

16.1 The Divine Disposition

It is noticed that some are born with a divine disposition. Right from childhood, they are seen to be fearless, truthful, sweet-natured, and helpful. Sree Ramana Maharshi (a saint from Tamil Nadu, India, 1879-1950 ACE), otherwise a cheerful child, would be in a contemplative mood even in his childhood. Once when Lokamanya Tilak was in primary school, a classmate had littered groundnut shells in the class. The teacher was caning the entire class as a punishment as none confessed to have done it. Little Tilak fearlessly refused to put out his hand for the caning saying, "I have not done it, so I shall not take the punishment." This child grew up to be India's great freedom fighter who boldly declared to the British, "Freedom is my birthright, and I shall have it." The great saint Chattambi Swamigal, when he saw Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda as a child, had predicted that he would grow up to be a great person. However, most of us must work hard to cultivate such a disposition which heralds spiritual growth and unfoldment.

Just as the beautiful predawn twilight glow heralds the sunrise, the divine virtues in a person precede success and greatness and, in special cases, the Realization of the Ultimate. These qualities were earlier spoken of as essential values (ref. 13.7 to 13.11, 15.5). Here they are referred to as 'divine wealth' (daivee - sampat) as they open the treasury of love, peace, and happiness in us.

16.2 Some Divine Virtues (16.1-16.3)¹

16.2.1 Fearlessness (Abhaya)

We, ordinary men, are plagued by a hundred different fears. Most of them arise out of attachments to our body, life, lifestyle, and things related to us. (For instance: What will happen when I grow old? I don't want to die.) A detached mind is fearless. A Käpäli (a täntrika who worships räjasika and tämasika aspects of God) demanded the head of Ädi Sankara for performing a sacrifice. Sankara readily offered it saying, "If it is of any use to you, you can take it." His disciple Padmapäda invoked God's grace and saved his Guru's life.

Fear is contagious. A lion cub brought up in a flock of sheep will bleat and run away from a fox. When he realizes that he, too, is a lion he becomes fearless. The company of brave and fearless people instills fearlessness in us. Some fear the known, some the unknown. Knowledge and practice can help remove such fears. For instance, the fear of speaking in public, which ranks amongst the top fears in man, goes with practice. Similarly, the fear of death goes with knowledge of one's identity.

To fearlessly walk the path of righteousness is, indeed, a divine virtue. Knowing

REFERENCE: "THE HOLY GITA", BY SWAMI CHINAMAYANADA

fully well that the British soldiers would attack, Mahatma Gandhi fearlessly led the famous Salt March with thousands following him. His fearlessness was based on the strength of his character and the righteous cause for which he stood.

It needs great heroism to burn our deep-rooted attachments and seek the Truth. Some rare fearless souls like Naciketas (ref. *Kathopanishad*) were willing to face Death in order to know the Truth.

16.2.2 Non-injury (*Ahimsa*)

Human beings often hurt others when they are themselves hurt. Sometimes they hurt in revenge because of selfishness, to subdue others because of sadistic tendencies, or simply inadvertently. We hurt others physically, verbally, or mentally. Some serve the poor with great love, but do not mind skinning animals for their fur pelts. Some are very kind to their pets, but eat the flesh of a cow or a pig without compunction. Some are vegetarian on certain days. Some hurt through cruel words or negative thoughts. ‘Not harming any being, at any time, by one’s body, speech, or mind is called *Ahimsa*.

In the presence of one well-established in this great virtue, all thoughts of violence disappear. Wild animals are known to have lived peacefully near great sages. Lions and tigers followed Sree Caitanya Mahäprabhu (a Vaisnava saint and social reformer in eastern India, 1486–1534 ACE) as he danced through the forest singing the name of the Lord. The dacoit Angulimälä gave up his violent ways when he came in contact with the Buddha.

16.2.3 Truthfulness (*Satyam*)

We tell lies prompted by desire, selfishness, greed or attachment, in order to appear good in the eyes of others, out of habit, or just for fun. Speaking untruth causes a knower-doer split which makes the mind agitated. One lie lead to another and we lose the trust of others when caught.

Truthfulness is to be honest in our thoughts (intellectual honesty – ritham), words (satyam), and actions (straightforwardness – ärjavam). To be honest is to speak as it is seen (yathä drshtam), known (anumitam), or heard (srutam) without either exaggeration and embellishment or omission in the sense of half-truths. However, our words should be appropriate (mitam), pleasant (priyam), and beneficial to others (hitam). We should not delude, cheat, or confuse others with our words. We should keep our promises (satya-vrata). Even the mere wish of a person well-established in truth comes true.

