



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## Gleanings Of Advaita Philosophy In Uddhava Gīta

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### *Abstract:*

Uddhava Gita is the concluding portion of the Bhagavata Mahapurana. The 23 chapters (7-29) of the 11th Skandha is named as Uddhava Gita. It appears as the embodiment of the philosophical vision of the Bhagavata mahapurana. It describes the spiritual knowledge transmitted by Lord Krishna to Uddhava when Uddhava approached Srikrishna who was about to depart from the world, the latter reveals the great knowledge to him. The book is in the form of a dialogue between the teacher Krishna and the disciple Uddhava. Philosophically Uddhava Gita stands on a par with Bhagavatgita. It discusses concepts like Atman, Brahman, Maya, Prakriti etc. which are highly monistic in character. The Advaita philosophy of Uddhava Gita will be highlighted in the full paper.

### *Index Terms:*

Philosophy, Advaita, Uddhavagita, Purana

### *Introduction:*

Uddhava Gīta (U.G), a philosophical treatise appears as the last portion of the Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa. It begins from the chapter 7<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> of the eleventh Skandha. It was taught by Lord Kṛṣṇa to his dear friend Uddhava, when Kṛṣṇa decided to leave the world. Kṛṣṇa advised this gīta when Uddhava was inconsolable at the very thought of separation from him. Uddhava was in the same situation when Arjuna got confused after seeing his kith and kin on the battle field, Kurukṣetra. Here Uddhava is in the same perplexity after he saw the impending destruction of the Yādava community, in which Lord Kṛṣṇa was born, during his lifetime itself. Brahma and the celestials implored the Lord to return to his divine abode after the purpose of his descent was over. Being an exceptional devotee and a dear friend of Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava could not understand why he is not preventing the destruction of the Yādava community while he could have done so. Uddhava approaches him and beseeched to take him along with Kṛṣṇa. Then the Lord expounded truth to him, which portion is known as Uddhavagīta. Kṛṣṇa imparts the supreme knowledge to Uddhava, citing various anecdotes and allegories. He explains the paths of Bhakti, jñāna and Karma, the duties of a brahmachārī, a Gṛhastha, a vānaprastha and a yati; the value of Sādhusanga; the cause of bondage and the means of liberation; the superiority of Bhaktiyoga, etc. to Uddhava.

### ***The Concept of Brahman in Uddhava Gīta***

UddhavaGīta has its own views about the concept like Atman, Brahman, Maya, Prakriti, etc. According to UddhavaGīta Kṛṣṇa alone is the supreme being. He is considered as Brahman concealed in the form of human being. His existence can't be experienced by perception, it is experienced by inference.<sup>1</sup> Just as the existence to air is known by inference and not by perception. He can be known only by inference. Brahman is beyond prakṛti<sup>2</sup>. It is said that he is the master of Prakṛti and Puruṣa, Māya and Jīva or the Prakṛti and Puruṣa are the two forms of Brahman<sup>3</sup>. The term 'aum' is a significant expression which has been declared to be the denomination of the Brahman, one is asked to contemplate on this 'aum' to realize the Brahman. It is said that the God rests in the minds of the devotees. None can be compared with him. He is aprameya or beyond our capacity to learn.

### ***The concept of Atman in Uddhava Gīta***

According to U.G. the Jīva is one and is a part of God, but really speaking is of the nature of the supreme.

एकस्यैव ममांशस्य जीवस्यैव महामते । बन्धोऽस्याविद्ययाऽनादिविद्यया च तथेतरः ॥ (XI.11.4)

