

Uddhava Gita
from the Bhagavata Purana
Chapter 5

Translation by Swami Tadatmananda, Arsha Bodha Center

श्रीभगवानुवाच
The Blessed Lord said,
śrī-bhagavān uvāca

मयोदितेष्ववहितः
Dedicated to My teachings
mayoditeṣv avahitaḥ

स्वधर्मेषु मदाश्रयः ।
about dharma, taking My refuge,
svadharmeṣu mad-āśrayaḥ

वर्णाश्रमकुलाचारम्
social and family duties
varṇāśrama-kulācāram

अकामात्मा समाचरेत् ॥१॥
should be done by one without desire.
akāmātmā samācaret (1)

अन्वीक्षेत विशुद्धात्मा
One with a pure mind should observe:
anvīkṣeta viśuddhātmā

देहिनां विषयात्मनाम् ।
for people attached to objects,
dehināṃ viṣayātmanām

गुणेषु तत्त्वध्यानेन
considering them to be valuable,
guṇeṣu tattva-dhyānena

सर्वारम्भविपर्ययम् ॥२॥
their efforts turn out contrary.
sarvārambha-viparyayam (2)

सुप्तस्य विषयालोको
Like objects seen in a dream
suptasya viṣayāloko

ध्यायतो वा मनोरथः ।
or imagined in reverie
dhyāyato vā manorathaḥ

नानात्मकत्वाद्विफलस्
are useless, being constantly changing,
nānātmakatvād viphalas

तथा भेदात्मधीर्गुणैः ॥३॥
likewise are various objects perceived (when awake).
tathā bhedātmadhīr guṇaiḥ (3)

यमानभीक्षणं सेवेत
One should always follow the yamas
yamān abhīkṣṇaṃ seveta

नियमान् मत्परः क्वचित् ।
and niyamas, being intent on Me.
niyamān mat-paraḥ kvacit

मदभिज्ञं गुरुं शान्तम्
A peaceful guru who knows Me
mad-abhijñāṃ guruṃ śāntam

उपासीत मदात्मकम् ॥५॥
as oneself, one should approach.
upāsīta mad-ātmakam (5)

निवृत्तं कर्म सेवेत
One should embrace renunciation
nivṛttaṃ karma seveta

प्रवृत्तं मत्परस्त्यजेत् ।
and give up pleasures. Intent on Me,
pravṛttaṃ mat-paras tyajet

जिज्ञासायां सम्प्रवृत्तो
one seeking wisdom
jijñāsāyāṃ sampravṛtto

नाद्रियेत्कर्मचोदनाम् ॥४॥
should ignore ritualistic injunctions.
nādriyet karma-codanām (4)

अमान्यमत्सरो दक्षो
Free from pride and envy, skillful,
amāny amatsaro dakṣo

निर्ममो दृढसौहृदः ।
not possessive, good-hearted,
nirmamo dṛḍha-sauhṛdaḥ

असत्त्वरोऽर्थजिज्ञासुर्
not impulsive, seeking truth,
asatvaro 'rtha-jijñāsur

अनसूयुरमोघवाक् ॥६॥
free from enmity and useless talk (thus one should be).
anasūyur amoghavāk (6)

जायापत्यगृहक्षेत्र

Indifferent towards wife, children, home, land,
jāyāpatya-gr̥ha-kṣetra-

स्वजनद्रविणादिषु ।

family and wealth,
svajana-draviṇādiṣu

उदासीनः समं पश्यन्

one should consider equally
udāsīnaḥ samaṃ paśyan

सर्वेष्वर्थमिवात्मनः ॥ ७ ॥

all that seems to be for one's own sake.
sarveṣv artham ivātmanaḥ (7)

निरोधोत्पत्त्यणुबृहन्

Dying out, arising, small, big,
nirodhotpatty-aṇu-br̥han-

नानात्वं तत्कृतान् गुणान् ।

many - such qualities produced by that
nānātvam tat-kṛtān guṇān

अन्तः प्रविष्ट आधत्त

fire assumes when it enters wood.
antaḥ praviṣṭa ādhatta

एवं देहगुणान् परः ॥ ९ ॥

Likewise, atma assumes the qualities of the body.
evaṃ deha-guṇān paraḥ (9)

विलक्षणः स्थूलसूक्ष्माद्

Separate from the physical and subtle
vilakṣaṇaḥ sthūla-sūkṣmād

देहादात्मेक्षिता स्वदृक् ।

bodies, atma is the self-aware witness,
dehād ātmekṣitā svadr̥k

यथाग्निर्दारुणो दाह्याद्

like separate from wood is the fire
yathāgnir dāruṇo dāhyād

दाहकोऽन्यः प्रकाशकः ॥ ८ ॥

that burns and shines.
dāhako 'nyaḥ prakāśakaḥ (8)

