

The Satanic Verses of Bhagavad-gita

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This essay, “The satanic¹ verses of Bhagavad-gita”, is mainly a criticism of the morality (or the ethicality) of the Bhagavad-gita.† The criticism is as follows:

1. In the Bhagavad-gita, Krishna, who is not in the least a yogi himself,² demands Arjuna, and in fact every other mortal, to be a yogi,³ while contradictorily enticing him with material prospects and benefits.⁴ Krishna is not said to be a yogi basically because he claims to create the (painful)⁵ manifested world (Vyakta Prakriti),⁶ when, as a yogi, he, as Paramatman (or Supreme Soul or Supersoul),⁷ would quite simply be expected to be content within himself, and not to have any desire,⁸ including the desire for creation. Krishna is not the God of yoga but the "God of desire and hypocrisy"!

2. According to the Gita, it is Krishna who does everything, it is he who is responsible for every good as well as evil that exists in the world,⁹ and yet he proclaims to make it—the prospects of yoga—worse for evil people,¹⁰ asserts to annihilate miscreants,¹¹ while contradictorily¹² claiming to be the friend of every being.¹³

3. As per the Gita, a lot many modern women would be miscreants and thus would be on Krishna’s hit-list—threatened to death by him—since Krishna says that even women, vaisyas [merchants], sudras [low-level workers], or any people of sinful birth go to the highest goal, if they take his shelter;¹⁴ he further says that then how much more righteous brahmanas and devout King-sages!¹⁵ which means that Krishna does not consider women to belong to the category of “righteous brahmanas”; so women are either unrighteous brahmanas or not brahmanas at all; if they are unrighteous brahmanas, they are unrighteous anyway, and if they are not brahmanas at all, then the women who do the works of brahmanas—e.g. the works of professional teachers—would be unrighteous, miscreants, for Krishna asks everyone from a division to do work only assigned for their division.¹⁶ It is in fact not only many of the modern women but people of other faiths too—people who do not believe in Krishna—such as atheists, Christians, Muslims, Jews, etc., that could be supposed to be threatened with death by Krishna.¹⁷ Krishna, for modern people, is therefore nothing short of a terrorist; and the Bhagavad-gita is “Hindu terrorism”!

* Let the author first of all declare that he is after truth, not politics. Let him also mention that he is not anti-Hindu; he is in fact an ardent believer and practicer of Hindu astrology and is a great devotee of Lord Rama. Also, he believes to have objectively discovered that his Vedic horoscope is the astrological manifestation of “Sheshasayi Vishnu”—the author was born on 31st December 1979 at 07:30 AM in Mahim, Mumbai, India. Hindu astrology is the main reason why he feels that the ultimate truth is not beyond Hinduism. He considers himself a “weak agnostic” though. He is not a Christian or a Muslim.

† The word “Bhagavad-gita” is spelled variantly as Bhagavadgita, Bhagavadgītā, Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavad Gītā, Bhagavat Gita, etc. and is also known simply as Gita, Gītā, or Geeta.

Note:

1. If the monistic interpretation of the Gita is true, then anything other than God—the Paramatman (or the Supersoul)—is unreal and does not exist. In that case, the last two criticisms would—at least to some remarkable extent—lose their significance.¹⁸
2. If the dualistic interpretation of the Gita is true,¹⁹ there are two possibilities, since there can be two types of relevant²⁰ dualisms.²¹
 - Type A: Paramatman (i.e. the Supersoul), Brahman, and Atman (i.e. the soul) are ontologically distinct realities.
 - Type B: Only Paramatman and Brahman are ontologically distinct realities.
 - If Type A is true, then all of the criticisms appear pretty significant and valid, and the Gita would be liable to be considered as an intrinsically—if not exclusively—satanic text.²²
 - If Type B is true, then whether the Paramatman could be held guilty of deluding the Brahman would depend partly upon the kind of experience the Brahman undergoes, which, on the whole, may either be pleasant or unpleasant.²³

The normal—or the commonsensical or the common man’s—understanding of the metaphysics of the Gita however appears to be broadly of the Type A, where “God”—i.e. Krishna—and “mortals” are thought to be distinct beings. And therefore it is to that specific understanding that this essay would be most perfectly significant.

Abbreviations (for the “Notes” section):

FE. Franklin Edgerton, *The Bhagavad Gītā*. Motilal Banarsidass, 1996.

SR. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgita*. HarperCollins Publishers India, 2010.

WDPH. W. Douglas P. Hill, *The Bhagavadgītā*. OUP, 1973.

