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A Quintessence of Uddhava Gita

- Swami Shantananda Puri



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H.H. Srimad Swami Purushottamanandaji Maharaj

SAMARPAN

*This book
is dedicated with veneration
to the Lotus Feet of
my revered Guru*

*Swami Purushottamanandaji
Vasishtha Guha, U.P., Himalayas*

– Swami Shantananda Puri

Introduction

'Uddhava Gita' forms the major part of the 11th Skandha (known as the Jnanaskandha) of Srimad Bhagavatam authored by Vyasa. Vallabhacharya, the founder of 'Suddhadvaita' philosophy has given the name "Samadhi Bhasha"* (the language of the state of Super Consciousness) to Bhagavatam. Profound meanings will be revealed if we meditate on each sloka, which may be far from the meanings given in the dictionary as also by the commentators. Even if we understand it in an ordinary way it can help us substantially in our spiritual progress.

It almost starts with the episode of the naked monk (Avadhoota) and his 24 Gurus.

* वेदाः श्रीकृष्णवाक्यानि व्याससूत्राणि चैव हि
समाधिभाषा व्यासस्य प्रमाणं तच्चतुष्टयम्॥

The story is symbolic. The one who could make the entire existence – a worm, a bee, an elephant, a bird, a serpent and even a prostitute as one's Guru required no other formal Guru. A Guru is a small window into the Infinite. If you can learn from the river and the mountain, sun and the moon, the flora and the fauna, the Infinite itself would become your Guru.

Osho, in one of his books has narrated the story of Hassan, a great Sufi saint. Somebody asked him at his death bed as to who was his Guru. Hassan said - "Do not ask me now. You cannot understand even if I tell you. I am waiting for my friend Mr. Death. I do not have much time to make you understand." His disciple insisted - "Now that you are going, please do not leave us in suspense permanently. There is still time for you. Please tell us atleast briefly."

Hassan began to narrate - "In my young days I was once sitting on the bank of a

river, when a dog came there. When it bent down and saw the waters of the river, another dog was seen inside the waters. He was afraid. When he barked at the second one, the latter could be seen barking in return. The dog was very thirsty. Its thirst was so torturing that it had to jump into the river in spite of its fear, after hesitating again and again and shaking with terror. The moment it plunged into the river, the second dog disappeared and it was not seen. After all, the second dog was its own image - a shadow. It never existed. This dog was my first Guru. All our fears are our own shadows. Jump into the Infinite and the duality will disappear. The one whose thirst for the Lord is intense has to take the leap with all his fears and doubts. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. This was the lesson, the most valuable one, I learnt from the Dog, my first Guru. In due course there were many more such Gurus."

These lessons based on real experience which can come to us from the entirety of

Existence are more direct and better absorbed in our mind than what we can gather from the formal Gurus (of course the role of a Sadguru in life has its own supreme place).

Uddhava Gita has not left untouched any important factor contributing to our progress in spirituality - e.g. Satsanga or holy company, Yoga, Jnana, Scientific analysis of bondage, mukti and sufferings or miseries, bhakti etc. The special feature is the short cuts in sadhana delineated by the compassionate Lord when Uddhava pointed out the difficulty in controlling the mind which was the main part of the sadhana in the various types of paths.

As the title 'Uddhava Gita' suggests, Lord Krishna speaks here from the level of the disciple in a language comprehensible to the seekers while, in Bhagavad Gita, the Lord has talked from His supreme height. After all, Uddhava Gita is a very small chunk out of the large Gulabjamun called

Srimad Bhagavatam whose every word is seeped in the syrup (Raso vai Sah) called the Supreme Lord. May this text induce the readers not familiar with Srimad Bhagavatam to go through it and be endowed with its blessings.

Love and Hari OM

-Swami Shantananda Puri



Sri Swami Shantananda Puri



CHAPTER - I

A Quintessence of Uddhava Gita

Introduction

Out of the numerous Gitas like the Bhagavad Gita, Surya Gita, Brahma Gita, Siva Gita, Rama Gita etc, extant nowadays, Bhagavad Gita and Uddhava Gita are given maximum importance as both these Gitas have come out of the mouth of Lord Krishna Himself who was verily the Brahman Absolute. The main difference is that the former i.e., the Bhagavad Gita (sung by Bhagavan) has been titled so in order to emphasise that the author is Bhagavan Krishna himself and the subject matter of the Gita is also Bhagavan. In Uddhava Gita, the emphasis is on the eminence of the disciple Uddhava whom Krishna wants to make a repository of all the knowledge of all the

paths for liberation so that it may be passed on to the posterity undistorted by time. Srimad Bhagavatam describes¹ Uddhava as the best among those belonging to the lineage of Vrishni, as the most beloved of Krishna, the most intelligent and both a minister and a companion of the Lord. He is one of the three persons who have been given the title of 'Haridasa' in Srimad Bhagavatam, the other two being King Yudhishtira and Govardhana mountain.

Uddhava Gita occurs in the Eleventh skandha(part) of Srimad Bhagavatam (verse no. 19 of chapter 7 to verse no. 34 of chapter 29 – Total 1030 verses). One striking similarity in both these Gitas is as follows. In Bhagavad Gita, when once Arjuna was beset with grief on account of his ignorance and ultimately surrendered² himself to the

- 1 वृष्णीनां प्रवरो मन्त्री कृष्णस्य दयितः सखा।
शिष्यो बृहस्पतेः साक्षादुद्धवो बुद्धिसत्तमः ॥ (XI-46-1)
- 2 यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे
शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥ (B.G. ॥-2)

Lord, an excellent pathway to liberation, a yoga, flowed out of the divine lips of Sri Krishna and the first chapter of that Gita was rightly known as 'Vishada Yoga'. In the same way, when Uddhava feels unhappy and grieves over the impending separation from Krishna who is preparing to depart for his Divine Domain, leaving the world, he surrenders³ himself at the feet of the Lord, when again the unparalleled compassion of the Lord flows out of His lips in the form of Uddhava Gita. Further when once the instructions are over, both avow⁴ that their delusion has been dispelled.

In Bhagavad Gita Krishna finally exhorts Arjuna to take up his bow and arrows and fulfil his duties as a kshatriya by fighting with the Kauravas. In Uddhava Gita,

- 3 निर्विण्णधीरहमु ह वृजिनाभितप्तो
नारायणं नरसखं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ (Bhagavata XI-7-18)
- 4 (a) नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत (B.G. XVIII-73)
(b) विद्रावितो मोह मदान्धकारो
य आश्रितो मे तव सन्निधानात् । (Bhagavata XI-29-37)

Krishna commands Uddhava to return to the forest of Badri and live the life of a recluse with all austerities practised as per His instructions merging his speech and the mind in the Lord. This is because of the difference in the fitness (Adhikari Bedha) of the two respective devotees.

While the Bhagavad Gita instructs Arjuna on the various Yoga paths and the sadhanas in a plain unadorned language, in Uddhava Gita Krishna intersperses his discourse with a lot of parable-like and other illustrations so that it will be easier to understand and remember it too besides being attractive enough to make it more interesting for an aspirant.



CHAPTER - II

The Story of the Avadhoota

Krishna starts his discourse by saying how the aspirants with an enquiring and discriminative mind try to rid themselves of their latent undesirable tendencies (vasanas) by contemplation. Even by observing Nature, including the insentient objects like the trees, mountains, water, the birds, animals, reptiles etc, which are all around us, one can get a lot of lessons, negative as well as positive, which will equip us in our quest for liberation and teach us how to remain happy while living our life in this world. In illustrating it, Krishna starts with the story of an Avadhoota Brahmin, a naked Brahmin (presumed to be Lord Dattatreya himself) who was always bubbling with irrepressible and ebullient inner joy. A king called Yadu, who saw this holy man wandering fearlessly, asked him the secret

of his never-waning happiness while all people around him were burning in the untold miseries of this world. While the latter were involved in this world being motivated by Dharma, earning of wealth and getting all the desires for enjoyment in this world fulfilled (Dharma, Artha and Kama), the Avadhoota was found moving without a single purpose or desire, sometimes like a dull fellow (though his scholarliness was evident), sometimes like a child or a mad man. The Avadhoota began to narrate how he had twenty-four masters (Gurus) in nature, from whom he learnt various lessons as to how to get liberated and live happily irrespective of the environment, by applying his intelligence.

The 24 gurus were :- earth, air, space, water, fire, moon, sun, pigeon, python, ocean, moth, honey-bee, elephant, honey gatherer, deer, fish, Pingala-a prostitute, osprey (a small bird), a child, an unmarried

maiden, arrowsmith, a serpent, a spider and a wasp. The Avadhoota began to expound in detail the lessons learned from each :-

The mother earth⁵ is reputed for its forbearance and tolerance. It remains unmoved and undisturbed however much people may subject it to suffering by stamping and treading on it hard with booted feet and by wetting it with their spittle, and urine etc. Even though others may perpetrate atrocities on us out of ignorance and also due to the will of the providence, we should remain unmoved like the earth and continue to walk on our own path, as the sorrows we get are ascribed to our destiny.

The mountains and the trees are only modifications of the earth. They exist only for serving others (by giving fruits, shelter,

5 भूतैराक्रम्यमाणोऽपि धीरो देववशानुगैः।

तद् विद्वान् चलेन्मार्गा दन्वशिक्षं क्षितेर्रतम्॥ (XI-7-37)

shade, etc). In the same way, one should learn to live a life devoid of selfishness devoting oneself solely to actions which will promote the welfare of other people.

2. I learnt from the air which has become my vital force (Prana) that one should remain content with the food just adequate for maintaining one's body and not go after things which attract one's senses like the palate so that one's mind, speech and knowledge do not get dispersed.

The external air⁶ in the atmosphere around us wanders over all the places and objects but it does not imbibe the characteristics or qualities of the latter. In the same way while moving in the world with various types of people we should remain untainted by the atmosphere. We should not go on absorbing all the defects and

6 विषयेष्वाविशन् योगी नानाधर्मेषु सर्वतः ।
गुणदोषव्यपेतात्मा न विषज्जेत वायुवत् ॥ (XI-7-40)

weaknesses of other people and should not also develop any attachment or revulsion towards any of them. The air carries the smell of objects it comes into contact with but remains pure in itself. So also even though we carry our body with us including its diseases, hunger, thirst, etc., we should remain detached from the body by seeing ourselves as the pure Atman.

3. The all pervasive Akasa (Space) pervades⁷ everywhere both inside and outside all the gross objects like pots, furniture, houses etc. but continues to remain as one integral space, undivided or not cut by the objects and unpolluted. The Absolute Supreme Being (Brahman) also (having no form of its own like the electric energy) pervades all beings - moveable and immoveable - as their very self (Atman). It

7 अन्तर्हितश्च स्थिरजगत्तमेषु ब्रह्मात्मभावेन समन्वयेन ।
व्याप्त्या व्यवच्छेद-मसङ्गमात्मनो मुनिर्नभस्त्वं विततस्य
भावयेत् ॥ (XI-7-42)

remains unattached with and uninfluenced by the body. Just as the same electricity pervades all the bulbs, one should consider his own Self as pervading all the bodies of all beings. It remains one whole without being divided.

4. Water, by its nature⁸, is pure, sweet to drink, friendly to all (wets everything) and is capable of purifying us. In the same way, a seeker on the spiritual path should be sweet, kind to all and capable of communicating his vibrations of sanctity and purity towards all who come into contact with him.

5. Fire is always glowing with its effulgence and full of light which cannot be overtaken and suppressed by others. It never accumulates any objects but absorbs them all into its stomach (by reducing them to ashes). Even though it eats all types of things

8 स्वच्छः प्रकृतितः स्निग्धो माधुर्यस्तीर्थभूर्नुणाम् ।
मुनिः पुनात्यपां मित्रमीक्षोपस्पर्शकीर्तनैः ॥ (XI-7-44)

(good and bad) indiscriminately, it never gets polluted by the latter's defects. One should emulate fire on these aspects by remaining shining with one's austerities, not quelled by the senses, keeping one's mind and senses under control and not allowing anybody's defects to creep into one.

Fire⁹ has no form of its own. It just takes on the form of the fuel it consumes becoming as long and as wide like the wood used as fuel. An aspirant should understand that in a like way, the Self (Atman) has no specific form of its own but projects itself in the forms of the various objects of the world and pervades the entire world created by it in the form of cause and effect.

6. As a result¹⁰ of the passage of time, the digits of the moon wax and wane but their

9 तेजस्वी तपसा दीप्तो दुर्धर्षोदरभाजनः ।
सर्वभक्षोऽपि युक्तात्मा नादत्ते मलमशिवत् ॥ (XI-7-45)

10 विसर्गाद्याः श्मशानान्ताः भावा देहस्य नात्मनः ।
कलानामिव चन्द्रस्य कालेनाव्यक्तवर्त्मना ॥ (XI-7-48)

core i.e., the Moon as such remains unchanged. The lesson is that birth, growth and death are all only for our bodies while the Self (Atman) remains the same without any change.