Yudhishtira’s and Hariscandra’s commitment to truth have become legendary. It is Gandhiji’s observance of truth and non-injury that made him a Mahätmä – a great soul.

16.2.4 Absence of Backbiting (*Apaishunam*)

‘Paishuna’ is to backbite, talk ill of others, expose their secrets and faults, and carry tales. ‘Apaishunam’ is the absence of these qualities. In *Rāmacaritamānasa* a good person is compared to cotton which undergoes many stages of difficulty before it can be woven into cloth. Thereafter it serves others by hiding their faults, beautifying them, and giving them protection from the vicissitudes of the seasons.

16.2.5 Non-covetousness (*Alolupatvam*)

Desire and craving which arise in us in the presence of sense objects is called ‘lolupatvam’. For instance, the mouth may start watering at the sight of chocolates, even when seen in a television advertisement, and even though our stomach is full, or a longing is created at the smell of freshly ground coffee. This happens due to uncontrolled senses and greed. The mind and senses of a non-covetous person do not react to the sense objects even when easily available. Garuda was carrying the pot of ambrosia (amrta) for his mother. He was not tempted to partake of even a drop, something for which others have fought wars. Lord Viṣṇu was pleased with his non-covetousness and made him His vehicle (ref. *Mahābhārata*, Ādiparvan 33). The saint Sree Ranga Avadhuta Maharaj, was once offered the best available mangoes. He said, “I will eat them only if my mouth waters.” They remained there untasted!

16.2.6 Gentleness (*Märdhavam*)

Märdhavam is to be soft, gentle, tender, and mild-mannered. Such people are easily loved and protected by others. Its opposite is to be harsh, crude, cruel, and rude.

A saintly heart is softer than butter as butter melts when it is itself heated whereas the saint’s heart melts at the sorrow of others. Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda in order to correct the brahmācārins (students of the Gurukula) who had missed the morning meditation class, told them to forgo lunch. They later came to know that Gurudev had himself not eaten that day!

16.2.7 Modesty (*Hree*)

To feel shy in the company of others, or in doing something, or to be self-conscious is not necessarily a virtue. But to be modest about one’s achievements, to feel embarrassed when praised, to feel shy of talking about oneself, and to be ashamed of doing something wrong (akārya-karana) – even when alone – is a virtue. The refined and dignified behavior of those who are well-born and brought up well is also called ‘lajjā’ (*kula-jana-prabhavasya lajjā*). We are also advised to give charity with modesty (*hriyā dheyam*). Its opposite is to be boastful or shameless in doing wrong.

16.2.8 Stillness and Steadiness (*Acāpalam*)

The agitation, impatience, boredom, restiveness and restlessness within expresses as meaningless talk and purposeless movements like leg-shaking, twisting a handkerchief, drumming on a table, doodling, frequent checking of messages (in the mobile or e-mails), calling people, or constantly surfing channels while watching television. All this is ‘chäpalam’. When the body is well-disciplined, even if the mind gets restless, the body remains still and steady. Keeping the body still is in itself an important sädhana (spiritual practice). Be always calm and cheerful and consciously keep the hands and legs still when not actively engaged in doing some work.

16.2.9 *Glow (Tejas)*

Tejas is the glow of good health, the brightness of intelligence, the confidence of an achiever, the boldness of good character, and the peaceful and pure aura of a saintly person. People’s questions would get resolved by simply sitting in the presence of Sree Ramana Maharshi. Its opposite is the bad vibes felt in the presence of the wicked or the pallor of failure and sickness. It is described that the great and mighty Rävana, the king of Lankä, when he came to abduct Sitä approached her like a dog with its tail between its legs! His usual tejas was absent due to his unrighteous intention.

Sri Krishna enumerates the divine virtues starting with fearlessness (abhayam) and ends the list with humility (na atimänitä). The army of divine forces must be led by fearlessness, fortified by truth, non-injury, penance and the rest and be backed by humility to win over the larger army of demonic forces which lie in wait ever ready to attack.

Virtues are interrelated; cultivating any of them strengthens the others. Mahatma Gandhi laid emphasis on non-injury and truth and other virtues followed. In contrast, a religious fanatic develops intolerance towards other religions which results in hatred, violence, and terrorism.

