

Uddhava Gita

from the Bhagavata Purana

Chapter 23

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श्रीभगवानुवाच
The Blessed Lord said,
śrī bhagavān uvāca

परस्वभावकर्माणि

The nature and actions of others -
para-svabhāva-karmāṇi

न प्रशंसेन्न गर्हयेत् ।

one should not praise or criticize,
na praśamsen na garhayet

विश्वमेकात्मकं पश्यन्

seeing the world being of one essence
viśvam ekātmakaṃ paśyan

प्रकृत्या पुरुषेण च ॥१॥

as prakriti and puruṣa.
prakṛtyā puruṣeṇa ca

परस्वभावकर्माणि

The nature and actions of others -
para-svabhāva-karmāṇi

यः प्रशंसति निन्दति ।

one who praises or criticizes
yaḥ praśamsati nindati

स आशु भ्रश्यते स्वार्थाद्

will lose his own happiness
sa āśu bhraśyate svārthād

असत्यभिनिवेशतः ॥२॥

due to fascination with the unreal.
asaty abhiniveśataḥ

तैजसे निद्रयाऽऽपन्ने

When the senses are withdrawn in dreams,
taijase nidrayāpanne

पिण्डस्थो नष्टचेतनः ।

or during deep sleep when the body remains,
piṇḍastho naṣṭa-cetanah

मायां प्राप्नोति मृत्युं वा

one experiences illusion and death.
māyāṃ prāpnoti mṛtyuṃ vā

तद्वन्नानार्थदृक् पुमान् ॥३॥

So too, for a person who sees duality.
tadvan nānārtha-dṛk pumān

किं भद्रं किमभद्रं वा

What is good? What is bad?
kiṃ bhadraṃ kim abhadraṃ vā

द्वैतस्यावस्तुनः कियत् ।

How good or bad? In this unreal world of duality,
dvaitasyāvastunaḥ kiyat

वाचोदितं तदनृतं

anything expressed in words
vācoditaṃ tad anṛtaṃ

मनसा ध्यातमेव च ॥४॥

or thought of by the mind is false.
manasā dhyātam eva ca

छाया प्रत्याह्वयाभासा

Shadows, echoes, and mirages
chāyā pratyāhvayābhāsā

ह्यसन्तोऽप्यर्थकारिणः ।

produce effects, even though they are unreal.
hy asanto 'py artha-kāriṇah

एवं देहादयो भावा

In this way, objects like the body, etc.
evaṃ dehādayo bhāvā

यच्छन्त्यामृत्युतो भयम् ॥५॥

produce fear, up to the time of death.
yacchanty āmṛtyuto bhayam

आत्मैव तदिदं विश्वं

Atma, Self of the world, Ishvara, the Lord
ātmaiva tad idaṃ viśvaṃ

सृज्यते सृजति प्रभुः ।

is the creator and created,
sṛjyate sṛjati prabhuḥ

त्रायते त्राति विश्वात्मा

the protector and protected,
trāyate trāti viśvātmā

ह्रियते हरतीश्वरः ॥६॥

the dissolver and dissolved.
hriyate haratīśvaraḥ

तस्मान्न ह्यात्मनोऽन्यस्माद्
Therefore, nothing other than atma,
tasmān na hy ātmano 'nyasmād

अन्यो भावो निरूपितः ।
anything else can be established.
anyo bhāvo nirūpitaḥ

निरूपितेयं त्रिविधा
The three aspects of atma
nirūpiteyaṃ trividhā

निर्मूला भातिरात्मनि ।
are unreal appearances.
nirmūlā bhātir ātmani

इदं गुणमयं विद्धि
This world of three gunas
idaṃ guṇa-mayaṃ viddhi

त्रिविधं मायया कृतम् ॥७॥
is a product of maya.
trividhaṃ māyayā kṛtam

एतद्विद्वान् मदुदितं
What I have taught - a wise person
etad vidvān mad-uditam

ज्ञानविज्ञाननैपुणम् ।
who understands and realizes it
jñāna-vijñāna-naipuṇam

न निन्दति न च स्तौति
does not criticize or praise anyone.
na nindati na ca stauti