Notes:

¹ In this work, the term “satanic” is meant to be “morally bad and evil”; Ref. A S Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*, 7th edition. OUP, 2005.

² In the Gita, Krishna is (falsely) hailed quite a few times as not only a yogi but also as the Lord (or the God) of yoga, the great Lord of yoga, etc. E.g. **10:17, 11:4, 11:9, 18:78**.

³ Ref. **Chapter 6: verse 46** (SR.): The yogin is greater than the ascetic; he is considered to be greater than the man of knowledge, greater than the man of ritual works, therefore do thou become a yogin, O Arjuna. **Chapter 2: verse 45** (WDPH.): The Vedas have three Strands for their province; free from the three Strands, Arjuna, be thou, free from the pairs, abiding in eternal truth, free from all gain and guardianship of wealth, and master of thy soul. **Chapter 2: verse 48** (SR.): Fixed in yoga, do thy work, O Winner of wealth (Arjuna), abandoning attachment, with an even mind in success and failure, for evenness of mind is called yoga. **Chapter 2: verse 61** (WDPH.): Holding all these in check let him sit, controlled, intent on me: for he whose senses are restrained possesses steadfast wisdom. **Chapter 14: verses 24–25** (WDPH.): He to whom pain and pleasure are alike, reliant on himself, holding earth, stones, and gold as equal, holding in level scales things dear and things not dear, a man of wisdom, to whom blame and praise are one; He who holds honour and dishonour equal, equal the friendly party and the foe, abandoning every enterprise—that man is said to have crossed beyond the Strands. **Chapter 6: verse 3** (SR.): Work is said to be the means of the sage who wishes to attain to yoga; when he has attained to yoga, serenity is said to be the means. **Chapter 6: verse 10** (SR.): Let the yogin try constantly to concentrate his mind (on the Supreme Self) remaining in solitude and alone, self-controlled, free from desires and (longing for) possessions. {Karma-yoga is mere practice to attain to yoga; “the true yoga”, as SR. rightly calls it, is Dhyana-yoga, for, quite logically, without desire, there cannot be any Karma, i.e. work.}

⁴ Ref. **Chapter 2: verse 2** (SR.): Whence has come to thee this stain (this dejection) of spirit in this hour of crisis? It is unknown to men of noble mind (not cherished by the Aryans); it does not lead to heaven; (on earth) it causes disgrace, O Arjuna. **Chapter 2: verses 32–37** (WDPH.): Happy the Kṣatriyas, O son of Prīthā, who find a fight like this, that comes without their seeking! It is heaven’s gate thrown wide! But if thou wilt not wage this war, as duty bids, then wilt thou cast aside thy duty and thine honour, and gather to thee guilt. Yea, and the world will tell of thine imperishable dishonour: and for a knight of fame dishonour is worse than death. ’Tis fear has held thee from the battle—so will the lords of great cars think; and where thou hast been highly honoured thou wilt come to light esteem. And many words ill to speak will they speak who wish thee hurt, and mock thy prowess. What can cause greater pain than this? Slain, thou shalt win heaven; victorious, thou shalt enjoy the earth; therefore arise, O son of Kuntī, with no uncertain spirit for the fight! **Chapter 11: verse 33** (WDPH.): Therefore arise, win glory, defeat thy foes, enjoy wide sovereignty! I have already slain these men; be thou no more than a means, left-handed bowman! {It is almost funny how purely 2:32–37 are contradicted by 2:38! [2:38 (WDPH.): Hold equal pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat; then gird thyself for the battle; thus shalt thou not gather to thee guilt.]}

⁵ Ref. **Chapter 8: verse 15** (FE.): Having come to Me, rebirth, Which is the home of misery and impermanent, Do not attain the great-souled men That have gone to supreme perfection. **Chapter 9: verse 33** (SR.): How much more then, holy Brahmins and devoted royal saints; Having entered this impermanent sorrowful world, do thou worship Me. **Chapter 5: verse 22** (FE.): For the enjoyments that spring from (outside) contacts Are nothing but sources of misery; They have beginning and end, son of Kuntī; The wise man takes no delight in them.