U.G. teaches the identity of the Ātman with the Brahman. The identity of the Ātman with Brahman or the Jīva with īsvarā is a reality. Devotion has no value if one cannot realize his ultimate identity with the object of his worship. God is definitely a subtle Jīva<sup>4</sup> and any distinction between them is due to the lack of true knowledge. According to Advaita Vedanta Reality must be uncontradicted. Reality is that which is unchangeable, indestructible and eternal. Śankara himself has defined it as Satyam Jñānam Anantam Brahma.<sup>5</sup> Śankaras Philosophy bears the name Advaita which means not bare identity but denial of ultimate difference. The self in man is Brahman, nothing but Brahman exists, because everything exists in Brahman, and Brahman is therefore the one ultimate Reality; the world is real; it cannot be unreal because it has emanated from Brahman. The true of true; that the objects of the Upaniṣads is to impart the right knowledge, by means of which Atman would be found identical with Brahman.<sup>6</sup> lastly Brahman is full of bliss feelings not being contraband for Brahman<sup>7</sup> U.G. also agrees the identity of Atman with Brahman. Here the difference is that the full of bliss feelings is enjoyed through devotion only.

### ***The concept of Prakṛti and Puruṣa in Uddhava Gīta***

The Bhāgavata defined Prakṛti as the reality which is full of the three gunās, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas-imperceptible, eternal replete with being and nonbeing and through indeterminate, is the source of all the specific objects. U.G. mentioned the salient features of prakṛiti:

1. Prakṛiti is subject to manifestation,
2. It is subject to transformation
3. It consists of the transformations of the Guna-s
4. It is multiform broadly speaking three-fold-Adhyātma, Adhibhuta and Adhidaiva, eg, the sense of seeing is Adhyātma, its function vision is Adhibhuta and the part of the sun-god situated in the eye organ is Adhudaiva

<sup>1</sup> Bha.XII.7.23

<sup>2</sup> Bhā XI.11.28

<sup>3</sup> Bhā.XI.24.3-4

<sup>4</sup> सूक्ष्माणामप्यहं जीव दुर्जयानामहं मनः ॥ (Bha.XI.16.11b)

<sup>5</sup> Taitṛīya Upaniṣad, 2.1.1

<sup>6</sup> Chakravarthi, S.C. The philosophy of the upaniṣads.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.p.165

5. It is not self-manifest
6. It is the equilibrium of the three guna-s<sup>8</sup>

When the *guṇās* are in equilibrium (Samyavastha) Prakṛti is invisible, imperceptible and there is no vestige of the universe. Another Basic concept associated with Prakṛti is Puruṣa who has the nature of knowledge.<sup>9</sup> Speaking about the origin of Prakṛti and Puruṣa, the Bhagavata observes that before creation only the Brahman existed. He became bifurcated in the forms of Māya and Jīva reflected therein-the sight and the seer. The first is known as prakṛiti and the latter is called Puruṣa<sup>10</sup> Vidyā, through which beings know their Atman and Avidyā, that binds the beings, both are products of Māya.<sup>11</sup>

### **Māya**

According to U.G. Māya is of two kinds-Vidyamāya and Avidyamāya<sup>12</sup>. The man who is a prey to Avidya is bound to this universe and one who is full of vidya is released.<sup>13</sup> The word maya originally meant the capacity to produce forms.<sup>14</sup> The description of maya as furnished by the U.G. is also the same. It manifests non-existent objects but is not manifested itself.

### **Bhakti**

It is difficult to conquer Prakṛti even for the very learned people except for those who are devotees of God<sup>15</sup>. Kṛṣṇa describes Uddhava what is true Bhakti. Doing every action for God and bear him in mind as much possible, offering the mind and all thought to him is the nature of Bhakti. So U.G. give importance to devotion than any other path. Its heart is set on devotion. Liberation is one of the distinguishing characteristics of U.G. The process which leads to liberation is subordinated to the process which leads to devotion. So in U.G. Kṛṣṇa says that neither Sāṃkhya, nor yoga nor Dharmā nor the study of the Veda, nor austerities nor renunciation leads a person to him as does intensive devotion. This devotion profoundly alters the treatment of Sāṃkhya, that Sāṃkhya indeed corroborates the non-dualism derived from vedic sources. Yet the highest wisdom of the U.G, its clearest vision, lies in its teaching of devotion to Kṛṣṇa a teaching which qualifies its non-dualism.