लोके चरति सूर्यवत् ॥८॥
He moves around the world like the sun.
loke carati sūryavat

प्रत्यक्षेणानुमानेन
Through perception, inference,
pratyakṣeṇānumānena

निगमेनात्मसंविदा ।
scripture, and realization,
nigamenātma-saṃvidā

आद्यन्तवदसज्ज्ञात्वा
knowing "all that begins and ends is unreal,"
ādyantavad asaj jñātvā

निःसङ्गो विचरेदिह ॥९॥
wanders the world with detachment.
niḥsaṅgo vicared iha

उद्धव उवाच
Uddhava said,
uddhava uvāca

नैवात्मनो न देहस्य
Neither atma, the seer, nor the body which is seen
naivātmano na dehasya

संसृतिर्द्रष्टृदृश्ययोः ।
experiences worldly suffering, because
saṁsṛtir draṣṭṛ-dṛśyayoḥ

अनात्मस्वदृशोरीश
the body is insentient, and atma is pure consciousness.
anātma-svadṛśor īśa

कस्य स्यादुपलभ्यते ॥१०॥
So, who experiences worldly suffering?
kasya syād upalabhyate

आत्माव्ययोऽगुणः शुद्धः
Atma is changeless, transcendent, pure,
ātmāvyayo 'guṇaḥ śuddhaḥ

स्वयञ्ज्योतिरनावृतः ।
self-shining, and eternal.
svayañjyotir anāvṛtaḥ

अग्निवद्दारुवदचिद्
It is like fire, whereas the body is insentient like wood.
agnivad dāruvad acid

देहः कस्येह संसृतिः ॥११॥
So, who experiences worldly suffering?
dehaḥ kasyeha saṁsṛtiḥ

श्रीभगवानुवाच
The Blessed Lord said,
śrī bhagavān uvāca

यावद्देहेन्द्रियप्राणैर्

As long as body, senses, and prana
yāvad dehendriya-prāṇair

आत्मनः सन्निकर्षणम् ।

are associated with atma,
ātmanaḥ sannikarṣaṇam

संसारः फलवांस्तावद्

worldly suffering is experienced
saṃsāraḥ phalavāṃs tāvad

अपार्थोऽप्यविवेकिनः ॥१२॥

by an ignorant person, even though it is unreal.
apārtho 'py avivekinaḥ

अर्थे ह्यविद्यमानेऽपि

Even though objects are unreal,
arthe hy avidyamāne 'pi

संसृतिर्न निवर्तते ।

worldly suffering does not cease
saṃsṛtir na nivartate

ध्यायतो विषयानस्य

for one who thinks about objects,
dhyāyato viṣayān asya

स्वप्नेऽनर्थागमो यथा ॥१३॥

like suffering that arises in dreams.
svapne 'narthāgamo yathā

यथा ह्यप्रतिबुद्धस्य

One who has not yet awakened
yathā hy apratibuddhasya

प्रस्वापो बह्वनर्थभृत् ।

experiences dreams filled with much suffering.
prasvāpo bahv-anarthabhṛt

स एव प्रतिबुद्धस्य

When he wakes up,
sa eva pratibuddhasya

न वै मोहाय कल्पते ॥१४॥

that suffering is not possible.
na vai mohāya kalpate

शोकहर्षभयक्रोध

Sadness, elation, fear, anger,
śoka-harṣa-bhaya-krodha

लोभमोहस्पृहादयः ।

greed, delusion, longing, etc.
lobha-moha-sprhādayaḥ

अहङ्कारस्य दृश्यन्ते

belong to the ahankara (individual),
ahaṅkārasya dṛśyante

जन्ममृत्युश्च नात्मनः ॥१५॥

along with birth and death, not to atma.
janma-mṛtyuś ca nātmanaḥ

देहेन्द्रियप्राणमनोऽभिमानो

The jiva, identified with the body, senses, prana and mind,
dehendriya-prāṇa-mano 'bhimāno

जीवोऽन्तरात्मा गुणकर्ममूर्तिः ।

is consciousness assuming their qualities and actions,
jīvo 'ntarātmā guṇa-karma-mūrtiḥ