16.3 *The Demonic Disposition*

Just as we see divine virtues inherent in some people, we see demonic ones manifesting in others. Some, even as children, are quite destructive, violent, cruel, and cantankerous. Some teenagers, always seem to get into trouble and feel quite comfortable being on the wrong side of the law. Some, by the time they are young adults, are well-established in their evil ways which not only harm others but, ultimately, also destroys them. Some through company, upbringing, and their own weakness fall into evil ways.

The demonic qualities are quite the opposite of the divine virtues. For instance, whereas a divine soul would not hurt anyone and suffers because of the pain of others,

the demonic one takes pleasure in hurting others. The demonic personalities are classified as asuras and räksasas. Asuras use their wealth, power, and knowledge for self-gratification and räksasas use them to harm others. Sri Krishna creates a word picture of the thoughts, words, and deeds of the predominantly demonic (16.7-16.18).⁴ The goodness of the good gets highlighted against the background of the evil and vice versa.

The foundation of the lives of people with demonic qualities is built on falsehood. Their intentions are evil, their words are false, behavior is bad and their acts cruel, violent, and heinous. Some do not believe in God and some think they are God! Räjä Vena (ref. *Bhägavatam*, Canto 4.14) asked the priests to propitiate him through their rituals! Some worship God for more power or to show their own might and power. They have no faith in the words of noble souls, or in the scriptures; they not only scoff at them but also at those who follow a life of values. For some of them, the goal of life is to eat, drink, and be merry. In order to satisfy their indulgent lifestyles, they loot and plunder, borrow or steal, or resort to other corrupt and unrighteous means. Troubled by endless worries and problems, they find escape in pleasures and addictions. They live on false hopes: ‘Even if I do wrong, I will never be caught.’

Some of them thrive on terrorizing others and they use their might to exploit and suppress the weak. Some of them are power hungry and self-indulgent or boastful and arrogant. They spend their time planning to destroy all competitors and aggrandizing more and more wealth and power. Some say, ‘Today I have taken over this company, tomorrow I will take over another. Soon I alone will be the sole player in the market.’ Some feel, ‘I am the sole provider for others. Others are only parasites living off me. I am the greatest, there is none like me.’ Propounding their contorted theories some become leaders with large followings. Caught up in the web of their own wrong notions and actions, and supported by sycophants, they get deeply entrenched in their evil ways. They cannot change, because they do not want to change. In *Rämäyana* we find that Rävana was implored by his wife, grandfather, brother and Sree Räma’s messengers, Angada and Hanumän, to give up his evil ways and return Sitä but he merely ignored and mocked them.

The die-hard evil do not give up their wrong ways even at the time of death. In *Mahäbhärata* we find that as Duryodhana was dying on the battlefield of Kuruksetra, he told Asvatthämä to produce a child who would kill the Pändavas. His dying thoughts were full of the hatred and revenge that he had nurtured throughout his life. In contrast, Jesus Christ bleeding on the cross, prayed to God, “Forgive them Father, for they know not what they do.” Alas the evil-minded deprive themselves of the great opportunity to progress that human life provides them with!

The Decisive Factor

A kingdom had a law that a king could rule only for five years and would later be banished into the dense forest, infested with wild beasts, across the river. One king spent the five years torturing others and indulging in pleasures. At the end of his tenure the boatman happily took him across, and the beasts had a good meal. The second king spent half the time in pleasure and the other half in worry and the hope that he may get an extension. But, alas, when his time to depart came, he met the same fate as the first king. The third king worried from day one. As the time to depart neared, his fear increased. He had to be dragged to the boat and midway he jumped into the river too scared to face what lay ahead.

The fourth king took good care of his subjects. The kingdom prospered and he too was happy. He sent some people across the river to clear the forest and build a beautiful city. When his time to depart came, the people implored him to stay on, but he blessed them and cheerfully went across the river to live happily in the city he had the foresight to build.

How we live here and now decides how we will live hereafter.

16.4 The Fate of the Divine and the Evil (16.19, 16.20)

As the Creator of the world, the Lord presides over all actions (karma- adhyaksa) and gives the results accordingly (karmaphala-dhätä). He is always just and compassionate in dispensing results. When Jaya and Vijaya, Lord Vishnu's own guards, did wrong they had to take three births in a demonic body. He did not set aside His rules, like many politicians do, for His own people. However, during their three lives, He Himself incarnated (as Varäha, Räma, and Krishna) and finally released them from their demonic body (ref. *Bhägavatam*, Canto 3.16). He always dispenses justice with compassion. Divine acts take man to heaven and divine bodies while demonic acts lead to hell and demonic bodies. As you sow, so you reap!