योऽसौ गुणैर्विरचितो

Composed of gunas that
yo 'sau guṇair viracito

देहोऽयं पुरुषस्य हि ।

belong to Ishvara is the body.
deho 'yaṃ puruṣasya hi

संसारस्तन्निबन्धोऽयं

It creates a life of suffering
saṃsāras tan-nibandho 'yaṃ

पुंसो विद्याच्छिदात्मनः ॥ १० ॥

for a person. Knowledge destroys that.
puṃso vidyā chid-ātmanaḥ (10)

तस्माञ्जिज्ञासयाऽऽत्मानम्
Therefore, by inquiring into the Self
tasmāj jijñāsayaṭmānam

आत्मस्थं केवलं परम् ।
in one's body, and reaching the one, supreme Self,
ātmasthaṃ kevalaṃ param

सङ्गम्य निरसेदेतद्
one should negate this
saṅgamyā nirased etad

वस्तुबुद्धिं यथाक्रमम् ॥११॥
identification with the body step by step.
vastu-buddhiṃ yathā-kramam (11)

वैशारदी सातिविशुद्धबुद्धिर्
The pure knowledge of a skillful guru
vaiśāradī sātiviśuddha-buddhir

धुनोति मायां गुणसम्प्रसूताम् ।
destroys the delusion born of gunas.
dhunoti māyāṃ guṇa-samprasūtām

गुणांश्च सन्दह्य यदात्ममेतत्
And after burning the gunas, that knowledge
guṇāṃś ca sandahya yad-ātmam etat

स्वयं च शाम्यत्यसमिद्यथाग्निः ॥१३॥
itself disappears like a fire without fuel.
svayaṃ ca śāmyaty asamid yathāgniḥ (13)

आचार्योऽरणिराद्यः
Guru is the lower kindling stick.
ācāryo 'raṇir ādyaḥ

स्यादन्तेवास्युत्तरारणिः ।
Shishya is the upper stick.
syād antevāsy uttarāraṇiḥ

तत्सन्धानं प्रवचनं
Teaching is the connection.
tat sandhānaṃ pravacanaṃ

विद्यासन्धिः सुखावहः ॥१२॥
Knowledge is the union, which brings happiness.
vidyā sandhiḥ sukhāvahaḥ (12)

अथैषां कर्मकर्तृणां
Now, (if you consider) those engaged in actions,
athaiṣāṃ karma-kartṛṇāṃ

भोक्तृणां सुखदुःखयोः ।
experiencing happiness and suffering,
bhoktṛṇāṃ sukha-duḥkhayoḥ

नानात्वमथ नित्यत्वं
to be many in number
nānātvam atha nityatvaṃ

लोककालागमात्मनाम् ॥१४॥
and heaven, time, scriptures and souls to be eternal...
loka-kālāgamātmanām (14)

मन्यसे सर्वभावानां

...and you consider everything's
manyase sarva-bhāvānām

संस्था ह्यौत्पत्तिकी यथा ।

existence to truly arise
saṁsthā hy autpattikī yathā

तत्तदाकृतिभेदेन

in different forms,
tat-tad-ākṛti-bhedena

जायते भिद्यते च धीः ॥१५॥

and that knowledge arises and is diverse...
jāyate bhidyate ca dhīḥ (15)

एवमप्यङ्ग सर्वेषां

...even then, dear Uddhava,
evam apy aṅga sarveṣām

देहिनां देहयोगतः ।

having acquired bodies, all beings
dehinām deha-yogataḥ

कालावयवतः सन्ति

due to phases of time are
kālavayavataḥ santi

भावा जन्मादयोऽसकृत् ॥१६॥

subject to repeated birth, death, etc.
bhāvā janmādayo 'sakṛt (16)

अत्रापि कर्मणां कर्तुर्

Also, doers of action
atrāpi karmaṇām kartur

अस्वातन्त्र्यं च लक्ष्यते ।

are seen to be helplessly controlled
asvātantryam ca lakṣyate

भोक्तुश्च दुःखसुखयोः

and experience suffering and happiness.
bhoktuś ca duḥkha-sukhayoḥ

कोऽन्वर्थो विवशं भजेत् ॥१७॥

What can be gained if one is helplessly controlled?
ko 'nv artho vivaśam bhajet (17)

न देहिनां सुखं किञ्चिद्

Doers of action might not gain happiness,
na dehinām sukham kiñcid

विद्यते विदुषामपि ।

even though wise,
vidyate viduṣām api

तथा च दुःखं मूढानां

and even though dull, might not gain suffering.
tathā ca duḥkham mūḍhānām

वृथाहङ्करणं परम् ॥१८॥

So, pride is completely false.
vrthāhaṅkaraṇam param (18)