### **Jñāna, Karma and Bhakti according to Śankara and Uddhavagīta**

In Gītabhāṣya Śankara suggests three different paths or methods of realization-jñānamārga, karmamārga and Bhakti Mārga. Though each path is sufficient in itself to guide the spiritual aspirant to reach the highest stages of perfection and realization. The path of knowledge has its own importance. True wisdom can crace every trace of sin and true knowledge can destroy the effects of Karma. By attaining the supreme wisdom, the wise have reached the abode of perfection. The Karmayoga affirms that through incessant work and struggle in the cause of truth and righteousness man can reach the goal of perfection. In Gita stress has been laid on bhakti or devotion to God as the means of salvation. Devotion leads the devotee towards God resulting in the perfect unison of man with God. Pure love of God qualifies a man to attain moksha. In the gīta philosophy of 6 spirits, there is a perfect unity of the moral, the subline and the divine. Kṛṣṇa explains the nature of jnana and Bhakti Uddhava, that the

<sup>8</sup> Bhā.(XI.22.12)

<sup>9</sup> Bhā.XI.22.33

<sup>10</sup> तन्मायाफलरूपेणा केवलं निर्विकल्पितम् वाङ्मनोगोचरसत्यं द्विधा समभवत् बृहत् || (Bha.XI.24.3)

<sup>11</sup> Bhā.XI.11.3

<sup>12</sup> Bhā.XI.11.3

<sup>13</sup> Bhā.XI.11.3

<sup>14</sup> Radhakrishnan, The Bhagavad gita,P.41

<sup>15</sup> Bhā.Xi.22.60

knowledge or Jnana is that which sees the one supreme consciousness done, impregnating all creation from Brahma, the creator down to the smallest of his creations. When that substance is seen, to the exclusion of all changing modes, then that understanding is known as jñāna. The fire of greatly increased flames reduces pieces of wood into ashes, like that devotion on God consumes all sorts of sin, yoga, Sāmkhya, the study of the Vedas, asceticism and charity do not lead so much to obtaining Kṛṣṇa as devotion. Kṛṣṇa says one mind will be purified only through devotion. UG. teaches to combine action with devotion. Laying emphasis on devotion without expecting any fruit thereof, man should perform his dharma by offering everything to him.

### Conclusion

Kṛṣṇa imparts the supreme knowledge to Uddhava through various anecdotes and allegories. He says that the supreme being creates, manifests and withdraws the universe from himself and into himself, just as the spider does with its web. From this we can understand that the world itself is the manifestation of Brahman. The same is emphasized by Śāṅkara through Advaita which establishes the oneness of the supreme reality or Brahman by denying the reality of the world. According to Śāṅkara Brahma is the knower and the world is the object of knowledge. The former is pure consciousness while latter is inanimate, Śāṅkara's philosophy bears the name Advaita which means not bare identity but denial of ultimate difference. U.G. also identifies Jīva is one and is a part of Brahman, is the nature of the supreme. It says that devotion has no value if one cannot realize his ultimate identity with the object of his worship. Brahman is definitely a subtle jīva any distinction between them is due to the lack of true knowledge. The jīva-s involvement in samsara arises from its identification with bodies generated by the Guna-s of Prakṛti. Knowledge of its real nature alone will put an end to its entanglements. So long as there is perception of multiplicity, there will be no freedom for the Jīva. So UddhavaGīta says that emancipation can be attained when the true nature of atman is realized and penetrating the veil of maya one identifies oneself with Brahman, the true self. The same is the Advaita philosophy of Śāṅkara. The consciousness of the Lord and that of the living entity are transcendental. Consciousness is not generated by the association of matter. The theory that consciousness develops under certain circumstances of material combination is not accepted in the UddhavaGīta. It teaches that one has to purify the materially contaminated consciousness. In pure consciousness actions may be dedicated to the will of īsvara and that will makes one happy. It does not mean that one has to cease all activities. When the activities are purified, they are called Bhakti. Activities in Bhakti appear to be like ordinary activities, but they are not contaminated. One must become free from the bodily conception of life, ie, Māya which barriers one to identify self with Brahman. Mukti or liberation means freedom from material consciousness or avidya Vidyā is that when one realizes, the self as Brahman, ie, All the instruction of the U.G are intended to awake this pure consciousness.

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