7. The Sun¹¹ absorbs water from the earth and in proper time releases it in the form of rain. So also a yogi may absorb the vibrations (in the form of smell, taste, form, touch, etc) from the various objects through his senses but should renounce them when the time comes. At no time he should get attached to them.

When the Sun shines reflected in the water in the various vessels, it is the foolish people who consider the various reflections as different ones while the Sun remains one and the same.

In the same way, it is the one Self (Atman) who is reflected in the body-mind

11 गुणैर्गुणानुपादत्ते यथाकालं विमुञ्चति।
न तेषु युज्यते योगी गोभिर्गा इव गोपतिः ॥ (XI-7-50)

complex of various persons as if they are separate Jivas (individual souls). The wise aspirant should learn from this that there is only one Self which is reflected differently in various bodies.

8. One should not cultivate excessive love or attachment towards anybody. Anybody contravening this principle will have to rue it when confronted with miseries and sorrows as in the following story of a pigeon.

There lived a pigeon and his wife in a nest on a tree in a jungle. The couple were closely attached to each other and always moved together wherever they flew. In due course they got children and both of them loved their children dearly. They were so involved with each other that no thoughts of death or the other world ever crossed their mind. One day when the parent pigeons had gone out in search of food for the children, a hunter caught all the fledglings inside the nest by throwing his net over them. When

the parents returned home, the she-pigeon became highly upset and miserable on seeing the pitiable plight of her children struggling inside the net. Forgetting her own body, she voluntarily fell into the net and got herself entangled in it. On seeing this the pigeon began to wail and lament thus :-

Oh my Lord, my dear wife who always doted on me and never failed to execute even a single command of mine has abandoned me and leaving the house vacant is proceeding to heaven along with all the children. With all my children and wife dead what purpose will be served by my continuing to live alone in misery?

On seeing his wife and children struggling to escape from this certain death, the pigeon also deliberately fell into the net. The hunter, happy in the prospect of a sumptuous lunch took all the pigeons with him and went home.

A householder, who finds happiness in the company of objects of senses loses his

mental peace while looking after his family and becomes extremely miserable like the pigeon. This human body¹² may be deemed as an open door to liberation. Having obtained it, the person who wastes it by being attached to his family and house like the pigeon in this story is the one who having ascended substantially falls down (Aroodha Chuta).



12 यः प्राप्य मानुषं लोकं मुक्तिद्वारमपावृतम्।
गृहेषु खगवत् सक्तः तमारूढच्युतं विदुः ॥ (XI-7-74)

Avadhoota's story continued

The naked mendicant continued the details of his 24 Gurus from Nature.

9. A python never goes out in search of food. It remains lying in one place for days together and eats whatever comes on its way, small or big. So also a person should remain indifferent¹³ to food and should eat whatever he gets, tasty or not, small or big irrespective of its quality or quantity as decreed by destiny just like a python, without making any efforts to go and seek food. Even though he may possess enough strength of mind and strength of all the senses, a person should remain bereft of all actions lying down as if asleep. This is a lesson to be learnt from the python.

13 ग्रासं सुमृष्टं विरसं महान्तं स्तोकमेव वा।
यदृच्छयैवापतितं प्रसेदाज्जगरोऽक्रियः ॥ (XI-8-2)

10. The ocean neither overflows in rainy season due to the abundant water from the rivers flowing into it nor does it get dried up in summer. In the same way one should learn neither to exult in prosperity nor to feel unhappy in adversity. A seeker should remain bubbling¹⁴ with joy, fathomless, profound, deep, unperturbed and free from all limitations like the ocean.

11. A moth¹⁵ with its fatal attraction for light and fire, perishes by immolation into the fire. Similarly, a foolish person blind with passion falls into the fire-like pitfalls of sex, gold, ornaments, clothings etc. (the products of Maya) being tempted by the prospects of

14 (a) मुनिः प्रसन्नगम्भीरो दुर्विगाहो दुरत्ययः।
अनन्तपारो ह्यक्षोभ्यः स्तिमितोद इवार्णवः ॥ (XI-8-5)
(b) समृद्धकामो हीनो वा नारायणपरो मुनिः।
नोत्सर्पेत न शुष्येत सरिन्द्रिरिव सागरः ॥ (XI-8-6)

15 योषिद्विरण्याभरणाम्बरादि द्रव्येषु मायाचितेषु मूढः।
प्रलोभितात्मा ह्युपभोग बुद्ध्यया पतन्नवन्नश्यति नष्टदृष्टिः ॥ (XI-8-8)

enjoyment and not being capable of controlling the senses.

12. A mendicant¹⁶ should survive on a life of alms by begging, like a honey-bee, a little at a time from each house (Madhukari Biksha) just adequate for the maintenance of his body in order that he may not become a burden to the donor-householders.

Just as a bee collects the essence (the honey) from a number of flowers (big and small), in the same way, a wise man should absorb the essentials from all types of scriptures (small and big).

A monk should not keep and store food for the evenings or for the next day. He should use his hand and stomach as a vessel for taking the food and keeping it; otherwise he will perish like the honey-bee which stores the honey and finally meets its death when the honey stored up is taken away by other people.

- 16 स्तोत्रं स्तोत्रं ग्रसेद् ग्रसं देहो वर्तेत यावता।
गृहानहिसत्रातिष्ठेत् वृत्ति माधुकरि मुनिः ॥ (XI-8-9)

13. A mendicant should not touch¹⁷ even a wooden icon of other sex and should keep away from such company. This lesson can be learnt by seeing a male elephant which is got seduced by a tame cow elephant and then caught and bound.

14. Even though the greedy people¹⁸ of this world accumulate a lot of money by working for it, they neither enjoy it themselves nor do they give it away in charity. Ultimately that money will be plundered and enjoyed by somebody else just as the honey stored by the bees is taken away by the honey-gatherer.

15. The deer,¹⁹ which run away from the hunters, are halted, lured and caught as they

17 पदापि युवतीं भिक्षुर्न स्पृशेद् दारवीमपि।
स्पृशन् करीव बद्ध्येत करिण्या अन्नसन्नतः ॥ (XI-8-13)

18 न देयं नोपभोग्यं च लुब्धैर्यद् दुःखसञ्चितम्।
भुङ्क्ते तदपि तच्चान्यो मधुहेवार्थविन्मधु ॥ (XI-8-15)

19 ग्राम्यगीतं न श्रुणुयाद् यतिर्वनचरः क्वचित्।
शिक्षेत हरिणाद् बद्धान्मृगयोगीतमोहितात् ॥ (XI-8-17)

stop in their tracks being tempted by the lilting music from the flutes played by the hunters. This is a lesson for a wandering monk not to hear wordly songs or music.

A question was once raised with Bhagwan Ramana Maharshi as to whether one could realize God through music. Bhagwan remained quiet without answering. When the lady repeated her question and added that saints like Saint Tyagaraja (founder of Carnatic music) Saint Purandaradasa and Saint Meera got God only through their devotional songs, Bhagwan told :- " Those saints did not get it by singing but on the contrary sang what they got." I have come across a number of singing monks who were experts in music and scriptures and used to sing in concerts and cassettes, came into contact with admiring young women and it ended in marriages even though the monks were in their forties or fifties, with years of sanyas behind them.

16. A person under the sway of the inexorable delights of the palate is caught and drawn to death just as a fish is baited and trapped by the thorned hook with a piece of meat, as he loses his discriminative wisdom.

A person who has controlled all his²⁰ senses except the palate cannot be declared to have conquered his senses so long as he does not conquer his palate. When a person has won over his attraction towards taste he can be deemed to have conquered all.

17. Now comes the story of Pingala, a prostitute. Pingala was a prostitute in Mithila, a city ruled by King Janaka. One day, she dressed herself and decorated herself beautifully in order that some rich customers may get attracted to her. She was fondly hoping that some rich fellow will come to her and pay her generously for

20 यावज्जितेन्द्रियो न स्याद् विजितान्येन्द्रियः पुमान्।
न जयेद् रसनं यावज्जितं सर्वं जिते रसे॥ (XI-8-21)

enjoying a few hours with her. For more than half the night she continued to wait at her doorstep, with unfulfilled hope, losing her sleep. Slowly she began to lose hope and her face became pale and sunken with disappointment. By the grace of God, an intense dispassion (vairagya) suddenly arose in her mind. Her mind became detached from all wordly desires and she burst into a song of dispassion. The Avadhoota, at this stage of the story, warned the king that a man is always hanging from the gallows of desire and the only sword which can cut it off is vairagya (dispassion). Nobody can get out of the bondage of the body without detachment. Now the Avadhoota repeated the song²¹ sung by Pingala repenting the life of folly led by her so far:-

What an ignoramus I have been that I had ignored such a nice customer (The

21 सन्तं समीपे रमणं रतिप्रदं वित्तप्रदं नित्यमिमं विहाय।
अकामदं दुःखभयाधिशोकमोहप्रदं तुच्छ महं भजेऽज्ञा ॥ (XI-8-31)

Supreme Lord) who was always very near to me and who was capable of giving me real love, pleasure and plenty of wealth. He is a lover who is eternal. Ignoring him, I have been after insignificant men who had no love for me and were capable of giving me miseries, fear, worry and sorrow only. Who else but myself could be attached to such a despicable body full of bones and flesh covered by a skin with hair and nails, having nine outlets out of which urine, faeces etc. are ever flowing out. I am perhaps the only person in this city of videhas (liberated people) who has been desiring for persons other than the Lord who is always prepared to give Himself to us. This Lord is my master, a well wisher of all beings, friend, my beloved and my own Self. In future I shall revel only in the Lord who has been compassionate enough to arouse vairagya in me. I am leaving all my desires and take refuge at His feet. In future I shall be content with whatever money or comforts come my way as per the prarabdha (decree of

destiny). Thus she went back to her bed to catch some sleep with a peaceful mind.

The naked mendicant concluded²² this story saying :- "Desire is the greatest misery. Vairagya or dispassion is the greatest happiness. When once Pingala got rid of her desire for the night customer, she was able to sleep in happiness."



22 आशा हि परमं दुःखं नैराश्यं परमं सुखम्।
यथा सञ्छिद्य कान्ताशां सुखं सुष्वाप पिबला ॥ (XI-8-44)

Conclusion of Avadhoota's story of 24 Gurus

Avadhoota continues:-

18. A kurara bird (osprey) which managed to get a piece of flesh was attacked by other stronger birds. Only when it dropped the piece of flesh, it became happy and peaceful. The lesson learnt²³ from this story is that accumulation of possessions which are liked best, leads to strife and unhappiness. A wise man who possesses nothing lives in infinite happiness.

19. Neither honour²⁴ or dishonour perturbs me nor do I worry about my house and

23 परिग्रहो हि दुःखाय यद् यत्प्रियतमं नृणाम्।
अनन्तं सुखमाप्नोति तद् विद्वान् यस्त्वकिंचनः ॥ (XI-9-1)

24 न मे मानावमानौ स्तो न चिन्ता गेहपुत्रिणाम्।
आत्मक्रीड आत्मरति-र्विचरमीह बालवत् ॥ (XI-9-3)

children. I wander like a child revelling in my own Self and finding entertainment in my own Self.

20. Now the mendicant tells the story of a young unmarried girl and her bangles. An unmarried poor maiden was pounding grains in a mortar with a pestle, in the sly, in order to feed the guests who had come to see the girl for a probable alliance for marriage. She was alone and she did not want the guests to know that she was too poor to keep a servant. When she found that the jingling sound of the bangles in her hands would alert the guests, she removed all the bangles till only one was left in each hand and no sound came out of it. The Avadhoota happened to be at that place at that time. He learnt²⁵ a lesson from the young maiden that whenever several people live together, there will arise strife and quarrel among them. Even if only two persons live together, they

25 वासे बहूनां कलहो भवेद्द्वारता द्वयोरपि।

एक एव चरेत्तस्मात् कुमार्या इव कङ्कणः ॥ (XI-9-10)

will be gossiping. One should always move alone like a single bangle in the hand of the maiden.

21. An arrowsmith²⁶ was so absorbingly engaged in his work in his shop that he was not aware of what was going on inside or outside. Thus he failed to notice even the king who was passing by that way. Likewise, one should keep his mind concentrated one-pointedly on his Self. The mind is to be brought under control by breath control exercises, by remaining vigilant and with vairagya and repeated practise. By thus keeping the mind firmly on the Lord, the Sattva guna increases while the Rajoguna and Tamoguna wane away. Then the mind becomes quiescent.

22. A serpent never bothers to build a nest of its own but resides within the holes of a mud structure built by white ants/rats

26 तदैवमात्मन्यवरुद्धचित्तो न वेद किञ्चिद् बहिरन्तरं वा।

यथेषुकारो नृपतिं ब्रजन्तमिषी गतात्मा न ददर्श पाश्वे ॥

(XI-9-13)

without advertising its presence. The following lesson was learnt from the serpent that a mendicant should never build an ashram or any shelter. He should live in caves etc., as a man of few words in such a way that nobody would find out from his behaviour and conduct, that he is a great saint. Building a house²⁷ for an impermanent body will entail a lot of sufferings and one should emulate a serpent which lives happily in the shelter prepared by other animals etc.