यदि प्राप्तिं विघातं च
Even if how to gain or avoid
yadi prāptiṃ vighātaṃ ca

जानन्ति सुखदुःखयोः ।
happiness or suffering is known,
jānanti sukha-duḥkhaḥ

तेऽप्यद्धा न विदुर्योगं
they don't clearly know a means
te 'py addhā na vidur yogaṃ

मृत्युर्न प्रभवेद्यथा ॥१९॥
to avoid death.
mṛtyur na prabhaved yathā (19)

कोऽन्वर्थः सुखयत्येनं
What object could make him happy
ko 'nv arthaḥ sukhayaty enaṃ

कामो वा मृत्युरन्तिके ।
or pleased when death is near,
kāmo vā mṛtyur antike

आघातं नीयमानस्य
like for one led to his execution,
āghātaṃ nīyamānasya

वध्यस्येव न तुष्टिदः ॥२०॥
what would give him pleasure?
vadyasyeva na tuṣṭidaḥ (20)

श्रुतं च दृष्टवद्दुष्टं
Happiness in heaven and the world is ruined
śrutaṃ ca dr̥ṣṭavad duṣṭaṃ

स्पर्धासूयात्ययव्ययैः ।
by competition, envy, death, and decay
spardhāsūyātyaya-vyayaiḥ

बह्वन्तरायकामत्वात्
because fulfilling desires has many obstacles,
bahv-antarāya-kāmatvāt

कृषिवच्चापि निष्फलम् ॥२१॥
like farming that produces no harvest.
kṛṣivacc āpi niṣphalam (21)

अन्तरायैरविहतो
Unimpeded by obstacles,
antarāyair avihato

यदि धर्मः स्वनुष्ठितः ।
if dharma is properly followed,
yadi dharmaḥ svanuṣṭhitaḥ

तेनापि निर्जितं स्थानं
a heavenly abode
tenāpi nirjitaṃ sthānaṃ

यथा गच्छति तच्छृणु ॥२२॥
one can reach. Listen to how.
yathā gacchati tac chṛṇu (22)

इष्ट्वेह देवता यज्ञैः

Having worshiped the gods by sacrifice,
iṣṭveha devatā yajñaiḥ

स्वर्लोकं याति याज्ञिकः ।

the worshiper goes to heaven.
svar-lokaṃ yāti yājñikaḥ

भुञ्जीत देववत्तत्र

Like the gods, he there enjoys
bhuñjīta devavat tatra

भोगान् दिव्यान् निजार्जितान् ॥२३॥

the divine pleasures he has earned.
bhogān divyān nijārajitān (23)

स्वपुण्योपचिते शुभ्रे

Gained by his pious deeds, in a glorious
svapuṇyopacite śubhre

विमान उपगीयते ।

vehicle, being praised
vimāna upagīyate

गन्धर्वैर्विहरन् मध्ये

by celestial beings, enjoying the company
gandharvair viharan madhye

देवीनां हृद्यवेषधृक् ॥२४॥

of goddesses, dressed in finery...
devīnāṃ hr̥dya-veṣadhṛk (24)

स्त्रीभिः कामगयानेन

...going wherever he wants with celestial damsels
strībhiḥ kāmaga-yānena

किङ्किणीजालमालिना ।

in a vehicle decorated with strings of bells,
kiṅkiṇī-jāla-mālinā

क्रीडन् नवेदात्मपातं

playing, he thinks not of his (impending) fall
krīḍan navedātma-pātaṃ

सुराक्रीडेषु निर्वृतः ॥२५॥

while enjoying the gardens of the gods.
surā-krīḍeṣu nirvṛtaḥ

तावत्प्रमोदते स्वर्गे

He revels in heaven
tāvat pramodate svarge

यावत्पुण्यं समाप्यते ।

as long as his punya remains.
yāvat puṇyaṃ samāpyate

क्षीणपुण्यः पतत्यर्वाग्

When that punya is exhausted, he falls down
kṣīṇa-puṇyaḥ pataty arvāg

अनिच्छन् कालचालितः ॥२६॥

against his will, driven by time.
anicchan kāla-cālitaḥ (26)

यद्यधर्मरतः सङ्गाद
(But) if he is inclined to adharma due to association
yady adharma-rataḥ saṅgād

असतां वाजितेन्द्रियः ।
with wicked people, or if he is unrestrained,
asatām vājitendriyaḥ

कामात्मा कृपणो लुब्धः
desirous, miserly, greedy,
kāmātmā kṛpaṇo lubdhaḥ

स्त्रैणो भूतविहिंसकः ॥ २७ ॥
lustful, hurtful to others...
straiṇo bhūta-vihimsakaḥ (27)

कर्माणि दुःखोदकाणि
Acts that produce future suffering -
karmāṇi duḥkhodarkāṇi

कुर्वन् देहेन तैः पुनः ।
doing with the body, they again
kurvan dehena taiḥ punaḥ