सूत्रं महानित्युरुधेव गीतः

and is called "sutra" or "mahat,"
sūtraṃ mahān ity urudheva gītaḥ

संसार आधावति कालतन्त्रः ॥१६॥

moving about in the world due to karma.
saṃsāra ādhāvati kāla-tantraḥ

ज्ञानं विवेको निगमस्तपश्च

Enlightenment, born of discernment, scripture, austerities,
jñānaṃ viveko nigamas tapaś ca

प्रत्यक्षमैतिह्यमथानुमानम् ।

perception, tradition and inference, reveals the
pratyakṣam aitihiyam athānumānam

आद्यन्तयोरस्य यदेव केवलं

sole reality for the birth and death of the universe
ādyantayor asya yad eva kevalam

कालश्च हेतुश्च तदेव मध्ये ॥१८॥

and its function and order while it exists.
kālaś ca hetuś ca tad eva madhye

अमूलमेतद्बहुरूपरूपितं

This unreal, manifold assemblage
amūlam etad bahu-rūpa-rūpitaṃ

मनोवचःप्राणशरीरकर्म ।

of mind, speech, prana, body, and action -
mano-vacaḥ-prāṇa-śarīra-karma

ज्ञानासिनोपासनया शितेन

having cut with the sharpened sword of jnana and bhakti,
jñānāsinopāsanayā śitena

च्छित्त्वा मुनिर्गां विचरत्यतृष्णः ॥१७॥

a wise person wanders the world without desires.
cchittvā munir gāṃ vicaraty atṛṣṇaḥ

यथा हिरण्यं स्वकृतं पुरस्तात्

Gold is unchanged before and after (being cast).
yathā hiraṇyaṃ svakṛtaṃ purastāt

पश्चाच्च सर्वस्य हिरण्मयस्य ।

After being cast, all that's made of gold
paścāc ca sarvasya hiraṇmayasya

तदेव मध्ये व्यवहार्यमाणं

is nothing but gold, even while being used (as rings, etc).
tad eva madhye vyavahāryamāṇam

नानापदेशैरहमस्य तद्वत् ॥१९॥

having various names. For the world, I am like gold.
nānāpadeśair aham asya tadvat

विज्ञानमेतत्रियवस्थमङ्ग

O Uddhava, the mind with its three states,
vijñānam etat triyavastham aṅga

गुणत्रयं कारणकार्यकर्तृ ।

three gunas, three roles: cause, effect, and agent,
guṇa-trayaṃ kāraṇa-kārya-kartṛ

समन्वयेन व्यतिरेकतश्च

exists in general and in particular
samanvayena vyatirekataś ca

येनैव तुर्येण तदेव सत्यम् ॥२०॥

because of a fourth (consciousness). That alone is real.
yenaiva turyeṇa tad eva satyam

न यत्पुरस्तादुत यन्न पश्चात्

That which is non-existent before and after
na yat purastād uta yan na paścāt

मध्ये च तन्न व्यपदेशमात्रम् ।

is non-existent in the middle. It is a mere name.
madhye ca tan na vyapadeśa-mātram

भूतं प्रसिद्धं च परेण यद्यत्

Anything created out of something else
bhūtaṃ prasiddhaṃ ca pareṇa yad yat

तदेव तत्स्यादिति मे मनीषा ॥२१॥

is non-existent. Thus is my understanding.
tad eva tat syād iti me manīṣā

अविद्यमानोऽप्यवभासते यो

The world that appears, even though unreal,
avidyamāno 'py avabhāstate yo

वैकारिको राजससर्ग एषः ।

is a modification arising from rajas.
vaikāriko rājasa-sarga eṣaḥ

ब्रह्म स्वयञ्ज्योतिरतो विभाति

Brahman is self-shining, so it appears
brahma svayañ-jyotir ato vibhāti

ब्रह्मेन्द्रियार्थात्मविकारचित्रम् ॥२२॥

in various forms like senses, objects, body and mind.
brahmendriyārthātma-vikāra-citram

एवं स्फुटं ब्रह्मविवेकहेतुभिः

Thus is clear - by discerning brahman
evaṃ sphuṭaṃ brahma-viveka-hetubhiḥ

परापवादेन विशारदेन ।

through careful negation of everything else,
parāpavādena viśāradena

छित्त्वात्मसन्देहमुपारमेत

by removing ignorance about atma, one will withdraw
chittvātma-sandeham upārameta