⁶ Ref. **Chapter 9: verses 7–8** (FE.): All beings, son of Kuntī, Pass into My material nature At the end of a world-eon; them again I send forth at the beginning of a (new) world-eon. Taking as base My own material-nature I send forth

again and again This whole host of beings, Which is powerless, by the power of (My) material nature. **Chapter 14: verses 3–4** (WDPH.): For me the Great Brahman is a womb; therein I lay the germ; thence comes the birth of every being, Bhārata. Whatever forms take birth in any womb, O son of Kuntī, of these the Great Brahman is the womb, and I the Father that gives the seed. {9:7–8 & 14:3–4 are apparently contradicted by 4:14. [4:14 (WDPH.): Works do not stain me, nor in me is there longing for fruit of works; who recognizes this to be my state, he is not bound by works.] However, the appearance of the contradiction vanishes when the falsity in 4:14 becomes apparent: that without any longing for fruit of works a creator would not do work that creates a creation. The same would be true about 9:9. [9:9 (SR.): Nor do these works bind Me, O winner of wealth (Arjuna), for I am seated as if indifferent, unattached in those actions.] Why would he at all create a creation—Vyakta Prakriti—if he, to that work, is unattached and indifferent? Similarly, in 3:22 (WDPH.), Krishna says, ‘For me, O son of Prīthā, is no work at all in the three worlds that I must do; nor aught ungained that I must gain; yet I abide in work.’ In 3:23–24 (WDPH.), he says, ‘For if I were not, tireless, to abide ever in work—my path men follow altogether, son of Prīthā—Did I not work my work, these worlds would fall in ruin, and I should be the worker of confusion, and should destroy these creatures.’ 3:23–24, however, contradict 3:22 in that in the former Krishna makes it almost explicit and clear that there is something that he must do; that there is a desire in him, the desire that the three worlds should not fall in ruin, that the creatures should not be destroyed.]

⁷ Ref. **Chapter 13: verse 22** (FE.): The onlooker and consentor, The supporter, experience, great Lord, The supreme soul also is declared to be The highest spirit, in this body. **Chapter 15: verses 17–18** (FE.): But there is a highest spirit, other (than this), Called the Supreme Soul; Which, entering into the three worlds, Supports them, the undying Lord. Since I transcend the perishable, And am higher than the imperishable too, Therefore in the world and the Veda I am Proclaimed as the highest spirit.

⁸ Ref. **Chapter 2: verse 55** (FE.): When he abandons desires, All that are in the mind, son of Prīthā, Finding contentment by himself in the self alone, Then he is called of stabilized mentality. **Chapter 6: verse 18** (SR.): When the disciplined mind is established in the Self alone, liberated from all desires, then is he said to be harmonized (in yoga).

⁹ Ref. **Chapter 3: verse 27** (SR.): While all kinds of work are done by the modes of nature, he whose soul is bewildered by the self-sense thinks ‘I am the doer’. **Chapter 13: verse 29** (SR.): He who sees that all actions are done only by nature (prakṛti) and likewise that the self is not the doer, he verily sees. **Chapter 3: verse 5** (SR.): For no one can remain even for a moment without doing work; every one is made to act helplessly by the impulses born of nature. **Chapter 3: verse 33** (WDPH.): As is a man’s own nature, so he acts, even a man of knowledge; all creatures follow Nature; what will restraint effect? **Chapter 9: verse 10** (SR.): Under My guidance, nature (prakṛti) gives birth to all things, moving and unmoving and by this means, O Son of Kuntī (Arjuna), the world revolves. **Chapter 18: verse 61** (FE.): Of all beings, the Lord In the heart abides, Arjuna, Causing all beings to turn around (As if) fixed in a machine, by his magic power. **Chapter 15: verse 15** (WDPH.): And I am seated in the heart of all; from me are memory, knowledge, and removal of doubt; by all the Vedas am I to be known; and I am he who made the Vedas’ Ends, and know the Vedas. **Chapter 10: verses 4–5** (WDPH.): Discernment, knowledge, freedom from delusion, long-suffering, truth, restraint, tranquillity, pleasure and pain, existence, non-existence, fear and fearlessness, Harmlessness, an even mind, contentment, austerity, beneficence, fame, and infamy—such are the states of beings, severally dispensed by me alone. **Chapter 7: verse 12** (WDPH.): Know that those states of Purity, of Energy, and of Darkness are from me alone; but I am not in them; they are in me. **Chapter 13: verses 21–22** (WDPH.): For the Person, abiding in Nature, experiences the Strands born of Nature; his attachment to the Strands is the cause of his birth in good or evil wombs. The Supreme Person in this body is called the spectator, the approver, the sustainer, the experiencer, Great Lord, and also Highest Self. [WDPH. (pg. 48) says, ‘Freedom, in the Gītā, is an illusory liberty of choice, working within the bounds of an ultimate determinism’.]