देहमाभजते तत्र
acquire a body.
deham ābhajate tatra

किं सुखं मर्त्यधर्मिणः ॥ २९ ॥
What happiness is there for the mortal?
kiṃ sukhaṃ martya-dharmināḥ (29)

पशूनविधिनालभ्य
...killing animals without scriptural sanction,
paśūn avidhinālabhya

प्रेतभूतगणान् यजन् ।
worshiping groups of ghosts and spirits,
preta-bhūta-gaṇān yajan

नरकानवशो जन्तुर्
he helplessly falls into various hells
narakān avaśo jantur

गत्वा यात्युल्बणं तमः ॥ २८ ॥
and dwells in terrible darkness.
gatvā yāty ulbaṇaṃ tamaḥ (28)

लोकानां लोकपालानां
The heavens and their rulers
lokānām loka-pālānām

मद्भयं कल्पजीविनाम् ।
live for an eon in fear of Me.
mad-bhayaṃ kalpa-jīvinām

ब्रह्मणोऽपि भयं मत्तो
Even Brahmaji fears Me,
brahmaṇo 'pi bhayaṃ matto

द्विपरार्धपरायुषः ॥ ३० ॥
though his lifespan is immense.
dviparārdha-parāyuṣaḥ (30)

गुणाः सृजन्ति कर्माणि
The faculties produce actions,
guṇāḥ sṛjanti karmāṇi

गुणोऽनुसृजते गुणान् ।
and gunas produce the faculties.
guṇo 'nusṛjate guṇān

जीवस्तु गुणसंयुक्तो
A person, endowed with faculties,
jīvas tu guṇa-samyukto

भुङ्क्ते कर्मफलान्यसौ ॥ ३१ ॥
experiences the fruits of those actions.
bhuṅkte karma-phalāny asau (31)

यावत्स्याद्गुणवैषम्यं
As long the gunas are imbalanced,
yāvat syād guṇa-vaiṣamyam

तावन्नानात्वमात्मनः ।
atma will have diverse manifestations.
tāvan nānātvam ātmanaḥ

नानात्वमात्मनो यावत्
As long as atma has diverse manifestations,
nānātvam ātmano yāvat

पारतन्त्र्यं तदैव हि ॥ ३२ ॥
being helplessly controlled will continue.
pāratantryam tadaiva hi (32)

यावदस्यास्वतन्त्रत्वं
As long one his helplessly controlled,
yāvad asyāsvatantratvam

तावदीश्वरतो भयम् ।
there will be fear of Ishvara.
tāvad īśvarato bhayam

य एतत्समुपासीरंस्ते
Those who embrace this (world view)
ya etat samupāsīraṃs te

मुह्यन्ति शुचार्पिताः ॥ ३३ ॥
are deluded and immersed in sorrow.
muhyanti śucārpitāḥ (33)

काल आत्मागमो लोकः
Time, Self, scripture, world,
kāla ātmāgamo lokaḥ

स्वभावो धर्म एव च ।
nature, and dharma -
svabhāvo dharmā eva ca

इति मां बहुधा प्राहुर्
thus they describe Me variously
iti māṃ bahudhā prāhur

गुणव्यतिकरे सति ॥ ३४ ॥
when the gunas are imbalanced.
guṇa-vyatikare sati (34)

उद्धव उवाच
Uddhava said,
uddhava uvāca

गुणेषु वर्तमानोऽपि
1) Existing with the gunas
guṇeṣu vartamāno 'pi

देहजेष्वनपावृतः ।
born of the body, 2) or not associated
dehajeṣv anapāvṛtaḥ

गुणैर्न बध्यते देही
with the gunas, 1) how can one not be bound,
guṇair na badhyate dehī

बध्यते वा कथं विभो ॥३५॥
2) or how can one be bound, O Krishna?
badhyate vā kathaṃ vibho (35)

कथं वर्तेत विहरेत्
How does one who is bound or free live and enjoy?
kathaṃ varteta viharet

कैर्वा ज्ञायेत लक्षणैः।
By what characteristics can he be known?
kair vā jñāyeta lakṣaṇaiḥ

किं भुञ्जीतोऽत विसृजेत्
How does he eat, excrete,
kiṃ bhujñīto 'ta visrjec

छयीतासीत याति वा ॥३६॥
lie down, sit, or go?
chayītāsīta yāti vā (36)

एतदच्युत मे ब्रूहि
O Krishna, please answer my
etad acyuta me brūhi

प्रश्नं प्रश्नविदां वर ।
question. You are the best source of answers.
praśnaṃ praśna-vidāṃ vara

नित्यमुक्तो नित्यबद्धः
Eternally free or eternally bound
nitya-mukto nitya-baddhaḥ

एक एवेति मे भ्रमः ॥३७॥
seem the same. Thus is my confusion.
eka eveti me bhramaḥ (37)