16.4.1 Heaven and Hell

Is there heaven and hell? Are they talked of only to make us do good and deter us from evil? Whether we believe in heaven or hell, we all know that bliss is heaven and intense pain, and sorrow is verily hell. All of us have experienced intense joy and sorrow and have, therefore, sampled heaven and hell right here on earth! Every action gives results (*Karma Theory and Rebirth Theory*). Ordinary good and evil acts give ordinary results which get exhausted in various earthly forms. The extraordinary noble and divine acts or the demonic and evil acts result in heaven or hell respectively where one experiences intense happiness or sorrow for long spells of time. Actions are finite

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and therefore their results, too, are finite. Therefore, our stay in either heaven or hell cannot be eternal. No one is damned forever. Hell is like a washing machine where one exhausts the results of wrong actions, is purified, and is given a chance again in the human body to progress.

The scriptures describe various types of heavens and hells to make us aware of the results we shall face because of our good and evil acts. A person who regrets the wrong he does and resolves to change is redeemed and can transform completely. No one is condemned in perpetuity. A judge can lighten the sentence or release the prisoner early from jail on the basis of his good behavior. The head of state can pardon even the death sentence. The Lord is more just and compassionate than any man or man-made law system. The truly good do not do their good deeds to go to heaven. Many just cultivate virtues to serve mankind and others cultivate virtues merely as a means to realize God with no other hidden agenda or subversive intentions.

16.5 The In-between Disposition

Most of us find ourselves to be of an in-between disposition. We are not ‘that good’ nor are we ‘so bad’. We worry but not endlessly. We binge but occasionally. We help others perhaps reluctantly. We speak the truth usually when it does not hurt us. We give – mostly what we don’t like! We may not be arrogant, but we do like to hear ourselves praised. We are kind to some and spiteful towards others. We believe in God but doubt His compassion. We would love to be good but do not mind being bad occasionally. Sri Krishna’s teachings are especially relevant for us as we can go either way – towards sorrow and bondage or towards peace, joy, and Liberation.

16.6 Bondage and Liberation

The world is a strange mix of good and evil. Good and bad thoughts arise in the minds of all. What we do thereafter decides our fate. What do we brood over, revel in, and act on? The good or the bad? Do we regret the opportunity of looting another or regret having spoken a lie? Do we rejoice in another’s downfall or in controlling our anger? Do we respect the words of the powerful or of noble souls? Do we value more a costly mobile phone or our peace of mind? The choice to act on goodness or otherwise is ours alone. We can decide to walk towards success, joy, and Liberation or towards sorrow and bondage (16.5).

16.7 Gateways to Hell

A place of torture and suffering is called hell. What is the root of suffering? Sri Krishna declares that desire, anger, and greed are the three gateways to hell (16.21). They blind

us and take hold of us rendering us unfit for any progress, success, or for achieving higher goals. They must be given up if we want to be happy.

No action is possible without desire. Desires by themselves are seldom wrong. That is what gives them their insidious power over us. Desires spring from fanciful ideas or sankalpas (For example: It would be good if I have this. It will make me happy. Life without it is incomplete.) They cause agitations which prompt actions. When they are not fulfilled, they result in anger. All is well till someone says ‘NO’ to our wishes. When desires are fulfilled, they cause greed for more. Sri Krishna spoke several times of the calamitous nature of rājasika and tāmasika desires especially while describing the ladder of the fall (ref. 2.62-63) and as an answer to Arjuna’s question of why man sins (ref. 3.37-43). He gave many ways of overcoming them.

16.8 Overcoming Desire-Anger-Greed

16.8.1 The Path of Knowledge (Jnana-yoga)

In the Path of Knowledge desire, anger, and greed are overcome by the following methods:

- (1) Enquire whether objects have happiness. Can they truly make me happy? By understanding the finite and inert nature of objects we can give up desires for them.
- (2) By not brooding or entertaining our fanciful wishes we avoid desires from taking root in the mind (*asamkalpādh jayet kämam*). Anger has no force without desires (*krodham käma-vivarjitam*). Greed is removed by understanding the calamitous nature of wealth, pleasures, and comforts (*arthānarthekshayä lobham*). Think about how they make us dependent, how their demands never get satiated, and how they tire our senses and dull the mind.
- (3) By entertaining sāttvika desires we overcome the rājasika and tāmasika desires.
- (4) By cultivating the opposite virtues too desires can be overcome. Desires come from a feeling of incompleteness. Being fulfilled and content with what we have, we overcome cravings for what we do not have. By exercising control over our senses (Dharma), by being compassionate (Dhyā), and by sharing what we have with others (Dhana) we can control desires, anger, and greed respectively.
- (5) Right conduct comes naturally when things happen as we wish. We must be watchful of our behavior with others when things are not as we wish. Adverse, undesired, and unconducive situations can help to bring out the best in us and control anger, desires, and greed.

