

Uddhava Gita
from the Bhagavata Purana
Chapter 15

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उद्धव उवाच
Uddhava said,
uddhava uvāca

विधिश्च प्रतिषेधश्च
Scriptural injunctions and prohibitions
vidhiś ca pratiṣedhaś ca

निगमो हीश्वरस्य ते ।
indeed come from you, the Lord.
nigamo hīśvarasya te

अवेक्षतेऽरविन्दाक्ष
O Krishna, they concern the
avekṣate 'ravindākṣa

गुणं दोषं च कर्मणाम् ॥१॥
virtues and defects of deeds ...
guṇaṃ doṣaṃ ca karmaṇām

वर्णाश्रमविकल्पं च
... divisions of varna and ashrama,
varṇāśrama-vikalpaṃ ca

प्रतिलोमानुलोमजम् ।
births in different kinds of marriage,
pratilomānulomajam

द्रव्यदेशवयःकालान्
material things, place, age, time,
dravya-deśa-vayaḥ-kālān

स्वर्गं नरकमेव च ॥२॥
heaven and hell.
svargaṃ narakam eva ca

गुणदोषभिदा दृष्टिम्
Without considering those virtues and defects,
guṇa-doṣa-bhidā dṛṣṭim

अन्तरेण वचस्तव ।
how can your teachings *
antareṇa vacas tava

निःश्रेयसं कथं नृणां
confer liberation on people?
niḥśreyasaṃ katham nṛṇāṃ

निषेधविधिलक्षणम् ॥ ३ ॥
* (about injunctions and prohibitions)
niṣedha-vidhilakṣaṇam

पितृदेवमनुष्याणां
For ancestors, gods, and people,
pitṛ-deva-manuṣyāṇāṃ

वेदश्चक्षुस्तवेश्वर ।
O Krishna, your Vedic wisdom
vedaś cakṣus taveśvara

श्रेयस्त्वनुपलब्धेऽर्थे
is best for imperceptible things,
śreyas tv anupalabdhe' rthe

साध्यसाधनयोरपि ॥ ४ ॥
their means and ends.
sādhyasādhanayor api

गुणदोषभिदादृष्टिर्
The distinctions of virtues and defects
guṇa-doṣa-bhidā dṛṣṭir

निगमात्ते न हि स्वतः ।
come from you, not from themselves.
nigamāt te na hi svataḥ

निगमेनापवादश्च
But if such scriptural distinctions are dismissed,
nigamenāpavādaś ca

भिदाया इति ह भ्रमः ॥ ५ ॥
that will cause confusion.
bhidāyā iti ha bhramah

श्रीभगवानुवाच
The Blessed Lord said,
śrī bhagavān uvāca

योगास्त्रयो मया प्रोक्ता

Three yogas were described by me,
yogās trayo mayā proktā

नृणां श्रेयोविधित्सया ।

for the liberation of people to bestow
nṛṇāṃ śreyo vidhitsayā

ज्ञानं कर्म च भक्तिश्च

spiritual knowledge, karma yoga and devotion.
jñānaṃ karma ca bhaktiś ca

नोपायोऽन्योऽस्ति कुत्रचित् ॥६॥

There are no other means.
nopāyo 'nyo 'sti kutracit

निर्विण्णानां ज्ञानयोगो

Jnana yoga is for the disillusioned
nirviṇṇānāṃ jñāna-yogo

न्यासिनामिह कर्मसु ।

who have withdrawn from deeds.
nyāsinām iha karmasu

तेष्वनिर्विण्णचित्तानां

For those not disillusioned with deeds
teṣv anirviṇṇa-cittānāṃ

कर्मयोगस्तु कामिनाम् ॥७॥

who have worldly desires is karma yoga.
karma-yogas tu kāminām

यदृच्छया मत्कथादौ

Blessed by listening to stories about me,
yadṛcchayā mat-kathādau

जातश्रद्धस्तु यः पुमान् ।

for one whose faith is kindled
jāta-śraddhas tu yaḥ pumān

न निर्विण्णो नातिसक्तो

and is neither disillusioned nor attached to desires,
na nirviṇṇo nātisakto

भक्तियोगोऽस्य सिद्धिदः ॥८॥

bhakti yoga leads to perfection.
bhakti-yogo 'sya siddhidaḥ

तावत्कर्माणि कुर्वीत

One should perform deeds
tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta

न निर्विद्येत यावता ।

until getting disillusioned
na nirvidyeta yāvatā

मत्कथाश्रवणादौ वा

or by hearing my stories, etc,
mat-katha-śravaṇādau vā

श्रद्धा यावन्न जायते ॥९॥

having his faith kindled.
śraddhā yāvan na jāyate

स्वधर्मस्थो यजन् यज्ञैर्
One who fulfils responsibilities and performs rituals
svadharmastho yajan yajñair