23. A spider brings²⁸ out through its mouth the fine web string from its inside and having moved in that web for some time retrieves it and puts it into its stomach again. In the same way, the supreme God plays by creating the

27 गृहारम्भोऽति दुःखाय विफलश्चाध्रुवात्मनः।
सर्पः परकृतं वेश्म प्रविश्य सुखमेधते ॥ (XI-9-15)

28 यथोर्णनाभिर्हृदयात् ऊर्णां सन्तत्य वक्रतः।
तथा विहृत्य भूयस्तां ग्रस्त्येवं महेश्वरः ॥ (XI-9-21)

entire universe through His Maya and destroying it in due course of time at the end of each of the four yugas. Lord alone is real.

24. A worm is kept inside a muddy nest with a hole by a wasp and it lives in constant fear of the wasp stinging it. It is constantly thinking of the wasp so that eventually it identifies itself with the form of the wasp without abandoning its original form. I learnt²⁹ that if a being keeps its mind one-pointedly on any object either out of love, hatred or fear it attains that form.

After narrating the lessons learnt from all the 24 Gurus, mostly from Nature, the Avadhoota finally says³⁰ that his own body has been the greatest of all Gurus as it is the

29 यत्र यत्र मनो देही धारयेत् सकलं धिया।
स्नेहात् द्रेषात् भयाद्वापि याति तत्तत्सरूपताम् ॥ (XI-9-22)

30 देहो गुरुर्मम विरक्तिविवेकहेतुर्बिभ्रत् स्म सत्त्वनिधनं सततात्स्युर्दकम्।
तत्त्वान्यनेन विमृशामि यथा तथापि पारक्य मित्यवसितो
विचराम्यसक्तः ॥ (XI-9-25)

cause of detachment and discrimination. It is always subject to birth and death and goes on giving us sorrow after sorrow. Even though this body had been helpful to him in contemplating on the Reality, he never considered it as belonging to him. So saying, he detached himself from any attachment to the body and he was wandering around happily.

In conclusion, the Avadhoota gave a pertinent advice³¹ to King Yadu as follows:-

After countless births in lower yonis (species) we have got this precious human birth. Hence we should try at the earliest to get liberation as quickly as possible before death overtakes us. The purpose of the entire life is to get Moksha and not to revel in

31 लब्ध्वा सुदुर्लभमिदं बहुसम्भवान्ते मानुष्यमर्थद मनित्यमपीह धीरः।
तूर्णं यतेत न पतेदनुमृत्यु यावन् निःश्रेयसाय विषयः खलु सर्वतः
स्यात्॥ (XI-9-29)

material pleasures. The enjoyment of sensuous objects can be had in any yoni as an animal or a bird or even an insect.

Dattatreya, the mendicant, took leave of the king and went away. On hearing these instructions King Yadu was able to renounce all attachments and become a man of equal vision.



Liberation and Bhakti

Krishna continues his discourse.

A sadhaka should completely surrender himself to the supreme Lord and should follow the laws pertaining to his station and status in life as promulgated by the Lord Himself (in Gita etc). He should observe the dos and donts (yama and niyama) prescribed in the scriptures and should serve a Guru who has the knowledge of the Supreme Lord, considering him as God Himself. He should be skilful in all his actions and having no sense of possession, should be indifferent towards his wife, children, land, wealth and relations. It is the three Gunas (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) which are responsible for the building up of the gross body. It is because of our identification with the body considering it as our Self that the transmigration of our subtle soul i.e.

rebirths take place. All external actions motivated by desires result in miseries. It is because the Jiva considers his body as the Self that we are subject to the cycle of birth and death. It is the three Gunas (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) which prompt us to do actions. If we have a prominence of Sattva guna in us, we go for Satsanga, we do charity, we study scriptures and we worship God etc. If we have the prominence of Rajo guna, it makes us run about here and there and engage ourselves in activities, like building hospitals, temples and schools and in the process, desires and anger are generated. Excessive Tamo guna results in indolence, lack of vigilance and procrastination. As you consider the body as your Self, you consider the actions as having been done by you and its results—the sins and virtues - also as accruing to you and thus you are subject to pleasure and pain. So long as we consider the body as ours on account of the influence of the gunas, we cannot experience that there is only one undivided Self which is occupying all the bodies and there is no multiplicity at all.

Uddhava was bewildered. He asks Krishna to tell him by what qualities a liberated soul is recognized and as to how to get rid of the gunas to reach that state. Just as in the dream, a dream world is created which looks real (but actually unreal), similarly this world is also unreal. When one gets the knowledge of the Self as to who one is, one becomes liberated. The one who has not made any Self-enquiry and has not attained Self-knowledge continues to be bound and suffers. Even though I may be a millionaire sleeping with lakhs of rupees in my pocket, the moment I see myself as a beggar in the dream, I identify myself with the body of the beggar and become unhappy with my poverty. The moment I wake up I become aware of who I am and the sorrows suffered as a beggar cease.

A liberated person does not consider himself as the doer of any action as all actions take place in the Totality and the bodies are only instruments through which the Totality seems to work. So he is not at all concerned with what happens in this world drama. He

is undifferentiated in his outlook and has an even mind which has no preferences or choice. Whether somebody does a work well or in a bad way, he neither praises nor rebukes. He does not do, talk about or think of anything as good or bad. He is always drowned in the bliss of his own Self. He is not concerned whether people worship him or torment him.

Hence through Self enquiry³² and contemplation, the delusion that each Self (Atman) is different and there are as many souls as there are beings, should be removed. We should keep our pure mind concentrated on the all-pervasive Supreme Self (Brahman) and completely withdraw ourselves from all worldly activities.

If a Sadhaka finds himself³³ unable to keep the mind concentrated on the Supreme

32 एवं जिज्ञासयापोह्य नानात्व भ्रममात्मनि।
उपारमेत विरजं मनो मय्यर्प्य सर्वगे॥ (XI-11-21)

33 यद्यनीशो धारयितुं मनो ब्रह्मणि निश्चलम्।
मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि निरपेक्षः समाचर॥ (XI-11-22)

Lord, he should continue to do actions after dedicating them all to the Lord and without any expectation of the fruit. He should hear the stories of Lord's leelas and glories, think of them again and again and sing His glories. Thus, completely taking refuge in the Lord, he should do all actions motivated by three purusharthas viz. Dharma, Artha and Kama. Doing like this, one gets unwavering and firm Bhakti (Devotion) in the Lord.

Uddhava then questions Krishna about the characteristics of a Sadhu (a bhakta) and how to do Bhakti. Krishna details the characteristics of a Sadhu, namely compassion, forbearance of sorrows, truthfulness, helping everybody and freedom from desires. The one³⁴, who at the final stage renounces even all the laws (Dharma) prescribed by the Lord in the various scriptures and is solely devoted to the service of the Lord is the best of the

34 आज्ञायैवं गुणान् दोषान् मयाऽदिष्टानपि स्वकान्।
धर्मान् सन्त्यज्य यः सर्वान् मां भजेत स सत्तमः ॥ (XI-11-32)

Sadhus. Similarly, the one³⁵ who devotes himself exclusively to the Lord whether with or without any knowledge of who the Lord is and what are his attributes or glories is also the best of the Sadhus.

The next question was how to do Bhakti i.e. what external sadhanas are to be done in the Bhakti path? The following sadhanas are prescribed by Lord Krishna :-

The sadhanas are to prostrate to serve and to worship Bhagvan's idols and as also the devotees of the Lord, and to sing the stories and glories of the Lord. One should have faith in hearing the stories of the Lord and his avatars and should continuously meditate on Him. One should surrender³⁶ in Lord's service whatever one earns and finally dedicate oneself to the Lord with the

35 ज्ञात्वाज्ञात्वाथ ये वै मां यावान् यश्चास्मि यादृशः।
भजन्त्यनन्यभावेन ते मे भक्ततमा मताः ॥ (XI-11-33)

36 मत्कथाश्रवणेश्रद्धा मदनुष्ठान मुद्भव।
सर्वलाभोपहरणं दास्येनात्मनिवेदनम् ॥ (XI-11-35)

attitude of a servant. One should undertake pilgrimages to holy places and should take initiation of a Mantra from a Guru. One should remain humble without the least ego and should leave off hypocrisy. Whatever food item is offered as 'Bhog' (naivedya) to any deity should not be used as offering to the Supreme God. Even the light³⁷ of the lamp kept before the Lord should not be used for our purposes. I am reminded of a story. Chanakya was the mentor of King Chandragupta but was living in a small cottage. When once a visitor went to meet Chanakya, the latter was engaged in state affairs and doing it under the light of a big candle. On seeing the visitor, he put off the candle with him and lighted a new candle. The visitor who was surprised asked Chanakya as to what was the need for putting off an existing candle and to light a fresh one. Chanakya said that the candle he was using belonged to the state and he was

37 अपि दीपावलोकं मे नोपयुञ्ज्यान्निवेदितम्। (XI-11-40)

then working on something which related to state affairs. Now that he had to meet a private visitor he had no right to use the government candle for his personal dealings and so he had to put it off. Similarly one should not use anything meant for the exclusive use of the temple or the Lord for any personal benefit to be derived.

One should worship the Lord by doing free social service (poortha) and by performing fire sacrifices (ishta). Serving sadhus (saints) bestows knowledge of the Lord. There is no easier way³⁸ to reach the Lord except through Satsanga (company of holy men) and Bhakti Yoga.

Glory of Satsanga:– It is only through Satsanga (company of holy men) that one can annihilate one's attachment and desires. No other means – neither Sankhya, Yoga, Dharma, Austerity, Renunciation, Study of

38 प्रायेण भक्तियोगेन सत्सङ्गेन विनोद्धव।

नोपायो विद्यते सध्वद्ग्रायणं हि सतामहम्॥

Scriptures nor social services – can draw us towards God as Satsanga. Even animals, birds and demons who had no knowledge of scriptures nor had served any saints nor had done any austerities had God-realization solely through the glory of Satsanga.



God's incarnation as Hamsa (swan) (Hansavatara)

Krishna continues his discourse to Uddhava:

Rajas, Tamas, and Sattva are the three gunas (modes) which belong to the intellect (Buddhi) and do not belong to the Self. People normally possess all the three gunas in different proportions. By increasing Sattva guna, Rajas and Tamas can be quelled. Finally, through our peaceful thoughts generated by Sattva guna we have to extinguish Sattva guna too in order to get liberation (Jeevan Mukti). That stage is called gunātīta (transcending the three gunas). The question is how to increase Sattva guna. The ten factors³⁹ which influence and determine

39 आगमोऽपः प्रजा देशः कालः कर्म च जन्म च ।
ध्यानं मन्द्रोऽथ संस्कारो दशैते गुणहेतवः ॥ (XI-13-4)

the growth and predominance of a particular guna (say Tamas or Sattva) are the following:-

1. **Agama:** The gunas depend on what type of *books you study*. If you read books on philosophy or religion, they increase your Sattva. If you read books on Political Science and History, they increase your Rajo guna.
2. **Apah:** The type of *water* we drink i.e. whether it is from a holy river like Ganges or from a tap near a gutter etc., influence your gunas.
3. **Praja:** What is the type of *people* you keep company with or come into contact? Do you move with saints and sadhakas or do you move with deceitful and dishonest people or with convicts and murderers or with attractive members of opposite sex?

4. **Desah:** How is the environment of the *place* you live in? Is it conducive to meditation and other Sadhana ? Do you live near a temple or an ashram or do you live in a slum area or near a cinema theatre ?
5. **Kalah:** Do you spend your *time* in playing cards for stakes or in gossip or talking about God or scriptures or in sleeping ?
6. **Karma:** What is the type of *activity* in which you are engaged? Are you a lecturer on philosophy or an assistant in a butchery or a jail worker controlling the convicts or are you doing sadhana daily doing japa and prayers ?
7. **Janma:** Whether you are *born* in a family of politicians or crooked businessmen or in a family of scholars steeped in the knowledge of philosophy and religion?
8. **Dhyanam:** Are you meditating on thematic deities like the crude local

village deities not mentioned in our scriptures or on the Supreme Being? Do you meditate on household affairs or how to serve your country?

9. **Mantra:** Do you do japa of mantras relating to ghosts, ghouls, dead people or gods or japa for abhichara i.e. causing harm, death, disease etc. to enemies or mantras for liberation or mantras for getting mystic powers?
10. **Sanskara:** The conditioning or *training* you get at home and hostel etc. are important. Are you trained to prostrate before elders and saints and to serve them or are you trained as a NCC cadet to wield a gun and a rifle? Are you trained to pray to God for atleast ten minutes daily and to help the needy and the poor or are you taken to the lectures of politicians or discourses of saints?