स्वानन्दतुष्टोऽखिलकामुकेभ्यः ॥२३॥

from seeking pleasure, being content with one's own fullness.
svānanda-tuṣṭo 'khila-kāmukebhyaḥ

नात्मा वपुः पार्थिवमिन्द्रियाणि
Atma is not the physical body, senses,
nātmā vapuḥ pārthivam indriyāṇi

देवा ह्यसुर्वायुर्जलं हुताशः ।
faculties, prana, air, water, fire,
devā hy asur vāyur jalaṃ hutāśaḥ

मनोऽन्नमात्रं धिषणा च सत्त्वम्
or mind. All these are material, including intellect, sattva,
mano 'nna-mātraṃ dhiṣaṇā ca sattvam

अहङ्कृतिः खं क्षितिर्थसाम्यम् ॥२४॥
ego, śpace, earth, and prakriti.
ahaṅkṛtiḥ khaṃ kṣitir artha-sāmyam

यथा नभो वाय्वनलाम्बुभूगुणैर्
Like space is not affected by air, fire, water or earth,
yathā nabho vāyv-analāmbu-bhū-guṇair

गतागतैर्वर्तुगुणैर्न सञ्जते ।
nor by seasons that come and go,
gatāgatair vartu-guṇair na sajjate

तथाक्षरं सत्त्वरजस्तमोमलैर्
so too, by impurities of sattva, rajas, and tamas,
tathākṣaraṃ sattva-rajasa-tamo-malair

अहम्मतेः संसृतिहेतुभिः परम् ॥२६॥
transcendent brahman is not affected by the world.
aham-mateḥ saṃsṛti-hetubhiḥ param

समाहितैः कः करणैर्गुणात्मभिर्
By controlling one's senses, composed of gunas,
samāhitaiḥ kaḥ karaṇair guṇātmabhir

गुणो भवेन्मत्सुविविक्तधाम्नः ।
what is achieved if one has reached my own abode?
guṇo bhaven mat-suvivikta-dhāmnaḥ

विक्षिप्यमाणैरुत किं नु दूषणं
Or if his senses are extrovert, how does that hurt him?
vikṣipyamāṇair uta kiṃ nu dūṣaṇaṃ

घनैरुपेतैर्विगतै रवेः किम् ॥२५॥
How is the sun affected when clouds come and go?
ghanair upetair vigatai raveḥ kim

तथापि सङ्गः परिवर्जनीयो
Yet, one should avoid attachment
tathāpi saṅgaḥ parivarjanīyo

गुणेषु मायारचितेषु तावत् ।
to objects born of ignorance until,
guṇeṣu māyā-raciteṣu tāvat

मद्भक्तियोगेन दृढेन यावद्
through strong devotion to me,
mad-bhakti-yogena dṛḍhena yāvad

रजो निरस्येत मनःकषायः ॥२७॥
the rajas tainting the mind has been removed.
rajo nirasyeta manaḥ kaṣāyaḥ

यथाऽऽमयोऽसाधुचिकित्सितो नृणां
Like illness, if improperly treated,
yathāmayo 'sadhu-cikitsito nṛṇām

पुनः पुनः सन्तुदति प्ररोहन् ।
comes back again and again to afflict a person,
punaḥ punaḥ santudati prarohan

एवं मनोपक्ककषायकर्म
so too, a mind, not completely free from desire and action,
evaṃ mano 'pakva kaṣāya-karma

कुर्योगिनं विध्यति सर्वसङ्गम् ॥२८॥
afflicts a ignorant yogi who is attached to everything.
kuyoginaṃ vidhyati sarva-saṅgam

करोति कर्म क्रियते च जन्तुः
A person performs deeds
karoti karma kriyate ca jantuḥ

केनाप्यसौ चोदित आनिपतात् ।
being compelled one desire or another, until he dies.
kenāpy asau codita ānipatāt

न तत्र विद्वान् प्रकृतौ स्थितोऽपि
But an enlightened person, even while alive,
na tatra vidvān prakṛtau sthito 'pi