16.8.2 The Path of Devotion (Bhakti-yoga)

In the Path of Devotion desire, anger, and greed are overcome by the following methods:

REFERENCE: “THE HOLY GITA”, BY SWAMI CHINAMAYANADA

- (1) Love for God helps us overcome desires for worldly possessions and relations.
- (2) Like Kamsa (Sree Krishna's maternal uncle who hated the Lord with all his heart) or the Gopis (milkmaids of Vrindavan, the childhood companions of Sri Krishna), we can direct our anger, desires, and greed towards God alone. Get angry with God if you must, desire to meet Him, and seek more and more of His love alone.
- (3) Pray intensely and seek divine Grace to overcome your weaknesses.

16.8.3 *The Path of Action (Karma-yoga)*

Desire, anger, and greed can be overcome through the Path of Action too. Performing our duties unconditionally without ego and egocentric desires, being dedicated to a noble cause, and receiving the results cheerfully without complaints or insistence on specific results exhausts our existing negative qualities and prevents new ones from being formed.

16.8.4 *The Path of Meditation (Dhyāna-yoga)*

During meditation, our dormant and subtler desires (*väsanäs*) spring forth into our awareness. When we merely witness them without becoming involved, they exhaust themselves naturally.

16.9 *The Scriptures – The Mind Management Tool*

Each field has its own science and laws which when followed give results. There is research methodology, surgical procedures, building laws, landing instructions, and traffic rules. When not followed, there are accidents and disasters. These systems, procedures, laws, and instructions must be studied and followed strictly.

Strangely, many do not see the importance of studying the Science of Living, nor have faith in the scriptures that speak about it. They act according to their own whims and fancies and get into endless trouble and suffering.

Scriptures are manuals on how to live a happy life, how to maximize the use of the body-mind-intellect, and how to live in harmony with others. They provide guidance for every stage of life – student, householder, or retired person – and every type of personality (*sättvika*, *räjasika* or *tämasika*). They give instructions on what, why, when, where, and how to conduct ourselves. They make us aware of what is right and wrong and of the results of doing good and bad actions.

The scriptures are the valid means of knowledge since they are revealed by the Lord Himself. Sri Krishna Himself taught the *Gitä* to Arjuna; and the Vedas were revealed to sages on the seat of meditation. Other scriptures based on these revealed books and written by Self-realized Masters too are valid as they come from the experiments and

experiences of these great men. The scriptures should therefore be studied, and their instructions followed. Knowing the scriptures is the first step, but doing what we know is the next important step.

Scriptures are the valid guides for right and wrong conduct.

Reflect

If our behavior is not according to our ideals, then our ideals will fall to the level of our behavior (buddhih karmänusärini).

A person who gives in to corruption starts calling it mutual cooperation. If we give in to laziness and wake up later than we plan, we find ourselves waking up still later and later. Before we realize it our ideals change to suit our conduct.

Understanding that thoughtless actions, desire-prompted actions, or unrighteous actions only lead to suffering, we must follow the guidance of the Guru and the scriptures in the performance of our actions and in our behavior. It is the best and surest way to managing our desires, anger, and greed. We must follow the instructions of the wise. Allen's Axiom states: When all else fails, follow instructions!

The grandsire of the Pändavas, Bhismäcärya, was once performing the rites for the ancestors (sräddha-karma). As he was offering the rice ball (pinda) for his departed father, his father's hand actually appeared to take the offering. He, however, offered it in the allotted place. When asked why he did not give it directly to his father, he said, "If I do not follow the instructions of the scripture's others, too, shall not do so. They will say, 'Let my father's hand appear, then only will I give.' People will lose faith in the scriptures."

Reflect

Non-believers do not harm religion as much as misguided believers or believers who do not follow the righteous ways of dharma.

Chapter 16, Daiväsura-sampad-vibhäga-yoga - Summary

Elaborating on the thought mentioned in the ninth chapter, this chapter, as its name indicates, describes the distinct and contrasting divine virtues and demonic qualities. The former liberate and the latter bind. This chapter gives a word picture of the thoughts, words, and deeds of a demonic personality which results in hell and intense suffering. Sri Krishna cautions us to avoid the three gateways to hell (desire, anger and greed) by leading a life in accord with the guidance of the scriptures.

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