Except for the 7th factor "Janma(birth)" rest of the factors can be changed to our

benefit by choosing those which will increase Sattwaguna. As 'Janma' is fixed by destiny, the choice looks limited. Even here, when one is aware that he is handicapped by this factor, he can certainly make extra efforts to make up for it by his sadhana as in the case of Prahlada who was born in the family of demons to Hiranyakasipu who was a sworn enemy of the Supreme Lord but he never swerved from his faith in God and a continuous Sadhana for constant remembrance of God.

Now Uddhava asks a pertinent question as to why, even after knowing that the wordly objects are the repositories of calamities, people are drawn helplessly to the enjoyment of the objects, like dogs and donkeys. His intention was to know the remedial measures to be taken by understanding how the inexorable but fatal attraction to sensuous objects is caused.

Lord Krishna begins to answer: The attraction towards objects is caused mainly

by Rajo guna and sometimes by Tamoguna. The person is put under a delusion when these gunas disturb and overwhelm the mind. The only way⁴⁰ to prevent it is to keep the mind concentrated on God repeatedly with great vigilance and bringing it back to God whenever it tries to slip away. It is a slow process and requires repeated practice. One should never feel despondent when it takes a long time to establish the mind firmly on God. We should cultivate patience and be prepared to wait for the entire lifetime, if necessary, but we should be so enthusiastic and zealous as if getting liberation is a matter of few hours. Breath control and sitting on one posture (Asana) for at least three hours continuously will also be of help. In this connection Krishna begins to narrate the episode of his Hansavatara, where taking the form of a swan he had instructed Sanaka, Sanandana etc, in the same connection.

40 अप्रमत्तोऽनुयुञ्जीत मनो मय्यर्पयञ्छनेः।
अनिर्विण्णो यथाकालं जितश्वासो जितासनः ॥ (XI-13-13)

Once Sanaka and other Maharshis who were the mind-borne sons of Brahma, the creator, approached their father and put a question relating to the higher subtle aspects of Yoga. They asked: "The mind has entered into all the objects of senses on account of enjoyment of the objects several times in the past and has become completely attached to the objects. Factually also, all the objects are the products of imagination of the mind. The mind is the material cause of all the objects and as such is immanent in them. The objects also have entered into the mind as they are in every thought (Vritti) of the mind. Thus the mind and the objects are intricately mixed with each other. As it is essential to take the mind away from the objects as part of the sadhana to get Moksha, please tell us how they can be separated from each other."

As Brahma could not think of an answer, he mentally invoked the help of the Supreme Lord, his own father. The Supreme Lord took the form of a swan and went before them.

Along with Brahma, all the sages prostrated to his feet and asked the swan- "Sir, who are you?" The Hansa quipped back- "As there is no multiplicity of objects and there is only one Self (Atman), how can such a question arise at all? Even if I were to answer, as Atman has no species, quality, activity, relationship etc., on what basis can I describe the indescribable Atman?" Having been made of the same five basic elements, all the beings being equal and in reality too, your question of "Who are you" is meaningless. Now the Hansa took up answering the original doubt posed by the Maharshis to Brahma.

He answered⁴¹ it in three words- "Madroopam ubhayam tyajet" and then elaborated it in various ways. If the ingredients, say, beaten rice and sugar were to be kept mixed as they are, it is possible to separate them with some effort. If you were

41 गुणेषु चाविशच्चित्तमभीक्षणं गुणसेवया।

गुणाश्च चित्तप्रभवा मद्रूप उभयं त्यज ॥ (XI-13-26)

to make a 'halva' (pudding) of them by cooking them all together, the ingredients are inextricably merged with each other and they cannot be separated. You can only throw away the entire 'halva'. Similarly, one should not try to separate the mind and the objects. Throw away both. How can one throw them away? If you want a child to throw away the lighted candle it has caught hold of, you have to tempt the child with a more attractive object. So think of the Lord's form constantly till you are transformed into Lord's form when automatically the mind and the objects - both leave you. As you think so you become. In Advaita, it is called Brahmākāra Vrtti. By continuously thinking of the Lord and assuming His form, all His attributes come to us automatically and Vairagya is automatic. Vairagya is one of the six qualities of excellence (Bhaga) for Bhagawan. Once when Ravana who wanted to coerce Sita into accepting him was trying hard without success, one of his ministers suggested that he should assume the form

of Rama through his power of māya and then seduce Sita. Ravana said "I had tried it also without success. When once I became Rama, his vairagya also caught hold of me rendering even the attainment of Moksha as insignificant enough to strive for and I could not bring myself to look at anybody else's wife."

Just as the dream world in a dream, though it looked real was only a thought i.e., the product of imagination of the mind, all the three states viz., waking, sleep and dream are part of one cosmic dream. The one who was the witness of all the three states of the mind is the Supreme Lord. The three states of the mind are caused by the mind through the power of maya and are unreal. Be convinced of it through the words⁴² of saints and logic and cut off your ego (the

42 एवं विमृश्य गुणतो मनसस्त्रयवस्था मन्मायया मयि कृता इति
निश्चितार्थाः।

संछिद्य हार्दमनुमानसदुक्तितीक्ष्णज्ञानासिना भजत माखिल
संशयाधिम् ॥ (XI-13-35)

identification as 'I' with an individual body) with the sword of knowledge and concentrate on God, the Supreme Self. Hence withdraw your eyes from all the objects including the body and with all your desires quelled, enjoy in silence the experience of the bliss of the Atman (Self). Even though the world including the body may intrude sometimes while taking food etc, they will not be capable of again putting you into delusion as you have already renounced them after having been convinced that anything other than the Self is all unreal.



Glory of Bhakti and Dhyana Yoga (Meditation)

Now Uddhava asked Krishna—“Various people hold different views as to what is the sadhana which can bestow the highest good (some say Dharma, others say truth, control of mind, sacrifices, austerity, charity etc). Are they all equally important or is only one of them important? You yourself told that one should remove all attachment and keep the mind solely on GOD—which is tantamount to Bhakti yoga.” The Lord answered as follows :

The one who possesses⁴³ nothing, has his mind and senses under control, has an even mind (with an equal vision) and is happy by

43 अकिंचनस्य दान्तस्य शान्तस्य समचेतसः।

मया संतुष्टमनसः सर्वा सुखमया दिशः ॥ (XI-14-13)

thinking of the Lord finding happiness in every corner and direction. He does not want either heaven or moksha but desires to have Me only.

When a devotee is free⁴⁴ from all desires, has an equal vision, has no enemies and is full of peace, he becomes so holy that he can purify anybody who comes into contact with him. I walk behind him always so that I may become sanctified from the dust of his holy feet.

Even a devotee who has not been able to conquer his senses and is being disturbed by the objects, will in due course, cease to be influenced by the objects by the effect of Bhakti which is growing in him.

Yoga practice, the path⁴⁵ of knowledge, practice of righteousness, Japa, austerities,

44 निरपेक्षं मुनि शान्तं निर्वैरं समदर्शनम्
अनुब्रजाम्यहं नित्यं पूयेयेत्यङ्घ्रिरेणुभिः ॥ (XI-14-16)

45 न साधयति मां योगो न सांख्यं धर्म उद्धव।
न स्वाध्यायस्तपस्त्यागो यथा भक्तिर्ममोर्जिता ॥ (XI-14-20)

renunciation-none of these things are as capable of leading one to God-realisation as exclusive devotion (Bhakti) towards the Lord.

In Bhakti yoga, by discoursing⁴⁶ on or by hearing the sanctifying stories of the Supreme Lord one's mind gets purified. As and when the mind becomes pure, one is able to see the subtle Reality.

Your rise and fall depend⁴⁷ upon the mind which is the steering wheel. If you turn your mind towards objects and continue to think of them you will be entangled in the mire of objects. If you turn the steering wheel of your mind towards God and continue to think of Him constantly through meditation, Japa, prayers, singing His praises etc., you

46 यथा यथात्मा परिमृज्यतेऽसौ मत्पुण्यगाथाश्रवणाभिधानैः।
तथा तथा पश्यति वस्तु सूक्ष्मं चक्षुर्यथैवाञ्जनसम्प्रयुक्तम्॥

(XI-14-26)

47 विषयान् ध्यायतश्चित्तं विषयेषु विषज्जते।
मामनुस्मरतश्चित्तं मन्येव प्रविलीयते॥ (XI-14-27)

will ultimately get dissolved into Him and get merged.

In answer to Uddhava's question as to the manner in which and the form on which meditation (Dhyana) is to be done, Bhagwan gives a brief description of Dhyana Yoga.

One should sit in a posture with a straight back but in comfort and keep his eyes fixed on the tip of the nose. One should do pranayama (breath control) and side by side control his senses too. Along with pranayama one should chant 'OM' by taking it up through prana. Then he should imagine his heart to be an inverted lotus. He should invoke therein the sun, the moon and the fire and inside the fire he should think of the form of Narayana with his four hands bearing the conch, the chakra, mace, lotus etc. adorned with a garland of jungle flowers and a shining diadem and other ornaments. After practising to concentrate on that form exclusively, keep the attention on the smiling face of God.

After having established oneself in thinking of the Lord's face one should draw the mind away from the face and keep it on the Space. Then, after some time, one should leave off concentrating on the space also and then exclusively think of the transcendental Supreme Being. One will in due course experience that one has merged completely in the transcendental Supreme Being and there is no meditator separate from the Lord. Thus, through this Dhyana Yoga one gets liberation.



Varnasrama Dharma

Now, Krishna tells Uddhava the various types of Siddhis or mystic powers that one can get by concentrating on various aspects of the Cosmic form of the Lord. But he concludes⁴⁸ that for one who has controlled his mind, senses and breathing process and concentrates on the Supreme form of the Lord there is no siddhi which will be difficult to get.

Uddhava asks Krishna to tell him the various laws and duties prescribed for the various castes and stations in life (Varnasrama), by practising which everybody irrespective of caste etc, will be able to develop Bhakti in the Lord.

48 जितेन्द्रियस्य दान्तस्य जितश्वासात्मनो मुनेः।
मद्धारणां धारयतः का सा सिद्धिः सुदुर्लभा ॥ (XI-15-32)

“God does not play dice”. He created the four castes and made people be born in the respective castes based on the gunas they had developed in their previous births and the type of activity they were engaged in (Gunakarma vibhagasah). He also established specific dharmas for each caste by following which all can reach God finally.

There are various departments in an industry – Research, Production, Marketing, Stores etc. People working in each department are afforded scope to reach the higher levels of management by working efficiently in their own respective departments. It is not that executives belonging to one department are superior to another. In the same way the caste system was evolved. Further all the departments are to work together in harmony helping each other in order to promote the growth of the Industry forgetting their selfish interests.

Control of senses and the mind, austerities, contentment, forbearance, truth,

compassion and devotion to the Lord are the characteristics of Brahmins.

Strength, courage, valour, ability to bear any amount of pain, generosity, industry, a natural flair for leadership etc, is the nature of Kshatriyas.

A deep faith in the Lord and the Vedas, a philanthropic and charitable disposition, absence of hypocrisy and not to be satisfied with whatever money they accumulate are the nature of Vaisiyas.

Serving and helping the Brahmins and gods and to be satisfied with whatever money they get out of it is the nature of the fourth varna.

There are some characteristics which are common to all the castes and a sine qua non for all human beings in general. They are – non-violence, truth, non-stealing, to be free from desires including lust, anger and greed, love towards all beings and taking interest in their welfare. Then Krishna narrates how a celibate (Brahmachari) is to live and

conduct himself while in Gurukula. Especially a celibate, a vanaprasthi and a sanyasi (monk) should refrain from having intimate contacts with persons of opposite sex by touching their body, gossiping with them or by cracking jokes to make them laugh etc. Observing purity, cleanliness, daily prayers, going on pilgrimage to holy places, to see God in all beings, doing japa, control over mind, speech and body are all the disciplines prescribed in common for all the four stations in life from a celibate to a monk.

Apart from the other duties, a householder should live by his earnings of white (pure) money or whatever has come to him by chance without effort. He should never treat his servants cruelly. He should not get attached to his family and never neglect worship of God. One should contemplate on the transient nature of all objects and always live like a guest⁴⁹ in his

49 इत्थं परिमृशन्मुक्तो गृहेष्वतिथिवद् वसन्।

न गृहैरनुबद्धयेत निर्ममो निरहङ्कृतः ॥ (XI-17-54)

own house by not getting involved in the problems of the household and allowing the other people of the house to take their own decisions and run the house in any manner they like. He should have no ego of his own and should have no sense of possession towards any object.