निवृत्ततृष्णः स्वसुखानुभूत्या ॥३०॥
is free from desire, due to experiencing his own fullness.
nivṛtta-tṛṣṇaḥ svasukhānubhūtyā

कुर्योगिनो ये विहितान्तरायैर्
Those yogis are ignorant due to obstructions
kuyogino ye vihitāntarāyair

मनुष्यभूतैस्त्रिदशोपसृष्टैः ।
caused by people sent by the gods.
manuṣya-bhūtais tridaśopasṛṣṭaiḥ

ते प्राक्तनाभ्यासबलेन भूयो
Due to the strength of their practice in previous lives,
te prāktanābhyāsa-balena bhūyo

युञ्जन्ति योगं न तु कर्मतन्त्रम् ॥२९॥
they practice yoga, without engaging in worldly deeds.
yuñjanti yogaṃ na tu karma-tantram

तिष्ठन्तमासीनमुत व्रजन्तं
Standing, sitting, walking,
tiṣṭhantam āsīnam uta vrajantaṃ

शयानमुक्षन्तमदन्तमन्नम् ।
reclining, bathing, eating,
śayānam ukṣantaṃ adantaṃ annam

स्वभावमन्यत्किमपीहमानम्
or any other natural activity,
svabhāvam anyat kim apīhamānam

आत्मानमात्मस्थमतिर्न वेद ॥३१॥
is not attributed to oneself by one established in atma.
ātmānam ātmastha-matir na veda

यदि स्म पश्यत्यसदिन्द्रियार्थं

An object, perceived by the extrovert senses,
yadi sma paśyaty asad indriyārtham

नानानुमानेन विरुद्धमन्यत् ।

is negated as being separate by reasoning.
nānānumānena viruddham anyat

न मन्यते वस्तुतया मनीषी

A wise one does not consider it real
na manyate vastutayā manīṣī

स्वाप्नं यथोत्थाय तिरोदधानम् ॥३२॥

like a dream that disappears upon waking.
svāpnaṃ yathotthāya tirodadhānam

यथा हि भानोरुदयो नृचक्षुषां

Like for one's eyes, the rising of the sun
yathā hi bhānor udayo nṛ-cakṣuṣāṃ

तमो निहन्यान्न तु सद्विधत्ते ।

removes darkness but does not create anything new,
tamo nihanyān na tu sad vidhatte

एवं समीक्षा निपुणा सती मे

so too, the correct understanding of me
evaṃ samīkṣā nipuṇā satī me

हन्यात्तमिस्रं पुरुषस्य बुद्धेः ॥३४॥

removes ignorance for a person's mind.
hanyāt tamisraṃ puruṣasya buddheḥ

पूर्वं गृहीतं गुणकर्मचित्रम्

Before enlightenment, various qualities and actions
pūrvam gṛhītaṃ guṇa-karma-citraṃ

अज्ञानमात्मन्यविविक्तमङ्ग ।

are attributed to atma due to ignorance, O Uddhava.
ajñānam ātmany aviviktam aṅga