¹⁰ Ref. **Chapter 7: verse 15** (WDPH.): Not in me take refuge evildoers, fools, lowest of men; bereft of knowledge by delusion, turned to Devilish estate. **Chapter 7: verse 25** (WDPH.): Veiled by my power of delusion, I am not light to all; deluded is this world, and does not recognize me as unborn, immutable. **Chapter 9, verse 12** (WDPH.): Vain of hope are they, vain of work, vain of knowledge, void of wit; they enter the delusive nature of Monsters and of Devils. **Chapter 16: verses 19–20** (SR.): These cruel haters, worst of men, I hurl constantly these evil-doers only into the wombs of demons in (this cycle of) births and deaths. Fallen into the wombs of demons, these deluded beings from birth to birth, do not attain to Me, O Son of Kuntī (Arjuna), but go down to the lowest state. [In 4:36 (SR.),

Krishna (contradictorily) says, ‘Even if thou shouldst be the most sinful of all sinners, thou shalt cross over all evil by the boat of wisdom alone’. In **9:30–31** (SR.), he similarly says, ‘Even if a man of the most vile conduct worships me with undistracted devotion, he must be reckoned as righteous for he has rightly resolved. Swiftly does he become a soul of righteousness and obtain lasting peace. O son of Kuntī (Arjuna), know thou for certain that My devotee perishes never’. Well, does Krishna at all give them any chance?]

¹¹ Ref. **Chapter 4: verse 8** (FE.): For protection of the good, And for destruction of evil-doers, To make a firm footing for the right, I come into being in age after age.

¹² FE. (Vol. 2; Pg. 91) rightly says that the Gītā makes no attempt to be logical or systematic in its philosophy.

¹³ Ref. **Chapter 5: verse 29** (WDPH.): Knowing that it is I whom sacrifice and austerity affect, great Lord of all the worlds, the friend of every being, he reaches peace. In **Chapter 9: verse 29** (SR.), Krishna again contradictorily says, ‘I am the same in (alike to) all beings. None is hateful nor dear to Me. But those who worship Me with devotion they are in Me and I also in them.’

¹⁴ Ref. **Chapter 9: verse 32** (SR.): For those who take refuge in Me, O Pārtha (Arjuna), though they are lowly born, women, Vaiśyas, as well as Sudras, they also attain to the highest goal.

¹⁵ Ref. **Chapter 9: verse 33** (FE.): How much more virtuous brahmans, And devout royal seers, too! A fleeting and joyless world This; having attained it, devote thyself to Me.

¹⁶ Ref. **Chapter 18: verses 47–48** (WDPH.): Better a man’s own duty, though ill-done, than another’s duty well-performed; if a man do the duty his own nature bids him, he incurs no stain. One’s innate duty, son of Kuntī, should one not abandon, imperfect though it be; for every enterprise in imperfection is involved, as fire in smoke.

¹⁷ [Ref. **Chapter 16: verses 6–9** (WDPH.): There are two orders of created beings in this world, the Divine and the Devilish; the Divine order has been described at length; of the Devilish, O son of Pṛithā, hear from me. Neither action nor inaction do Devilish men know; cleanness is not in them; nor even right conduct nor truth. ‘Without truth, without basis, is the universe,’ they say, ‘and without Lord; born of mutual union, caused by lust—naught else!’ Holding this view, lost souls of feeble judgement, they come forth with cruel deeds as enemies to destroy the world.] Now, as we have seen previously, according to 4:8 (FE.), for protection of the good, and for destruction of evil-doers, to make a firm footing for the right, Krishna comes into being in age after age. Thus, this is how Krishna has threatened, with death, the atheists, i.e. the ones who say that the universe is without Lord, the ones who, according to him, come forth with cruel deeds as enemies to destroy the world. Further, Krishna, in **9:11** (WDPH.) says, ‘Fools scorn me when I dwell in human form: my higher being they know not as Great Lord of beings.’ In **9:12** (FE.), he says, ‘They are of vain aspirations, of vain actions, Of vain knowledge, bereft of insight; In ogriish and demoniac Nature, which is delusive, they abide.’ In **9:13** (SR.), he says, ‘The great-souled, O Pārtha(Arjuna), who abide in the divine nature, knowing (me as) the imperishable source of all beings, worship Me with an undistracted mind.’ Thus are threatened with death the remaining ones, i.e. Christians, Muslims, Jews, etc., who do not believe in Krishna, who he would consider to be of demoniac nature, the evil-doers, and per 4:8, would be annihilated age after age!