When a person desires to take sanyasa (monkhood), nobody in the house including his parents and wife are prepared to accept such a situation. Often enough, more than the attachment, it is their own selfish interests of losing a bread – earner, security and a prop for the future which influences their attitude. Krishna reveals a divine secret cause for the opposition by the people of the house. The gods become jealous of the person who desires to become a monk as this means that the latter will reach moksha much earlier than themselves (Gods will have to be born as human beings and do Sadhana). So they possess the bodies of the parents, wife, etc., oppose the person's proposal, if necessary, by resorting to

emotional blackmail and create impediments in his way. If the vairagya is very strong, the person will be forced from inside to flee from the house and take up sanyasa. Wherever there is doubt or hesitation on his part, it means that he is not yet ripe for that course of action. After all, when a fruit on a tree becomes ripe, it falls by itself and neither hesitates nor does it ask for advice from the tree as to whether it can fall now itself or it should wait. If anybody, whose dispassion is not the strongest runs away from home in a mistaken notion of his own fitness or in a moment of emotion, he will fall into danger and rue the result of his impulsive action. One has to develop bhakti, austerity, dispassion and control of mind and make himself eminently fit for the final step while remaining in the house itself.

A sanyasi should normally live by begging alms. He should always wander alone and shun all company. He should never reveal his excellence as it would draw praises from others increasing his own ego.

Though intelligent⁵⁰ one should behave like a playful child. Even though he may be an expert, he should conduct himself like a moron. Though a scholar, he should babble like a mad man. Though well-versed in the mores, he should live like a cow, unconventional and uncivilized like eating directly from the plate.

He should never involve himself in arguments including on spiritual topics. He should never give the least offence to anybody else nor take offence from anybody. He should remain unconcerned whether he gets food and shelter or not and be satisfied with whatever comes to him of its own accord.

A person whose dispassion has just been aroused and has practised self-control should approach a proper Guru and serve

50 बुधो बालकवत् क्रीडेत् कुशलो जडवच्चरेत्।
वदेदुन्मत्तवद् विद्वान् गोचर्या नैगमश्चरेत्॥ (XI-18-29)

him considering him as God Himself, till he gets the knowledge of the Brahman.

The dharma⁵¹ of a sanyasi is, mainly, control of the mind and refraining from causing any harm to anybody. The dharma of a householder is to protect all beings and performing sacrifices [even giving in charity, expounding the scriptures to others, doing austerities have been categorized as sacrifices (yagnas) in Bhagvad Gita]. For a householder,⁵² celibacy (by restricting his enjoyment with his wife to the prescribed season), austerity, purity, contentment, friendship with all beings are his dharma. For all castes and for all stations in life the most overwhelmingly important and common dharma is worshipping the

51 भिक्षोर्धर्मः शमोऽहिंसा तप ईक्षा वनौकसः ।
गृहिणो भूतरक्षेज्या द्विजस्याचार्यसेवनम् ॥ (XI-18-42)

52 ब्रह्मचर्यं तपः शौचं सन्तोषो भूतसौहृदम् ॥
गृहस्थस्याप्यृती गन्तुः सर्वेषां मदुपासनम् ॥ (XI-18-43)

Supreme Lord. It is a must for all. The one who lives by the codes of conduct aforementioned and is devoted to the Supreme Lord exclusively gets an intense Bhakti.



Jnana and Bhakti Yoga

Uddhava now raises a very relevant question: "The Vedas (scriptures) are all Lord's own words and they contain an ordinance of actions which must be done (injunctions) and actions which are prohibited. Obviously such injunctions and prohibitions are based on the different good and bad aspects (merits and demerits) of the various actions. In other words, they are based on differentiation. If such differentiation is not there, how can Vedas do good to the people? They are also your teachings contained in the Vedas. You yourself have been now telling me as to what is the necessity of looking at all things alike and non-differentiation. This contradiction in your words bewilders me. Please clarify it."

Bhagavan now begins to clarify that both are correct but they apply to different stages of sadhana. He says,

There are only three paths of sadhanas Jnana, Karma and Bhakti. Those who have become detached from actions and have renounced, they are entitled to pursue Jnana yoga. On the contrary, those whose mind is still attached to rituals and activities and who are full of desires are entitled for Karma yoga. Those who are neither detached fully from activities, nor are they so much attached to them but whose faith has been aroused in the stories of the leelas of the Lord, by chance, due to some good deeds done in the past and merit earned from it are fit for Bhakti yoga.

One should follow⁵³ the injunctions and prohibitions and perform the actions accordingly only till either one gets complete

53 तावत् कर्माणि कुर्वीत न निर्विद्येत यावता।
मत्कथा श्रवणादौ वा श्रद्धा यावन्न जायते॥ (XI-20-9)

vairagya (detachment) or till one gets faith in discoursing on or hearing the various stories of disportation (leela) of the Lord. Thus a person who observes the dharmas relating to his caste and station in life without being motivated by any desire, refraining from doing any prohibited actions, does not have to go to heaven or hell but either gets the knowledge of the Reality in the form of Self-Realization or gets devotion by the grace of God. Bhakti is considered as far superior to even Mukti as that is a path of dance and music of the soul while Jnana is a dry and drab prosaic faith.

The human body⁵⁴ is rare and difficult to get as it is attained after going through several transformations from an insect or a crawling worm to animals. Now it has been easily made available in this birth. It is strong and capable of carrying us across the

54 नृदेहमाद्यं सुलभं सुदुर्लभं प्लवं सुकल्पं गुरुकर्णधारम् ॥
मयानुकूलेन नभस्वतेरितं पुमान् भवाब्धिं न तरेत् स आत्महा ॥
(XI-20-17)

ocean of samsara and the Guru is the one who pilots the boat. God's grace is an ever blowing favourable wind and it is always standing ready to help us. With all these in-built facilities if a man neglects to use them by setting sail to his boat and cross the ocean of the cycle of birth and death, he is to be deemed as one who commits suicide of his Self.

When once a man has got detached from actions, is full of vairagya and has controlled his senses, he should practise to keep the mind still and concentrated on the Supreme Self. For this, he will have to cajole, persuade and convince the mind to co-operate and thus bring it under control. There are two famous compositions where some saints have addressed their mind and tried to cajole and persuade it, which will be of great guidance to a Sadhak. One is called "Manache Slok" by Samarth Ram Das (the Guru of Shivaji) in Marathi (English translations available in plenty). Another one is also an address to the mind (name

forgotten) by Pujya Mota in Gujarati*. By means of the disciplines of dos and donts (yama and niyama), meditation etc., in the yoga path or by the Self- inquiry methods in the Jnana marga or by worshipping the Lord through idols, the mind finally comes under control.

If a Sadhaka, though disgusted with actions and full of faith in the stories of the leelas of God and knowing fully well that all desires end in sorrows is not able to renounce his desires and actions, he need not feel despondent. Having firm faith and with a resolute mind let him pray, worship and surrender himself to the Lord while still enjoying all the sensuous objects and condemning them at the same time. As a result of this Bhakti yoga, the Lord becomes active while residing in his heart and as a consequence all the desires rooted in the

* English translation available with Hari Om Ashram, P.B.No.74, Nadiad (Gujarat), Pin 387001 or with Hari Om Ashram, Jahangirpura, Surat, Pin - 395 005.

heart perish. Here Krishna quotes an Upanishadic⁵⁵ statement: When once one realises the Lord who remains as the Self of all, the knot in the heart is cut asunder. On account of ignorance we, the pure conscious energy which is in no way bound with any body while pervading all the bodies, identify ourselves with the body considering it as 'I' (the Self). The body is a perishable inert matter. On account of this identification of the untainted eternal consciousness with the body, it looks as if the Atman is bound with the body and as if it has taken over all the sufferings of the body and is subject to birth and death. This imaginary bondage due to wrong identification is called a knot (granthi) . On the final realization of what we are, this delusion called the knot disappears. Till the last minute we get a lot of doubts and even after a lot of clarification from the Guru/Scriptures they persist in a

55 भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः।

क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि मयि दृष्टेऽखिलात्मनि ॥ (XI-20-30)

seed form. All these doubts are dispelled completely on Self-realisation. So, unheeding to the doubts one should carry on the Sadhana till the very end instead of waiting for all the doubts to be clarified which cannot happen in Sadhana stage. No doubt, any doubt about the Sadhana itself, in the absence of the solution for which our progress is likely to be impeded or stopped, must be got clarified by the Guru or any evolved saint or prayers to the God Himself. Here is an incident from my own life.

A Gurubhai of mine who was highly devoted to my Guru and who was a great favourite of my Guru approached me in secret after nearly thirtyfour years after my Gurudev's leaving his body as he was in a great dilemma. He had been a great devotee of Sri Rama from His childhood and had been repeating His mantra. He was given initiation into a mantra of a different deity by my Gurudev sometime in 1950s. This caused confusion and an opposition in his mind. After a little while he was unable to

do Japa of the Guru-mantra and on account of a guilty conscience he could not also do Japa of Ram mantra. Thus all Japas stopped even though he used to sit in meditation and do reading of Ram Charit Manas and Vishnu Sahasranam etc. In 1995 or so he approached me in confidence and wanted a solution from me to get out of his dilemma. As dictated to me inside by my Divine Mother, I told him to pray to the Gurudev ceaselessly for the next three days within which time Gurudev himself would give him the solution. On the second day, he came running to me with tears streaming from his eyes and told me "Swamiji, you were absolutely right. My Gurudev himself came in my vision and gave me a solution. Thanks to you, I am greatly relieved." Inwardly I was horror-stricken that a devotee could live with such a serious and calamitous doubt for nearly thirtyfour years. After all, it must have been my Gurudev who inspired him to approach me finally.

On self-realisation, all the past karmas including sanchita and kriyamana get wiped off so that there will be no more birth and death in future. This is the stage of the final bliss experienced by a person liberated while alive.

Krishna says, Oh Uddhava, a devotee who has intense love for me and is constantly remembering me with Bhakti can get heaven, Moksha or whatever he wants and he has no need⁵⁶ of vairagya or Jnana even. Such a devotee wants God alone and refuses even liberation⁵⁷ if offered by the Lord. This is the unsurpassable glory of Bhakti yoga.

My Gurudev used to say that one who loves (has bhakti) God intensely comes to know all about Him (jnana) and the one who has known everything about the Lord from

56 तस्मान्मद्भक्तियुक्तस्य योगिनो वै मदात्मनः ।
न ज्ञानं न च वैराम्यं प्रायः श्रेयो भवेदिह ॥ (XI-20-31)

57 न किञ्चित् साधवो धीरा भक्ता ह्येकान्तिनो मम ।
वाञ्छन्त्यपि मया दत्तं कैवल्यमपुनर्भवम् ॥ (XI-20-34)

the Guru and the scriptures (jnana) begins to love Him (bhakti) just as Rukmini began to love Krishna, though unseen. In fact, the distinction between Jnana and Bhakti is only from the viewpoint of ignorant sadhakas, while in reality they are all the same. Everything ends in Jnana i.e. knowing oneself (Jnane parisamapyate).



Secret of categorisation of things into Good and Bad

A pertinent question arises in the mind of a sadhaka as to why at all the Scriptures have taken the pains to categorise things as good and bad with reference to the merits and defects (Guna and Dosha) when the pilgrim on the spiritual path is finally exhorted to renounce all the objects whether good or bad.

In order to answer such a probable doubt, Krishna starts defining Guna (merit) and Dosha (defect). These are purely relative terms and the categorization of the same object changes from good to bad in different circumstances. The merit (Guna) of a thing is not decided based on the thing itself but it is based on its user's status. What is considered as righteous (dharma) in one case

may become adharma (unrighteous) for another person.

Hence merit or guna is defined as a firm observance of dharma with reference to a thing according to one's eligibility as per the injunctions. While killing of an animal deliberately by a person is prohibited as it entails a sin (a dosha or defect), the killing of the animal in a fire sacrifice is a dharma for the one who conducts the sacrifice (a guna or merit). Using of a thing by a person not eligible for it is defined as a dosha(defect). Even though ultimately all the objects are the same, all being the products of imagination, this procedure of categorizing them as good or bad, pure or impure, meritorious or defective is meant to restrict the natural inclination to accept all objects indiscriminately and in order to channelise a disciplined life by controlling the mind by withdrawing it from undesirable and prohibited things. This categorization of good and bad ensures that a man will not entangle himself in actions

motivated by his natural inclinations towards wrong things as a result of his vasanas (latent tendencies) but by strictly adhering to the injunctions of scriptures he will be able to restrict his life within the accepted parameters and keep his mind under his control (an essential sadhana in the path to spirituality). A man's natural inclination based on three modes (Sattva Rajas and Tamas) is always to allow his mind to run freely, untrammelled by any restriction to enjoy material pleasures which will ultimately end in sorrow. In order to curb such freedom of the mind which is dangerous, separate divisions of caste and stations in life depending on the innate fitness of the individuals with different laws of injunctions and prohibitions have been ordained so that everybody could learn to control the vasana-oriented actions by controlling the mind and be able to achieve the four objectives of dharma, wealth, enjoyment and liberation. With a similar purpose only, the categorization of good and bad (guna and dosha) have been extended

to places, times, fruits of action, grains, etc. The places where there are temples and holy men are classified as good. Similarly we speak of a good and auspicious time (to start a work) and a bad time. Similarly substances are also declared as good or bad, pure or impure. A freshly cooked food is considered as good while the food left over from the previous day is considered as polluted. The flowers over which water is sprinkled is considered as pure while the flowers which have been smelt by taking them to the nose are considered as impure. A vessel where Ganges water is kept is considered pure while the same vessel containing whisky or such drinks is considered as impure. Certain impure things can be sanctified by the use of mud or fire. The body and mind get purified by taking bath, by giving in charity, practising austerity, sadhanas and also by constantly thinking of the Lord.