निवर्तते तत्पुनरीक्षयैव

They are later negated by knowledge.
nivartate tat punar īkṣayaiva

न गृह्यते नापि विसृज्य आत्मा ॥३३॥

But atma itself cannot be qualified nor negated.
na gṛhyate nāpi viśṛjya ātmā

एष स्वयञ्ज्योतिरजोऽप्रमेयो

Atma is self-shining, unborn, immeasurable,
eṣa svayañ-jyotir ajo 'prameyo

महानुभूतिः सकलानुभूतिः ।

all pervasive, aware of everything,
mahānubhūtiḥ sakalānubhūtiḥ

एकोऽद्वितीयो वचसां विरामे

one without a second, beyond words,
eko 'dviṭiyo vacasāṃ virāme

येनेषिता वागसवश्चरन्ति ॥३५॥

by which words and prana are impelled.
yeneṣitā vāg-asavaś caranti

एतावानात्मसम्मोहो

This is ignorance of atma:
etāvān ātma-sammoho

यद्विकल्पस्तु केवले ।

to project duality on the nondual self.
yad vikalpas tu kevale

आत्मन्नृते स्वमात्मानम्

Except for atma, one's own self,
ātmann-ṛte svamātmānam

अवलम्बो न यस्य हि ॥३६॥

duality has no other foundation.
avalambo na yasya hi

योगिनोऽपक्वयोगस्य

For an unenlightened yogi
yogino 'pakva-yogasya

युञ्जतः काय उत्थितैः ।

whose body is afflicted while practicing,
yuñjataḥ kāya utthitaiḥ

उपसर्गैर्विहन्येत

those afflictions should be removed
upasargair vihanyeta

तत्रायं विहितो विधिः ॥३८॥

through the following methods.
tatrāyaṃ vihito vidhiḥ

यन्नामाकृतिभिर्ग्राह्यं

Experienced as name and form,
yan nāmākṛtibhir grāhyaṃ

पञ्चवर्णमबाधितम् ।

the world of five elements is considered non-negatable,
pañca-varṇam abādhitam

व्यर्थेनाप्यर्थवादोऽयं

and this (Vedanta) is considered mere praise
vyarthenāpy artha-vādo 'yaṃ

द्वयं पण्डितमानिनाम् ॥३७॥

according to pseudo-scholars who accept duality.
dvayaṃ paṇḍita-māninām

योगधारणया कांश्चिद्

Some are removed by meditation
yoga-dhāraṇayā kāṃścid

आसनैर्धारणान्वितैः ।

or by postures accompanied by meditation.
āsanair dhāraṇānvitaiḥ

तपोमन्त्रौषधैः कांश्चिद्

Others are removed by austerities, mantra, and herbs.
tapo-mantrauṣadhaiḥ kāṃścid

उपसर्गान् विनिर्दहेत् ॥३९॥

Thus one should remove afflictions.
upasargān vinirdahet

कांश्चिन्ममानुध्यानेन

Other afflictions are removed by meditating on me,
kāṁścin mam ānudhyānena

नामसङ्कीर्तनादिभिः ।

through recitation of my names and hymns
nāma-saṅkīrtanādibhiḥ

योगेश्वरानुवृत्त्या वा

or by serving a great yogi.
yogēśvarānuvṛtṭyā vā

हन्यादशुभदान् शनैः ॥४०॥

Thus one should gradually remove afflictions.
hanyād aśubhadān śanaiḥ

केचिद्देहमिमं धीराः

Some dedicated yogis strive to make their bodies
kecid deham imaṁ dhīrāḥ

सुकल्पं वयसि स्थिरम् ।

strong and and long-lived.
sukalpaṁ vayasi sthiram

विधाय विविधोपायैर्

And through various practices,
vidhāya vividhopāyair

अथ युञ्जन्ति सिद्धये ॥४१॥

they seek special powers.
atha yuñjanti siddhaye

न हि तत्कुशलादृत्यं

But that is not accepted by the wise.
na hi tat kuśalādrṭyaṁ

तदायासो ह्यपार्थकः ।

Such efforts are indeed useless
tad-āyāso hy apārthakaḥ

अन्तवत्त्वाच्छरीरस्य

because the body is short-lived,
antavattvāc charīrasya

फलस्येव वनस्पतेः ॥४२॥

like the fruit of a tree.
phalasyeva vanaspateḥ

योगं निषेवतो नित्यं

By regular practice of yoga,
yogaṁ niṣevato nityaṁ

कायश्चेत्कल्पतामियात् ।

one's body becomes strong.
kāyaś cet kalpatām iyāt

तच्छ्रद्धयान्न मतिमान्

But a wise person does not seek that.
tac-chraddadhyān na matimān

योगमुत्सृज्य मत्परः ॥४३॥

He gives up yoga to concentrate on me.
yogam utsrjya mat-paraḥ

योगचर्यामिमां योगी

A yogi who practices this kind of yoga,
yogacaryām imāṃ yogī

विचरन् मदपाश्रयः ।

by meditating on me and seeking refuge in me,
vicaran mad-apāśrayaḥ

नान्तरायैर्विहन्येत

is not troubled by afflictions,
nāntarāyair vihanyeta

निःस्पृहः स्वसुखानुभूः ॥४४॥

remaining detached and immersed in one's own fullness.
niḥspṛhaḥ svasukhānubhūḥ