scriptures. Thus, he becomes free from pride, attachment and desire etc. Thus he is purified, and his senses are controlled.

'**Yajñaḥ**'—It means, (yajña) offering daily oblation to sacred fire. Performance of 'Balivaiśvadeva' (offering a portion of the daily meal to creatures), according to one's caste, is also sacrifice.

* O Lord, the nectar of Your life history provides life and peace to the distressed beings. The great souls describe it by heart. It destroys all the sins and causes auspiciousness. The saints have described it in detail. Those who narrate it on the earth, they are specially charitable to the world i.e., they do the greatest good to the world (Śrīmadbhā. 10/31/9).

Besides it, from the view-point of Gītā performance of one's duty, according to one's caste, social order (stage of life) and circumstances, is also sacrifice (yajña), provided it is for the welfare of others, and is free from selfishness and pride. In addition, to these one's profession, daily routine, obedience to parents, teachers and elders, reverence to cows, Brāhmaṇa (the persons of the priest class), gods and the Lord, is also sacrifice (yajña), provided there is no desire for the fruit.

'Svādhyāyaḥ'—'Svādhyāya' includes chanting of the Lord's name, and study of sacred books, such as the Gītā, the Bhāgavata, the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata etc. In fact 'Svādhyāya', means the proper study of one's dispositions and situation viz., introspection. A striver, should be very cautious. He should not judge his progress, through changing propensities. Actually, these dispositions (propensities), always undergo modifications, they appear and disappear. So should a striver, not purify these? One must purify them. They can be easily and quickly purified, when a striver, ceases to regard them, and the inner sense, as his own. To regard them as one's own is impurity at the root. The self, being a fragment of the Lord, is pure and it has never got tainted. Affinity with dispositions, veils Self-realization. If we do not feel happy, in good dispositions and sad, in evil dispositions, and never treat these dispositions, as our own, by snapping total connection, with these, we can have, Self-realization.

'Tapah'—Austerity, consists in suffering hardships, such as hunger, thirst, cold, heat and rain etc., and knowingly tolerance of hardships happily, while discharging one's duty, and earning one's livelihood, is real austerity* (tapa) because it destroys sins and provides strength for toleration.

A striver, should not use his austerity, in granting boons, in

*The best austerity consists in welcoming the situation according to favourable or unfavourable circumstances which are caused by the past actions.

hurling curses, in doing evil to others and in satisfying desires. But he should use it, happily in developing power, in order to face obstacles, which hinder his spiritual progress. It is also austerity. During the course of spiritual practice, several hurdles come to his notice. He thinks, that in seclusion and congenial atmosphere, spiritual practice can be easily successful. Not to desire such circumstances viz., not to depend on them, is also austerity. A striver, should never deem his spiritual progress, dependent on favourable circumstances. Instead of having a yearning for favourable circumstances, he should make the best possible use of circumstances, that are available, and go on progressing spiritually. He should try to seek seclusion. But if it is not available, he should be engaged in spiritual practice, happily and zealously by regarding, the available circumstances, as God's gift.

'Ārjavam'—A striver, should be straightforward and simple, in his dealings, without attaching importance, to what the people think of him. He should be upright and simple, in order to attain salvation, even though people regard him, as a fool. Such a person free from deceit, attains salvation. He should harmonize his thoughts, words and deeds, because the thoughts, words and deeds of great souls are harmonized, while those of the vile, are not.



अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।

दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ॥ २ ॥

ahimsā satyamakrodhastyāgaḥ śāntirapaiśunam

dayā bhūteṣvaloluptvaṁ mārdaṁ hrīracāpalam

Non-violence, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquillity, aversion to fault-finding, compassion to living beings, freedom from covetousness, gentleness, modesty and steadiness (absence of fickleness). 2