58 अपवित्रः पवित्रो वा सर्वावस्थां गतोऽपि वा।
यः स्मरेत् पुण्डरीकाक्षं स बाह्याभ्यन्तरशुचिः ॥

While starting any ritual, a verse repeated by the priest affirms⁵⁸ that "Irrespective of whether a person is pure or impure, regardless of the state in which he is (he may have just got out of the bed and may not have bathed or he might be in a polluted state due to death of close relations), one who thinks of the Lord becomes pure both inside and outside."

Even the Mantras if directly read from a book or told by a person or a friend will be sterile and of no use. But a Mantra heard from the mouth of a Guru and any action dedicated to God are of tremendous benefit as they become pure and effective.

Ultimately, when once control over the mind is established by directing it to things classified as good, one has to withdraw his mind from all things, good and bad. The more he withdraws⁵⁹ his mind from all

59 यतो यतो निवर्तेत विमुच्येत ततस्ततः।
एष धर्मो नृणां क्षेमः शोकमोहभयापहः ॥ (XI-21-18)

things he will be able to liberate himself from the bondage of attachment to things. This dharma of final and thorough withdrawal is the highest discipline (dharma) to be followed which will ultimately drive away all sorrows, fear and delusion.

When the mind is attracted towards the good qualities (guna) attributed to an object a deep attachment ensues. This attachment gives rise to desires to enjoy more of it. When impediments come in their fulfilment, anger is generated and mutual fight takes place with people. As a result of anger, one loses his sense of propriety and impropriety, dharma and adharma and ignorance overwhelm him, as a result he loses his sense of right and wrong. Having thus lost his memory, he becomes empty and loses his human faculties. He is as if he is dead or like a zombie.

60 फलश्रुतिरियं नृणां न श्रेयो रोचनं परं।
श्रेयोविवक्षया प्रोक्तं यथा भैषज्य रोचनम् ॥ (XI-21-23)

All the Vedas⁶⁰ extol an attractive heaven full of enjoyment and prescribe performance of sacrifice etc. The intention of Scriptures is not to project the heaven as a worthy goal but is meant to generate a taste in a person to do the Vedic rituals whose real purpose is to purify the mind as preparatory to the performance of sadhanas for getting Moksha which is the only worthy goal of a human being. As a human being is naturally attracted towards enjoyment of sensuous objects, his wife, son etc. this will impede his spiritual growth. The ignorant people addicted to performance of actions believe in the lolly-pop of a heaven held out by the sweet words of the Vedas and thus go on wandering between births as gods in heaven and the births in inferior species on the earth. They suffer as they do not like to take interest in God's own words even. All the three parts of each Veda dealing with karma, meditation and Jnana are meant unanimously to reveal the oneness of Brahman and Atman (Self) but

it is revealed in a hidden indirect way. Vedas are Lord's own forms in the guise of speech (Sabdabrahman). They are so profound that one cannot easily understand their inner meanings. The secrets of the Vedas are known to nobody else except the Lord Himself. All the Vedas, with their focus on the Supreme Lord, superimpose all the things like earth, space etc. on the Lord and thus appear as if they are propagating differentiation but the Upanishads which represent the Jnana Kanda of the Vedas negate them all so that the Supreme Lord who is the substratum remains alone.



Birth and Death versus Atman

Uddhava raises another question: "People who have turned their intellect away from the Lord are transmigrating by taking birth again and again in lower and higher species (yonis) of beings like Gods, animals etc. based on the good and bad deeds done in the past birth. How can such a transmigration for an all-pervasive single Self, the birth and death of an eternal reality be possible? Kindly explain this to me!"

Krishna begins to elucidate. The mind of a man (chitta) is a store house of all the impressions of past deeds. In order to enable one to experience the results (reactions) of past actions, the five senses of perception have been attached to the mind. This is called the subtle body which alone transmigrates and goes on moving from one body to

another according to the actions done in the previous births. The Self is absolutely different from the subtle body. It has no coming or going. But when it identifies itself with the subtle body (Linga Sareera) it appears as if the Atman is coming and going from birth to birth. When a Jiva (Atman identified with the body is called Jiva) accepts the body as its own, it is called birth. In the dream also when the Atman identifies itself with the dream body, it is called a dream which looks real as long as it lasts. When due to some reason or other the Jiva forgets the body, it is called death. When once the Jiva begins to contemplate on the various objects of the world, it completely forgets the past and its previous body just as in a second dream we forget the body of the first dream. Every minute, every part of the body is changing but as it is subtle, it is not palpable. So birth and death are actually taking place every second. Even a deluded person is neither born nor does he die in reality. The entire thing is only a delusion

just as even though fire never dies, when fuel or wood is lit up and finally extinguished, it looks as if the fire was born with the wood and perished later. The entire world where the Self appears to experience the various objects is as unreal as a dream world. The Atman is eternal and ever liberated. So one should not⁶¹ seek enjoyment of the objects through the senses. So long as the Jiva⁶² continues to contemplate on these objects, it cannot prevent the continued recurrence of the birth and death cycle. One must understand that the multiplicity of the world seen is only due to the ignorance of 'who we really are'. One has to uplift himself through Self-inquiry.



61 तस्मादुद्धव मा भुंक्ष्व विषयानसदिन्द्रियैः।
आत्माग्रहण निर्मातं पश्य वैकल्पिकं भ्रमम्॥ (XI-22-56)

62 अर्थे ह्यविद्यमानेऽपि संसृतिर्न निवर्तते।
ध्यायतो विषयानस्य स्वप्नेऽनर्थागमो यथा॥ (XI-22-55)

Forbearance – The Song of a Bhikshu

Krishna had ended the previous discourse saying that a person seeking God-realization should learn forbearance and should be able to bear uncomplainingly any insult or opprobrium or tortures to which others may subject him. Otherwise, the rankling thoughts and anger will be transformed into indelible vasanas which will impel him to do actions entailing future births. So Uddhava says, "Krishna, it is so easy to advise a person to cultivate forbearance (titiksha). It is really beyond endurance if some wicked people were to attack us physically or with words. Nature is so strong that however intelligent we may be, we perforce retaliate or have reactions in our mind. It may perhaps be easy for those

who have reached a high state where they have surrendered themselves to you.”

Krishna began to narrate the story of forbearance of a Brahmin reduced to penury and forced to become a monk. A song of philosophical import sung by the monk (bhikshu) is known as Bhikshu Geetam.

There was once a very prosperous Brahmin in Ujjain, who was a greedy miser, full of lust and highly irate in his temper. He never used to talk sweetly to any close relatives or guests. His own wife, sons, daughters, servants and relations were all resentful of his treatment of them and began to hate him. When once the past punyas (merits earned in previous births) got exhausted, that miserly Brahmin lost gradually all the wealth he had accumulated with great effort. His own relatives grabbed some of his wealth and some wealth was looted by thieves. Some property was lost

in a conflagration of fire. He had neither earned any merit by doing charity nor did he enjoy. All his own people began to neglect him. At that time of suffering, a dispassion (vairagya) arose in his mind. He began to regret how he had wasted his life. He began to contemplate as follows:

“Wealth and money never contribute to a man’s happiness. A wealthy man suffers in this world and goes to hell after death. A man never enjoys his wealth. On the contrary he is constantly worried about earning money, how to increase it (by investment), how to keep it safe, about its probable loss by theft or taxation etc. As concomitants of becoming wealthy, he is exposed to fifteen types of dangers – namely, burglary or thieving, violence, lies, hypocrisy, desires, anger, pride, ego, differentiation, enmity, lack of faith, competition, bad habits namely addiction to sexual enjoyment, drinking and playing dice.

If a person who has been⁶³ bestowed with such a precious gift like a human body which is verily an open door to both the heaven and liberation ignores it and revels in wealth, the store house of calamities, he commits a spiritual suicide. It is a great blessing that atleast now God has endowed me with vairagya (detachment), a boat which can carry me across the ocean of Samsara.

All his close relatives, wife, son, father etc. became antagonistic. The Brahmin decided to get out of the house and strive for self-realisation by subjecting the body to severe austerities. He became a monk (bhikshu) and began to wander throughout. He went to various cities and villages in order to beg for alms. The wicked people in those places poured abuses on him and subjected him to various indignities. People beat him, urinated on his head, snatched away his vessel and his stick etc. and even kept him bound with ropes. None of these

63 लब्ध्वा जन्मा मरप्रार्थ्यं मानुष्यं तद् द्विजाग्रयताम् ।
तदनादृत्य ये स्वार्थं घ्नन्ति यान्त्यशुभां गतिम् ॥ (XI-23-22)

atrocities affected the bhikshu's mind in any way. He understood that these sufferings were the result of his deeds in past births and they had to be tolerated. His Sattwa guna endowed him with enough courage to bear all these miseries with equanimity and he burst into a song (known as Bhikshu Geetam).

Bhikshu Geetam

These people⁶⁴ who torment me are not at all responsible for my happiness or sorrow. Neither is it due to my karma (in past birth) nor the nine planets nor my body nor any god. Our mind is the only cause and it is that which runs this world. Happiness and sorrow are only mental modifications due to previous conditionings of like and dislike etc. Just as in a dream it is the mind which creates this world and all the objects and begins to think of these objects. Motivated by these thoughts (or desires for

64 नायं जनो मे सुखदुःख हेतु र्न देवतात्मा ग्रहकर्मकालाः ।
मनः परं कारणमामनन्ति संसारचक्रं परिवर्तयेद् यत् ॥ (XI-23-43)

objects) we perform actions which result in rebirths. All the activities are impelled by the mind. The Self is pure and does no actions. It is the eternal friend of the Jiva. But when it identifies itself with the mind and considers itself as the enjoyer of the objects (bhokta) it gets attached to the objects and thus gets bound to them. So the greatest⁶⁵ Yoga is when the mind withdraws itself from all the objects and remains integrated (Samadhi). For this purpose, various sadhanas are prescribed like giving charity, observing one's respective dharma (rules of discipline), observing yama and niyama (the dos and donts), study of scriptures, resorting to good deeds and undertaking of vows like celibacy etc. The purpose of all these sadhanas is to ensure control of mind.

Mind is our greatest enemy. The foolish people do not try to conquer it and instead

65 दानं स्वधर्मो नियमो यमश्च, श्रुतं च कर्माणि च सद्व्रतानि।
सर्वे मनोनिग्रहलक्षणान्ताः परो हि योगो मनसः समाधिः॥

(XI-23-46)

quarrel with people whom they wrongly consider as responsible for their sorrows and make enemies.

Even this body is a product of the imagination of our mind like the body assumed in a dream. The ignorant people consider their body as "theirs" while the other bodies conceived by the same imagination are⁶⁶ considered as "others" different from themselves. When all the bodies are the products of the same imagination like the various people seen in the dream, they are not separate from us and it is foolish to hold them responsible for our sufferings. So the ignorant people who distinguish saying "This is I" and "This is somebody else" wander in the darkness of ignorance, being overcome by delusion. Neither other persons or gods or self or planets or actions or time can be considered

66 देहं मनोमात्रमिदं गृहीत्वा, ममाहमित्यन्धधियो मनुष्याः।
एषोऽहमन्योऽयमिति भ्रमेण, दुरन्तपारे तमसि भ्रमन्ति॥

(XI-23-50)

as responsible for our sorrows as Atman has nothing to do with planets, gods or actions or time. If Atman (Self) is considered as responsible, it is our own self and where is the question of blaming it ?

Atman (Self) is supreme and⁶⁷ beyond all. It remains pure and untainted by any of the pairs of opposites (dvandva) like pain and pleasure, sorrow and happiness. Nobody, nowhere and by no means can induce happiness or unhappiness in Atman (Self). All these dvandvas affect only the ego which remains wandering in the vicious circle of birth and death. The one who is awake to this fact becomes fearless. The bhikshu decided to spend the rest of his days in the exclusive contemplation of the Supreme Lord.



67 न केनचित् कापि कथञ्चनास्य, द्वन्द्वोपरागः परतः परस्य।
यथाहमः संसृतिरूपिणः स्यादेवं प्रबुद्धो न विभेति भूतैः ॥

(XI-23-57)

CHAPTER - XIII

Effects of the three Gunas on man's nature

Krishna continues:

The nature of each person differs widely from others. This is because of the three gunas (the building blocks of a personality) which exist in different combinations, which may be infinite in numbers, by permutation. The three gunas are Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. The thoughts in the mind vary as per the gunas.

