

Symbolism in Indian Mythology: Gods, Demons, and Human Nature

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Abstract: *Indian mythology, rooted primarily in Hindu traditions such as the Vedas, Puranas, Ramayana, and Mahabharata, employs gods (devas) and demons (asuras or rakshasas) as profound symbolic archetypes. These figures transcend literal narratives to represent cosmic duality, moral conflicts, and the internal struggles of human nature. Gods embody light, order, pleasure, and dharma (righteous duty), while demons symbolize darkness, chaos, ego, unchecked desires, and pain—yet often possess virtues like devotion or intellect, blurring binary oppositions. Humans, as intermediaries between these forces, serve as the battlefield (kshetra) where divine and demonic qualities vie for dominance through the three gunas (sattva, rajas, tamas). This paper analyzes these symbols through textual and interpretive lenses, revealing how myths illustrate the human psyche's battle between good and evil, the consequences of imbalance, and the path to liberation (moksha). By examining Vedic cosmology and scholarly interpretations, the study underscores mythology's role in teaching self-awareness, ethical living, and the transcendence of duality. Ultimately, gods and demons are not external entities but projections of inner emotions and tendencies, reminding humanity that the true war occurs within.*

Keywords: Hindu mythology, symbolism, devas (gods), asuras (demons), human nature, duality, dharma, gunas, inner conflict