नाशीःकाम उद्धव ।
without desire for pleasure, O Uddhava,
nāśīḥ-kāma uddhava

न याति स्वर्गनरकौ
does not go to heaven, nor goes to hell
na yāti svarga-narakau

यद्यन्यन्न समाचरेत् ॥१०॥
by avoiding wrong deeds.
yady anyan na samācaret

अस्मिंल्लोके वर्तमानः
Living in this world,
asmiml loke vartamānaḥ

स्वधर्मस्थोऽनघः शुचिः ।
a righteous, sinless, pure person
svadharmastho 'naghaḥ śuciḥ

ज्ञानं विशुद्धमाप्नोति
gains spiritual knowledge,
jñānam viśuddham āpnoti

मद्भक्तिं वा यदृच्छया ॥११॥
or if blessed, devotion to me.
mad-bhaktim vā yadṛcchayā

स्वर्गिणोऽप्येतमिच्छन्ति
Even those in heaven desire this
svargiṇo 'py etam icchanti

लोकं निरयिणस्तथा ।
world. So do those in hell.
lokaṁ nirayiṇas tathā

साधकं ज्ञानभक्तिभ्याम्
It is the means for jnana and bhakti.
sādhakam jñāna-bhaktibhyām

उभयं तदसाधकम् ॥१२॥
But in both (heaven and hell), there are no such means.
ubhayaṁ tad asādhakam

न नरः स्वर्गतिं काङ्क्षन्
A person who desires neither heaven
na naraḥ svargatiṁ kāṅkṣen

नारकीं वा विचक्षणः ।
or hell if he is wise,
nārakīm vā vicakṣaṇaḥ

नेमं लोकं च काङ्क्षेत्
nor does he desire this world
nemaṁ lokaṁ ca kāṅkṣeta

देहावेशात्प्रमाद्यति ॥१३॥
which causes delusion after gaining a body.
dehāveśāt pramādyati

एतद्विद्वान् पुरा मृत्योर्
Knowing this, before dying,
etad-vidvān purā mṛtyor

अभवाय घटेत सः ।
he should strive for liberation,
abhavāya ghaṭeta saḥ

अप्रमत्त इदं ज्ञात्वा
remaining vigilant, knowing that this body,
apramatta idaṃ jñātvā

मर्त्यमप्यर्थसिद्धिदम् ॥१४॥
though mortal, can reach perfection.
martyam apy artha-siddhidam

अहोरात्रैश्छिद्यमानं
Similarly, when life is cut short, day and night,
aho-rātrais chidyamānaṃ

बुद्धायुर्भयवेपथुः ।
one trembling with fear, having understood this,
buddhvāyur bhaya-vepathuḥ

मुक्तसङ्गः परं बुद्ध्वा
becomes free from attachment. Discovering the highest,
mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṃ buddhvā

निरीह उपशाम्यति ॥१६॥
he becomes free from desires and peaceful.
nirīha upaśāmyati

छिद्यमानं यमैरेतैः
When a tree is cut down by lumberjacks
chidyamānaṃ yamair etaiḥ

कृतनीडं वनस्पतिम् ।
in which a nest has been built,
kṛta-nīḍaṃ vanaspatim

खगः स्वकेतमुत्सृज्य
a bird flies from its home
khagaḥ svaketam utsṛjya

क्षेमं याति ह्यलम्पटः ॥१५॥
and reaches safety, being unattached.
kṣemaṃ yāti hy alampaṭaḥ

नृदेहमाद्यं सुलभं सुदुर्लभं
First, having a human body, rare but already accomplished,
nṛ-deham ādyaṃ sulabhaṃ sudurlabhaṃ

प्लवं सुकल्पं गुरुकर्णधारम् ।
like a strong boat, being guided by a guru
plavaṃ sukalpaṃ guru-karṇa-dhāram

मयानुकूलेन नभस्वतेरितं
and driven by my favorable winds,
mayānukūlena na bhasvateritaṃ

पुमान् भवाब्धिं न तरेत्स आत्महा ॥१७॥
one who fails to cross the ocean of samsara kills oneself.
pumān bhavābdhiṃ na taret sa ātmahā

यदारम्भेषु निर्विण्णो

When disillusioned with all efforts
yadārambheṣu nirviṇṇo

विरक्तः संयतेन्द्रियः ।

becomes dispassionate and self-controlled, then
viraktaḥ saṁyatendriyaḥ

अभ्यासेनात्मनो योगी

that yogi should repeatedly meditate on the self
abhyāsenātmano yogī

धारयेदचलं मनः ॥१८॥

with a steady mind.