Sattva guna endows one with very desirable saint-like qualities: namely, control of mind and senses, forbearance, austerities, truthfulness, compassion, contentment, renunciation, lack of attachment, faith etc.

Rajo guna induces desires, effort, pride, dissatisfaction, differentiating mentality, enjoyment of objects, zeal for fight, pursuit of fame, wit and humour, valour, persistent efforts etc.

Tamo guna results in anger, greed, lying, violence, hypocrisy, quarrel, sorrow, delusion, grief, sleep, fear and laziness. While in combination, as in a normal man's life, sattva endows us with faith, Rajas with attachment and Tamas with money.

When a person worships⁶⁸ the Lord with devotion and performs actions without any motive, selflessly, he or she is of Sattvic nature.

The one who worships the Lord with desire-oriented actions is Rajasic. The one who serves the Lord in order to cause harm to his enemies etc. is Tamasic.

68 यदा भजति मां भक्त्या निरपेक्षः स्वकर्मभिः।
तं सत्त्वप्रकृतिं विद्यात् पुरुषं स्त्रियमेव वा ॥ (XI-25-10)

All the three gunas⁶⁹ are again the creations of the mind through imagination. Because of these gunas a person gets attracted to his own body, wealth etc. and gets bound. Atman has nothing to do with the gunas.

When once the Chitta remains happy, the senses are at rest, the body is fearless and the mind free from attachment, you take it that Sattva Guna is predominant in that person.

By knowing what qualities he should cultivate to make Sattva predominant and what qualities he should prevent to free himself from Rajas and Tamas, a man will be able to cultivate qualities which will take him to the Supreme Lord. That is why Lord Krishna is discussing them in detail. The other two qualities Rajas and Tamas are dangerous to a man as they will disturb the

69 सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणा जीवस्य नैव मे।
चित्तजा यैस्तु भूतानां सज्जमानो निबध्यते ॥ (XI-25-12)

mind and the body and the mind begins wavering.

The waking state⁷⁰ is based on Sattva, the dream is caused by Rajas and the sleeping state induced by Tamas. The Self or the Atman (4th state) pervades all the three states.

The classifications of the three gunas apply also to the nature of the place we choose to live, the type of food we take and the type of action we do.

If one does his duties (dharma) by dedicating them to the Lord and unmotivated by selfish desires, he is Sattvic. If the action done is motivated by the desire for its fruit, it becomes Rajasic. Any action which causes harm to other beings is Tamasic.

70 सत्वाज्जागरणं विद्यात् रजसा स्वप्नमादिशेत्।
प्रस्वापं तमसा जन्तोस्तुरीयं त्रिषु सन्ततम्॥ (XI-25-20)

To live in a jungle is Sattvic, to live in a village is Rajasic and to live in a house of ill-repute is Tamasic.

All healthy and nutritious food obtained without effort is Sattvic.

The food which is delicious and appealing to the palate is Rajasic. The impure food which gives trouble (to the stomach etc) is Tamasic.

It depends on our constitution⁷¹ of the three gunas as to in which yoni and status, we get our birth. The actions we do depend on the predominant guna. Based on the actions and the gunas, the nature of our next birth is determined. All the gunas are the product of our mind. Hence a person who is completely established in the contemplation of the Supreme Lord through Bhakti yoga

71 एताः संसृतयः पुंसो गुणकर्मनिबन्धनाः।
येनेमे निर्जिताः सौम्य गुणा जीवेन चिन्तजाः।
भक्तियोगेन मन्त्रिष्ठो मद्भावाय प्रपद्यते॥ (XI-25-32)

on account of his having conquered all the three gunas (gunatita) finally attains the Supreme Lord's form, also called as liberation. One has to go beyond the Sattva Guna also by stopping all thoughts through yogic methods and also by being thoroughly desireless. Then the Jiva leaves off its individuality and merges in the Supreme Lord.



CHAPTER – XIV

King Pururavas' Vairagya

Bhagavan Krishna Continues:

A man should use his human birth to realize God and not expend it in the enjoyment of sensual pleasures. In this connection, the story of King Pururavas who completely forgot himself in his infatuation for the divine nymph Urvashi who mercilessly abandoned him and went away is relevant. Earlier the king had spent a number of years in pursuit of sensual pleasures but his thirst never got satiated. One day, when he woke up from his days of folly he sang a song containing the lessons he had learnt:-

“Woe to me who has been completely overwhelmed so much with my lust that I was not aware of the passage of time at all for all

these years. Having been an Emperor I lost all sense of shame and dignity and was content to remain a teddy bear in the hands of a woman. When once a person becomes a prey to the charms of the other sex, nobody can rescue him except the great Lord Himself. I have been reduced to the pitiable state because of my lack of control over my senses and the woman (Urvasi) is not at all to blame. Urvasi herself instructed me on the reality and tried to wake me up by quoting passages from scriptures but I was under such a delusion that her words had no effect. A man of discrimination⁷² should never keep the company of people of opposite sex or of persons who pursue the company of other sex. No reaction takes place in the mind in respect of an object which we have neither seen nor heard of. It is only when the senses come into contact with objects that the mind gets attracted, disturbed and then attached. In order to keep the mind undisturbed and

72 अथापि नोपसञ्जेत स्त्रीषु स्त्रीणेषु चार्थवित्।
विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगान्मनः क्षुभ्यति नान्यथा॥ (XI-26-22)

peaceful, one should avoid one's senses coming into contact with the objects by withdrawing from them. When such thoughts came into the mind of Pururavas, his delusion began to wane slowly and he was able to realize God in the form of his own Self.

Benefits of Satsanga

One should leave off the company of bad people and always seek the company of holy men and mahatmas. How can one recognize the holy men and mahatmas?

They have no need for anything,⁷³ have an equal vision and treat important things and insignificant things alike. They are always peaceful and their mind is always fixed on the Supreme Lord. They have neither ego nor any sense of possession and do not accumulate things. The pairs of opposites like pain and pleasure do not affect

73 सन्तोऽनपेक्षा मच्चित्ताः प्रशान्ताः समदर्शिनिः।
निर्ममा निरहङ्कारा निर्द्वन्वा निष्परिग्रहाः। (XI-26-27)

them. The beauty is that in the presence of such Mahatmas, discourses on the stories relating to Lord's leelas always take place. The glory of hearing these stories is that they wipe off all the sins and impurities of the devotees who hear them.

Those people who hear⁷⁴ these stories or sing begin to be completely devoted to and dependant on the Lord, their faith is intensified and ultimately they attain Bhakti. There is nothing greater than Bhakti towards the Supreme Lord, so one should seek refuge in the holy feet of saints. For people who are being drowned in the frightening ocean of Samsara, the best refuge is afforded by saints who are like strong boats for the drowning people. These holy men bestow you with inner eyes with which to see them as also God. They are gods and friends of all. In short the Mahatmas are really of the form of the Supreme Lord and they are your Atman (Self) too.

74 ता ये शृण्वन्ति गायन्ति ह्यनुमोदन्ति चादृताः।
मत्पराः श्रद्धधानाश्च भक्तिं विन्दन्ति ते मयि॥ (XI-26-29)

CHAPTER - XV

Kriya Yoga

Kriya yoga is a term used by different saints in different senses. The 'Kriya Yoga' propagated by Paramahansa Yoganandji is a discipline handed over by his grand-Guru, Lahiri Mahashay and combines some yogic practices like Pranayama, concentration on the anahata sound from the heart etc. Patanjali yoga sutras talk of a different Kriya yoga. Here Krishna speaks of a Kriya yoga which is the process of performing formal puja to the idols or icons of gods like Siva, Vishnu, Ganesha, etc. as given in 'Kalpa', one of the six limbs for the study of the Vedas or in various Tantras. There are three methods of doing any Puja-Vaidic (based on Sriptures), Tantrik (as per Tantra texts) and a mixture of both. The Puja can be done by invoking the Supreme Lord in any form in an idol, on a sacrificial platform, in fire, Sun,

water and heart etc. The idol can be made of stone, wood, metal, mud, sandal etc. In the temples normally two types of idols are kept for the same deity, one mobile which is taken out for procession on some special days and the other static. Once installed, in respect of the static idol, the Avahanam (invoking the divinity) and Visarjanam (abandoning it) is not to be done everyday. The God is very pleased even with mere water if offered with faith and sincerity. It is not the items like dhoopa, deepa, food consecrated that please the Lord as much as the faith with which they are offered. Then the idol of God should be bathed with water along with the chanting of Vedic hymns like Purusha Sukta. Then five types of upacharas including arghya and padhya (symbolic washing of the hand and feet of the Lord with water) are offered. After the puja is over, we have to light the fire for the havana (a small fire sacrifice) or homa and then do meditation on the form of the Lord. After giving the oblations of the 'samit' (small twigs of trees)

and other articles one should give special oblations of ghee along with the chanting of the mantra of the chosen deity and the sixteen hymns of Purusha Sukta. Finally, one should sing the leelas of the Lord, give discourses and also dance being intoxicated with love for God. Whenever we do 'visarjan' (the retraction of the power invoked) we should imagine at that time that a light which emanates from the idol has come and merged with the light shining in one's heart. "Being the Self of all, the Lord is residing in all the beings." Hence one should do puja of idols accordingly as where and when one gets faith.

Thus by doing the puja of the Lord in a formal manner through worship of symbols, one gets Bhakti yoga which finally leads one to the Lord Himself.



The Supreme Reality

Sri Krishna continues:

In the empirical world, though duality is seen in the form of subject (the seer) and object (seen), there is only one substratum of pure Consciousness which alone is real. So all the objects in the world are only one and the same. In such a circumstance, as there is nobody else but the one Self, one should not either praise or condemn others. When the individual soul (jiva) forgets his form as the Self and begins to see the multiplicity of objects, just as in the so-called dream state, a man is entangled with attraction or revulsion or attachment etc. towards all those false objects (waking state) or gets absorbed in deep sleep (sleeping state) which is akin to death. Thus when all the objects are only an appearance and there

is nothing called duality at all, the question of differentiating, saying 'this is good' or 'this is bad' should not arise at all. It is true that this body as also the other objects are false but till this knowledge comes to a person through practical experience, the impression of the reality of these objects does not vanish.

In the entire world, everything is the Self. He alone has⁷⁵ taken the form of this world and He is the creator of the world too. When a pot is manufactured from clay, the clay which takes the form of the pot is called the material cause (Upadana karanam) and the potter who created the pot is called the efficient cause (Nimita karanam). Lord Himself is both the material cause as also the efficient cause. He is the creation and the creator too. He protects the world and He is the one who is protected in the form of the world. Finally, He is the destroyer of the

75 आत्मैव तदिदं विश्वं सृज्यते सृजति प्रभुः।

त्रायते त्राति विश्वात्मा हियते हरतीश्वरः॥ (XI-28-6)

world at the time of the deluge and in the form of the world He alone appears to have been destroyed. Even though from an empirical view point it looks as if the universe is different from the Lord but from the view of the ultimate reality there is nothing but Atman or Self. The three - fold division namely seer, seen and sight in this world is a projection of Māya.

Now Uddhava raises a question: "Oh Krishna, Atman is the seer and the body is an object seen. Atman is all consciousness while the body is insentient. This samsara in the form of birth and death cannot happen to the body. Nor can it happen to Atman. How then does birth and death take place and to whom?"

Krishna answers:-

This entire samsara⁷⁶ where the birth and death take place has no existence of its own.

76 अर्थे ह्यविद्यमानेऽपि संसृतिर्न निवर्तते ।

ध्यायतो निषयानस्य स्वप्नेऽनर्थागमो यथा ॥ (XI-28-13)

This is just a delusion that Atman seems to be closely related to our body, senses and the vital force (Prana). In the dream, many calamities take place but they never happened in reality. But so long as one does not wake up from the dream, its apparent reality persists. Similarly the waking state is also a dream projected by the mind and after projecting it, the mind has established a relationship of father, husband, master, ownership (of house etc.) etc. with various objects. The mind goes on thinking of the objects and is fully involved in them. Naturally various calamities overtake us as in the dream and they all look real until we wake up to the ultimate reality. Till the waking up, the samsara dream involving birth and death continues. When once we wake up, the dream world of the so - called waking state disappears and all the calamities too.

It is true that neither the Atman nor the body transmigrates and they cannot. When once we get a body in the dream-like world

we identify ourselves with that non-existing dream body and the entity which has considered the dream body as "I" is called ego or ahankara. This ego has created individuality and differentiation that this body is 'I' and the other bodies are different from it, even though it is the one Reality which is acting in the form of all the people in the dream— just like one actor taking several roles in a cinema and creating an illusion of several different people. It is thus the ego which undergoes birth and death and encounters grief, pleasure, fear, greed, delusion, attachment, etc. This ego is also called as jiva, the individual soul. This ego as such has no existence of its own. This world of multiplicity is the product of this ego along with mind, speech, prana (vital force), body and actions. One has to do⁷⁷ continuous meditation and self-enquiry,

77 अमूलमेतत् बहुरूप रूपितं मनोवचःप्राणशरीरकर्म ।
ज्ञानासिनोपासनया शितेनच्छित्वा मुनिर्गा विचरत्यतृष्णः ॥

(XI-28-17)

wielding the Jnana which results out of it as a sword, cut off the body sense called ego and then continue to move in the world fully liberated.