¹⁸ According to the monistic interpretation, the world is nothing but a dream of God. When a mortal living being, a man, for example, suffers, it is in fact God who, in his dream, suffers. When, at the same time, some other living being, some other man, for example, rejoices, it is in fact God who rejoices. I, Kedar Joshi, am thus nothing but one of the dreams God is having at present. And the Gita would ask me, i.e. the soul dwelling in Kedar Joshi’s body—which, the body, is a miserable and ephemeral unreality—to get out of the dream, i.e. to understand its true nature, to know that it, the soul, is the same as the permanent reality called the Supersoul, i.e. God. And this knowledge or understanding is called self-realization. In that way, though the God in the Bhagavad Gita is responsible for causing unfathomable grief and suffering, he could not be held responsible for making anyone else suffer, since no one else in fact at all exists. And therefore the God in the Bhagavad Gita looks less like a Satan and more like a madman, for causing himself so much unhappiness for no rational reason. Let me explain it in a different way. Suppose you are having an experience of seeing a blue coloured thing and a red coloured thing simultaneously in your dream. According to the Bhagavad Gita, whatever experience any living being is having at any given time is in fact nothing but a part of what God is experiencing in his dream. In other words, one man having an experience of seeing a blue coloured thing and another man having an experience of seeing a red coloured thing at the same time in what is normally thought to be “reality” is actually nothing but God’s experience of seeing a blue coloured thing and a red coloured thing simultaneously in his dream. The ephemeral

world is thus nothing but God’s dream. God creates a world just by deliberately going into a dream and destroys it by coming out of the dream. He then creates another world by going into another dream, and so on. God is therefore unlikely to be considered morally blemished or “satanic”, since each and every painful and evil experience that ever exists in reality is God’s own experience alone, not of anyone else, as no one except God exists. [It would have to be conceded though that if God were a yogi, there would be no pain, since no painful state/s of consciousness would ever exist. God is therefore blamable for letting the unfathomable pain exist.] However, whether God, i.e. the God in the Gita, could be considered “sane” or “insane” in doing all this is probably a highly interesting and open question though. And it is very essential to understand that the God in the Bhagavad Gita is the non-spatial “Supersoul”, not any “spatial”—of or relating to space—entity such as Krishna or Vishnu. The Supersoul only imagines or thinks of itself as Vishnu in its dream state. Vishnu is thus not a reality but a mere part of the divine dream or illusion. The Supersoul is the only real thing that exists; and it has freewill, the mechanics of which appears to be inconceivable to mankind. Individual souls are nothing but mere states of consciousness that altogether constitute the Supersoul’s dreaming experience.

¹⁹ which, per **8:20–21** and **15:17–18** appears to be likely. **8:20–21** (SR.): But beyond this unmanifested, there is yet another Unmanifested Eternal Being who does not perish even when all existences perish. This Unmanifested is called the Imperishable. Him they speak of as the Supreme Status. Those who attain to Him return not. That is My supreme abode. [For 15:17–18, please consult Note 7.] {However, the meaning of these verses does not have to be literal; it could be metaphorical; and hence the terms “Brahman” and “Atman” may still be purely conceptual, meant merely as abstractions.}

²⁰ There is an (irrelevant) dualism which holds that Nature—specifically the Vyakta Prakriti or the material world—is an ontologically distinct reality. It is “irrelevant” because since Nature has no capacity to feel or to have any state/s of consciousness [it is the soul (or the Person) that in fact supposedly does (Ref. 13:20)], whether it—the Vyakta Prakriti—is real or unreal is not pertaining to a criticism that criticizes “moral” foundations. This irrelevant dualism appears to be false too, for in **2:14–16** (WDPH.), Krishna says, ‘The touching of the world of sense, O son of Kuntī, which bring cold and heat, pleasure and pain—these come and go, impermanent; endure them, Bhārata. For he whom these do not disturb and to whom pain and pleasure are alike, that steadfast man, O prince of men, is fit for deathlessness. Of what is not there is no being, and no not-being of what is; and of these two is seen the boundary by seers of the truth.’

²¹ In a broader and technically more accurate sense they—with the exception of Type B—are in fact “pluralisms”.

²² In **10:20** (FE.), Krishna says, ‘I am the soul, Guḍākeśa, That abides in the heart of all beings; I am the beginning and the middle Of beings, and the very end too.’ Krishna is thus not only supposed to be the Supersoul but the soul as well, which would apparently make this dualism as immune to the last two criticisms as the monistic interpretation is. The appearance is however hollow, and the best analogy to explain it might be that of the human body (analogous to Krishna), where the brain could be held morally responsible if it consciously tortures any of the rest of the organs (analogous to the soul) for no good reason.

²³ For a metaphysical understanding of this statement, please consult Note 18, which attempts to describe the metaphysics of monism.