dhārayed acalaṁ manaḥ

धार्यमाणं मनो यर्हि

When a concentrated mind
dhāryamāṇaṁ mano yarhi

भ्राम्यदाश्वनवस्थितम् ।

suddenly wanders unsteadily, then
bhrāmyad āśv anavasthitam

अतन्द्रितोऽनुरोधेन

tirelessly, by proper
atandrito 'nurodhena

मार्गेणात्मवशं नयेत् ॥१९॥

means, one should control the mind.
mārgena ātma-vaśaṁ nayet

मनोगतिं न विसृजेज्

Without losing sight of the goal,
mano-gatiṁ na visrjej

जितप्राणो जितेन्द्रियः ।

one whose breath and senses are controlled
jita-prāṇo jitendriyaḥ

सत्त्वसम्पन्नया बुद्ध्या

by an intellect endowed with sattva
sattva-sampannayā buddhyā

मन आत्मवशं नयेत् ॥२०॥

should bring the mind under control.
mana ātma-vaśaṁ nayet

एष वै परमो योगो

This indeed is the highest yoga -
eṣa vai paramo yogo

मनसः सङ्ग्रहः स्मृतः ।

complete control of the mind,
manasaḥ saṅgrahaḥ smṛtaḥ

हृदयज्ञत्वमन्विच्छन्

like according to a rider's intention,
hṛdaya-jñatvam anvicchan

दम्यस्येवार्वतो मुहुः ॥२१॥

a horse is constantly commanded.
damyasyevārvato muhuḥ

साङ्ख्येन सर्वभावानां
By knowing that all that exists
sāṅkhyena sarva-bhāvānām

प्रतिलोमानुलोमतः ।
is destroyed and created,
pratilomānulomataḥ

भवाप्ययावनुध्यायेन्
one should observe the rise and fall (of thoughts).
bhavāpyayāv anudhyāyen

मनो यावत्प्रसीदति ॥२२॥
In this way, the mind becomes quiet.
mano yāvat prasīdati

निर्विण्णस्य विरक्तस्य
For a disillusioned, dispassionate,
nirviṇṇasya viraktasya

पुरुषस्योक्तवेदिनः ।
person who understands this teaching,
puruṣasyokta-vedinaḥ

मनस्त्यजति दौरात्म्यं
the difficulties of the mind are overcome
manas tyajati daurātmyam

चिन्तितस्यानुचिन्तया ॥२३॥
by constantly reflecting on them.
cintitasyānucintayā

यमादिभिर्योगपथैर्
By discipline, the path of yoga,
yamādibhir yoga-pathair

आन्वीक्षिक्या च विद्यया ।
reflection, and knowledge,
ānvīkṣikyā ca vidyayā

ममार्चोपासनाभिर्वा
or by worship of my form,
mamārcopāsanābhir vā

नान्यैर्योग्यं स्मरेन्मनः ॥२४॥
one should control the mind. There are no other means.
nānyair yogyaṁ smaren manaḥ

यदि कुर्यात्प्रमादेन
If by mistake
yadi kuryāt pramādena

योगी कर्म विगर्हितम् ।
a yogi commits a wrong deed,
yogī karma vigarhitam

योगेनैव दहेदंघो
then he should destroy that sin through yoga itself.
yogenaiva dahedaṁgho

नान्यत्तत्र कदाचन ॥२५॥
There is no other way.
nānyat tatra kadācana

स्वे स्वेऽधिकारे या निष्ठा
Being firmly established in one's own practice
sve sve 'dhikāre yā niṣṭhā

स गुणः परिकीर्तितः ।
is considered a virtue.
sa guṇaḥ parikīrtitaḥ

कर्मणां जात्यशुद्धानाम्
For the defects that arise from action,
karmaṇām jāty-aśuddhānām

अनेन नियमः कृतः
prohibitions are established ...
anena niyamaḥ kṛtaḥ

गुणदोषविधानेन
... concerning qualities and defects
guṇa-doṣa-vidhānena

सङ्गानां त्याजनेच्छया ॥२६॥
to remove attachment.
saṅgānām tyājaneccchayā

जातश्रद्धो मत्कथासु
One whose faith in my stories has been kindled,
jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu

निर्विण्णः सर्वकर्मसु ।
disillusioned with all endeavors,
nirviṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasu

वेद दुःखात्मकान् कामान्
knows that desires cause suffering
veda duḥkhātmakān kāmān

परित्यागेऽप्यनीश्वरः ॥२७॥
even if he is unable to remove them.
parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ

ततो भजेत मां प्रीतः
So he should lovingly worship me,
tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ

श्रद्धालुर्दृढनिश्चयः ।
full of faith, with firm resolve,
śraddhālur dṛḍha-niścayaḥ

जुषमाणश्च तान् कामान्
rejecting the enjoyment of those desires
juṣamaṇaś ca tān kāmān

दुःखोदकांश्च गर्हयन् ॥२८॥
that lead to suffering.
duḥkhodarkāṃś ca garhayan

प्रोक्तेन भक्तियोगेन

Through the bhakti yoga described here,
proktena bhakti-yogena

भजतो मासकृन्मुनेः ।

for a sage who worships me constantly,
bhajato māsakṛṇ muneḥ

कामा हृदय्या नश्यन्ति

all the desires of his heart are destroyed
kāmā hṛdayyā naśyanti

सर्वे मयि हृदि स्थिते ॥२९॥

when his heart is fixed on me.
sarve mayi hṛdi sthite

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्

The knot of the heart is severed,
bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś

छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।

all doubts are destroyed,
chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ

क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि

and his efforts come to an end
kṣīyante cāsyā karmāṇi

मयि दृष्टेऽखिलात्मनि ॥३०॥

when he discovers me as the self of all.
mayi dṛṣṭe 'khilātmani

तस्मान्मद्भक्तियुक्तस्य

Therefore, for a yogi with devotion to me,
tasmān mad-bhakti-yuktasya

योगिनो वै मदात्मनः ।

whose mind is fixed on me,
yogino vai mad-ātmanah

न ज्ञानं न च वैराग्यं

neither knowledge nor dispassion
na jñānaṁ na ca vairāgyaṁ

प्रायः श्रेयो भवेदिह ॥३१॥

are the main means for liberation.
prāyaḥ śreya bhaved iha

यत्कर्मभिर्यत्तपसा

Whatever is attained through action, austerities,
yat karmabhir yat tapasā

ज्ञानवैराग्यतश्च यत् ।

knowledge, dispassion,
jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat

योगेन दानधर्मेण

yoga, charity, piety,
yogena dāna-dharmaṇa

श्रेयोभिरितरैरपि ॥३२॥

and other means for liberation ...
śreyobhir itarair api

सर्वं मद्भक्तियोगेन
... through devotion to me, all this
sarvaṃ mad-bhakti-yogena

मद्भक्तो लभतेऽञ्जसा ।
my devotee quickly obtains -
mad-bhakto labhate 'ñjasā

स्वर्गापवर्गं मद्धाम
heaven, liberation, or my abode,
svargāpavargaṃ mad-dhāma

कथञ्चिद्यदि वाञ्छति ॥३३॥
whatever he desires.
kathañcid yadi vāñchati

नैरपेक्ष्यं परं प्राहुर्
Complete desirelessness is considered
nairapekṣyaṃ paraṃ prāhur

निःश्रेयसमनल्पकम् ।
the greatest good.
niḥśreyasaṃ analpakam

तस्मान्निराशिषो भक्तिर्
Therefore, devotion to me that is free from desire
tasmān nirāśiṣo bhaktir

निरपेक्षस्य मे भवेत् ॥३५॥
arises for the desireless.
nirapekṣasya me bhavet

न किञ्चित्साधवो धीरा
Wise, saintly,
na kiñcit sādhave dhīrā

भक्ता ह्येकान्तिनो मम ।
devotees, exclusively focused on me,
bhaktā hy ekāntino mama

वाञ्छन्त्यपि मया दत्तं
desire nothing else, even if I offer them
vāñchanty api mayā dattaṃ

कैवल्यमपुनर्भवम् ॥३४॥
liberation from rebirth.
kaivalyam apunar-bhavam

न मय्येकान्तभक्तानां
Those exclusively devoted to me,
na mayy ekānta-bhaktānām

गुणदोषोद्भवा गुणाः ।
are not affected by virtuous or defective qualities,
guṇa-doṣodbhavā guṇāḥ

साधूनां समचित्तानां
being saintly, composed,
sādhūnām sama-cittānām

बुद्धेः परमुपेयुषाम् ॥३६॥
reaching the goal beyond the mind.
buddheḥ param upeyuṣām

एवमेतान् मयादिष्टान्
Following these teachings of mine,
evam etān mayādiṣṭān

अनुतिष्ठन्ति मे पथः ।
following my path,
anutiṣṭhanti me pathaḥ

क्षेमं विन्दन्ति मत्स्थानं
they reach my blessed abode
kṣemaṃ vindanti mat-sthānaṃ

यद्ब्रह्म परमं विदुः ॥३७॥
known as supreme brahman.
yad brahma paramaṃ viduḥ