In this connection one is reminded of the famous Kuon of the Zen Budhists "if ever you see Buddha on the road, cut him to pieces." Buddha is the state of Turiyatita – a fully mature state of Pure Consciousness and not any personality. So any Buddha whom you meet in the market place or road cannot be a Buddha but some illusion of an ego. So one has to cut it off and proceed.

Knowledge is the discriminative ability (viveka) to distinguish between Self and non-self. When once we start exercising this viveka, we will know that ultimately there is only one reality and duality vanishes. The way to achieve it is through the sadhana consisting of austerities, hearing the scriptures, inferences and our own experience. We will know that the one who existed in the beginning before creation, that

one will continue to exist at the end after the destruction of the world and the one who is the cause of the creation has to be in the middle also (in the form of the world). It was pure gold which existed before it was converted into various ornaments and it is the same gold which exists when all the ornaments are melted down. In the middle also it is the gold which existed in different forms which were called by different names like ear rings, bangles etc. This example will make us understand that at all times the Supreme Reality alone exists. This ever changing creation has no independent existence of its own, but still it is shining before us. All the various names and forms like the senses, objects, mind etc. are in fact, the supreme Brahman who appears in all the forms. Atman remains untainted by and unrelated to all other things. The three gunas Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas cannot even touch the imperishable Atman who is beyond all these gunas. The one who is wandering aimlessly like a rudderless boat is the ego.

Despite⁷⁸ this, one has to withdraw himself from and avoid all contact with all objects made up of the three gunas through Bhakti yoga till such time as the impurities of the mind are removed. One has to be very careful and alert in this path till one reaches the goal. Until and unless the desires of the mind, the inclination to be involved in the activities of the world and attachment to objects are completely removed through Sadhana, any yogi who has not yet become fully mature may again be pulled down by those tendencies and rendered 'yoga bhrashta' (one who has slipped down from a higher state). Such people who have lost their way doing sadhana will, in due course, be made to restart their efforts on yoga path on account of the practice done in earlier days.

The one who has once realized the Supreme Reality, though involved in the

78 तथापि सङ्गः परिवर्जनीयो, गुणेषु माया रचितेषु तावत्।
मन्द्रक्तियोगेन दृढेन यावद् रजो निरस्येत मनः कषायः ॥

activities of the world as per the will of the Providence, is not affected by them nor does one's mind undergo the modification of pleasure or sorrow as all the desires have been dissolved long back on account of one's having experienced the bliss of the Atman (Self). Such a person⁷⁹ who is established in his original form remains completely unaware of his body and what it is doing, whether it is sitting, walking or eating. He is like a person fully drunk who is not aware even when his garments fall away from his body leaving him stark naked in the streets. There is a hear-say-story attributed to Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Once Sri Ramakrishna was going in the streets of Calcutta along with his disciples when a beautiful bhajan song describing the pangs of separation of Radha from Krishna was heard emanating from some street nearby.

79 तिष्ठन्तमासीनमुत ब्रजन्तं शयानमुक्षन्तमदन्तमन्नम्।
स्वभावमन्यत् किमपीहमानमात्मानमात्मस्थमतिर्न वेद॥
(XI-28-31)

Ramakrishna, moved by that song ran ahead through so many winding lanes and stood entranced before the house wherefrom the song was coming, oblivious of his surroundings, lost in Samadhi with tears streaming from his eyes which were closed. When the disciples went in pursuit of him and at last reached him, they found to their dismay that the master was standing naked, his 'dhoti' having fallen off somewhere on the way. With a disapproving look when they questioned Sri Ramakrishna "Where is your dhoti? This is Calcutta a big city and what will people think of you?", the latter rebuked them saying "I am trying to find out where my body is and you people are asking me about my dhoti!"

The Atman had always been there. On account of ignorance a person has always been considering his body, senses which were tainted with the association of games and activities as his own self, identifying himself with them. Now on realization of the real Self, the ignorance had vanished and the

Atman, the only reality stands revealed. It is not that a Jnani, through his Sadhana attained the Atman. Atman can neither be caught hold of from somewhere nor renounced. It is only a question of removing the ignorance and its effects (i.e. the body, world etc.) like removing a curtain.

Who can describe the⁸⁰ Atman, the Supreme Reality? We are the constant witnesses of its effects, namely the mind, speech, prana etc. which are all impelled to act only by the Atman (reference Kenopanishad). Who can describe electricity – its colour, its dimensions etc.? We are all seeing its effects daily in running the fan, in lighting the bulb, in activating the ironing machine, in the electric heater etc. but even Addison the first to discover it had never

80 एष स्वयंज्योतिरजोऽप्रमेयो
महानुभूतिः सकलानुभूतिः ।
एकोऽद्वितीयो वचसां विरामे
येनेषिता वागसवश्चरन्ति ॥ (XI-28-35)

seen nor described the electricity. No words can describe the Atman nor the mind can ever conceive it. It is a great Self-experience which can take place only when all experiences of the objects of the world cease. It is called 'Mahanubhooti' – the greatest of all experiences. Nobody can deny its existence as it will be tantamount to a denial of one's own existence. You and I are existing at this moment. Existence is highly proximate – nothing else can be nearer to you. Are we able to see this existence, though it is so close to us? Not at all. But we are always aware and have the knowledge that 'I AM' 'I EXIST'. How did we get this knowledge? Everybody is hundred per cent certain that 'I AM'. This is because this is not a second hand knowledge from the books or from your parents or friends. This is a 'direct' knowledge (aparoksha Jnana) which has come directly from the 'I' which exists i.e. from the very existence. How did you get your knowledge that 'this is my hand', 'this is my ball pen' 'this is a pot' etc? Do the hand,

ball pen or pot come and inform you that it is a hand or a pot etc.? The various senses like the eye perceived the form, smell, taste etc. of the objects and passed on the information to the mind. As the mind has been conditioned by learning from books, teachers etc. as to what is a hand, a pot etc. and this information is stored in the memory, the mind recognizes it and tells you 'this is a pot' etc. So this knowledge comes indirectly through the medium of the senses which collaborated with the mind. That is called 'Pratyaksha' knowledge i.e. obtained through the medium of the senses, the senses being not always reliable as in the case of seeing a mirage in a desert. On the contrary, in the case of the Atman, the awareness (Chit) of existence (Sat) is an immediate knowledge, not acquired through a medium. Atman reveals itself. So it is called self-effulgent (Swayam-Jyoti). A torch light throws light on all the objects in a room lying in darkness but it does not require any other torch light to see the first torch light. A torch

light can be seen by its own light-Swayam Jyoti. If I had no existence I could never have seen any of the objects of the world. Your existence cannot be different from my existence. There is only one Existence—the Atman. It is because of my Existence, the Atman, I am able to perceive and experience all the objects. It is the Atman which throws light on and reveals all the objects. So it is called 'Sakalanubhooti'. There is a logos in the fifth gospel of the Bible by St. Thomas (discovered from a cave near Egypt in 1940's) which runs something like "I am All. All came from me". Further, just as when the clay is known, all the pots are known, by knowing the Atman (which is the same as the Brahman) everything else is known (Sakalanubhooti). He is the one by knowing whom all else is known – "Yena jnatena sarvamidam jnatam bhavati" – (Upanishad)– "Sakalanubhooti".

When He is all, beyond the bounds of time and space, who can measure him and how can one measure the infinite? He is

immeasurable (aprimeya) and is non-dual (advitiya).

These beautiful ideas are all contained in one small verse (verse no.35 of chapter 28 in the 11th Skandha). It is said that the language of Srimad Bhagavatam is 'Samadhi Bhasha' (the language of meditation). When Vyasa expressed his inability to write Srimad Bhagavatam, Narada Maharshi directed him to meditate ('samadhina'nusmara) so that the entire subject matter to be written can be revealed to him. The more one meditates on these verses the more the inner meanings will be revealed to one.

Now Krishna gives us tips as to how the impediments which may come during the sadhana period before we reach maturity, for example, diseases, anger etc. can be removed.

When too much cold or too much heat occurs, some yogis resort to concentrating on the Sun and the Moon respectively. Other diseases can be cured through Asana and

Pranayama or through medicines. The impediments due to fear from serpents or the effect of planets as per the horoscope, can be driven away through mantras or medicines. The universal ⁸¹ panacea for all ills is constant meditation on the Lord or the chanting of the names of the Lord or following the advice of people who are expert in yogas.

The yogi who is solely dependent on the Lord and is performing the yogas as detailed in previous pages with all persistence will never be beset by any obstacles. He will be freed from all desires and will reach his goal of infinite bliss.



81 कांश्चिन्ममानुध्यानेन नामसंकीर्तनादिभिः ।
योगेश्वरानुवृत्त्या वा हन्यादशुभदाञ्छनैः ॥ (XI-28-40)

Easier Short Cuts in Sadhana

Uddhava who was patiently hearing all the teachings of Sri Krishna was bewildered by the details of the various yogas. He found them to be difficult to be practised by a common man as they all laid emphasis on control of the mind. He told Krishna that the majority of people trying to make the mind one-pointed have failed miserably and it has made them unhappy.

Now, Krishna began to tell Uddhava certain easy short cuts in sadhana by practising which one will be able to conquer death effortlessly:

1. Dedication of Actions

If we cannot do actions prescribed in Yoga Sastras, which will take us to the highest divinity, let us divinise all actions,

by dedicating them to the Supreme Lord. Even if you have to take a cup of tea, mentally offer it to the Lord, all the while thinking of Him and then drink the tea as His 'Prasadam'. Do all your actions surrendering them all to the Lord and at the same time remember the Lord slowly while doing the work. Gradually, your mind will be completely merged in the Lord and the mind will derive pleasure in the Self and in following all the disciplines prescribed for a Bhakta, called the 'Bhagavata Dharma'.

2. Satsanga (Holy Company)

Periodically one should go to and reside in such holy places where saints and devotees of the Lord abound and practise the disciplines followed by the bhaktas. One has to do Japa, Puja, Prayers, either hear or give discourses about God's glories, sing the names of the Lord and develop compassion and magnanimity by emulating the Lord's bhaktas.

3. Celebration of Festivals

One should celebrate the various seasonal festivals relating to the Lord like Ram Navami, Janmashtami or Siva Ratri etc. either separately or collectively along with Bhajans, instrumental music etc. Doing sadhanas continuously, one is sometimes liable to fall in depression or lack of enthusiasm. Celebrating such occasions of festivals will boost one's zeal for sadhana.

4. Seeing the Lord in all and Equal Vision

Next to Satsanga, this is the most important and effective sadhana. When we meet people, immediately a mental classification takes place that 'he is good', 'he is bad', 'he is my enemy' etc. and it disturbs the mind. If we are to consider that the same Supreme Lord is seated in the heart of all as our very self and thus consider them to be the various forms assumed by one and the same Lord, then we will treat all with love

and the mind will be at peace. As declared also in Isavasya Upanishad,⁸² when one sees the same Self residing in all beings and in his heart, there will be no more sorrow or delusion. As a concomitant he has an equal vision. He treats alike a Brahmin or an untouchable or a thief, the sun and a small spark of fire, the compassionate and the cruel as he sees only the God who resides in them all. In such a person of equal vision seeing the one Divinity in all, his ego, spirit of competition, cavilling at others, contempt etc. will all vanish. Krishna considers this sadhana of seeing the Supreme Lord in all beings as the best means for attaining God-Realisation.

Krishna concludes his discourse thus:-
"I have now told you a summary of the entire knowledge of Brahman (Brahma vidya). The one who hears this Uddhava Gita daily with faith and a concentrated mind will get

82 यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद्विजानतः।

तत्र को मोहः कः शोकः एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ॥ (Isavasya - 7)

transcendental bhakti and will be released from all the bondage of karmas.

“When a man after having⁸³ renounced all activities has completely surrendered himself to me, he gets immortality and is transformed into my own form on account of his having merged in me.”

At the bidding of Lord Krishna to go to the Badri forest and to live there practising the disciplines as instructed by him, Uddhava, after having prostrated to Krishna time and again, being reluctant to be separated from the Lord went away carrying the sandals of the Lord on his head. Glory to Lord Krishna and my own humble prostrations at His holy feet.

HARI OM



83 मर्त्यो यदा त्यक्त समस्तकर्मा निवेदितात्मा विचिकीर्षतो मे।
तदामृतत्वं प्रतिपद्यमानो, मयाऽऽत्मभूयाय च कल्पते वै॥

(XI-29-34)