



## Unconditional Universal Love as The Teaching of The *Bhagavadgītā*

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### Abstract

The objective of this paper is to show that the principal teaching of the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* is the teaching of love. This teaching of love has been rendered through all three *yogas*, i.e., *karma yoga*, *jñāna yoga*, and *bhakti yoga*. This teaching takes its birth in the womb of *karma yoga*, and subsequently it is nurtured by *jñāna yoga* and ultimately becomes mature at the hands of *bhakti yoga*. This love is unconditional and universal. The whole paper is an attempt to substantiate this view.

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The teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā consist of *karma yoga*, *jñāna yoga*, and *bhakti yoga*. One may think that one *yoga* is separate from and independent of other *yogas*. But this is not true. In fact, these three *yogas* are nothing but the different stages of one and the same teaching of the *Bhagavadgītā*. So, the teaching of the *Bhagavadgītā* is a continuous process beginning with the *karma yoga*, passing through the *jñāna yoga*, and ending with the *bhakti yoga*. This clearly implies that one *yoga* is complementary to the other *yogas*. But it is important to note that the teaching of the *Bhagavadgītā* is not one-way round. More clearly, to say *karma yoga* depends upon *jñāna yoga* and both of them, in turn, depend upon *bhakti yoga*. On the other hand, round *bhakti yoga* depends upon *jñāna yoga*, and both of them again depend upon *karma yoga*. But the culminating state of the teaching of the *Bhagavadgītā* is the teaching of *bhakti yoga*. If *bhakti yoga* is carefully pondered, then it can be understood that another name for *bhakti yoga* is unconditional universal love. Let us examine why I am claiming so. Before going to examine the same, let us first explain in brief what we mean by unconditional universal love. First of all, the very literal meaning of the term ‘love’ clearly implies that it must necessarily be unconditional. Conditional love is self-contradictory, like a triangular circle. Actually, love is not business. Business is always conditional; it depends upon a ‘give and take’ policy. A shopkeeper gives us some articles and in return he takes money from us. Thus, business is necessarily a conditional transaction. But love, in the true sense of the term, can never be conditional. In love, one knows to sacrifice, i.e., to give, but one does not know to get something in return. When a mother does something for her baby, she never has any desire to get something in return from her baby. In the like manner, a lover in the case of true love only loves his beloved till his death without having any desire to get back anything from her beloved, and vice versa. The love between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā is the classic example of an ideal and unconditional love. Swami Vivekananda also beautifully depicts the picture of an ideal love in his Complete Works.

Unconditional true love may be of two kinds—one is individual, and the other is universal. The love between Chandidas and Rajakini, or the love underlying Lyla and Majnu, are the two classic examples of individual love. But the teaching of the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* does not encourage individual love; it always encourages universal love, the love for the whole world. A true *bhakta* or a real *jñāni* or even a genuine *karma yogi*, as it is taught by the *Bhagavadgītā*, must sacrifice his whole life for the well-being (*lokasaṁgraha*) of the whole universe.

Now, let us proceed to examine why I am claiming that the principal teaching of the *Bhagavadgītā* is to encourage an unconditional universal love. It is already stated that the three *yogas*, i.e., *karma yoga*, *jñāna yoga*, and *bhakti yoga*, are the different stages of one and the same teaching of the *Bhagavadgītā*. The objective of all the *yogas* is unconditional universal love. Let us start to examine and explain with the *karma yoga*. The very conditions and nature of *karma yoga* are mainly pointed out in verses 47 and 48 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter. Verse no 47 categorically says that an action performed without having any desire to enjoy the fruit is known as *karma yoga* or *niṣkāma karma*.<sup>1</sup> So far as this verse is concerned, it clearly implies that *niṣkāma karma* or *karma yoga* must be unconditional. In our day-to-day life, whatever we do, we do for the sake of the enjoyment of the fruit of it. Here, the desire for the enjoyment of the fruit of an action is the condition for doing the action. But *niṣkāma karma* or *karma yoga* is positively devoid of this condition. So there is no room for any doubt that *niṣkāma karma* is a case of unconditional *karma*. But here a question arises: if one performs an action without having any desire, then in that case, how can the *karma* of one individual human being be distinguished from the action done by an animal or an action accomplished by a machine? A machine cannot have any desire to have something in return for what it does. Now, can we say that an action done by a machine is a case of *niṣkāma karma*? In reply, it must be said that an action performed by a machine cannot be a case of *niṣkāma karma* as it is taught by *Bhagavadgītā*. *Niṣkāma karma* is, first of all, the *karma* of a human being, and secondly, it is the *karma* of a *yogi*. Behind the action of a machine, there cannot be any motive, but behind the *karma* or action of a *karma yogi*, there must be a motive. But the question is, what is the motive of a *karma yogi* for his *niṣkāma karma*? The careful analysis shows that the motive of the same is the *lokasaṁgraha*. But why will one proceed to promote the well-being (*lokasaṁgraha*) for the whole world? The only rational answer is that one comes forward for *lokasaṁgraha* because of the unconditional universal love. The love here is unconditional since it does not have any desire to get anything back in return. Again, this love is also universal. The fact that this love is universal can be understood from verse 29 of the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter.<sup>2</sup> This verse categorically implies that if one is to be a *karma yogi*, then he must see himself

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<sup>1</sup> *karmaṇy evā'dhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana mā karmaphalāhetur bhūr mā te saṅgo'stv akarmaṇi. Gītā-2/47*

<sup>2</sup> *sarvabhūtastham ātmānam sarvabhūtāni cā 'tmani ikṣate yogayuktātmā sarvatra samadarśanaḥ. Gītā-6/29*

in all the living beings of the world, on the one hand, and on the other, he also perceives all living beings within himself; this means one identifies himself with others. In fact, another name of *niṣkāma karma* is sacrifice. The sense of sacrifice comes from the sense of love, and again, the sense of love in turn is the necessary consequence of the sense of identity. This sense of identity takes place only when one sees himself in others and others are seen in himself. A mother, for example, sacrifices for her child since she loves her child, and again she loves her child because she sees herself in her child, and her child is also seen in her. But it is worth noting that a mother sees herself only in her child, not in the child of others. That is why her love is confined only to her child. Therefore, this love is the case of individual love, though it is unconditional. But the love as the Bhagavadgītā teaches it is neither individual nor limited; it transcends the boundary of individual love and enters into the world of universal love. It knows no caste, creed, gender, or so on. A *yogi* taught by *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* loves and sacrifices for the whole world. Here, the term ‘world’ refers to human beings, animals, and even non-living nature. So, the love taught by the *Gītā* is really universal.

Here, one may ask—how does *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* promote such an unconditional universal love? I think all the *yogas*, *karma yoga*, *jñāna yoga*, and *bhakti yoga* simultaneously come forward to establish a solid foundation of such an unconditional universal love. The 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* advises one to transcend the boundary of the *kāma*. In fact, the world of *kāma* is the world of condition and individuality. The world of condition and individuality is hell, a locus of all problems like selfishness, greed, anger, hatred, and so on. As long as one belongs to this world, his *karma* necessarily will be *sakāma*, and love becomes individual and conditional. If one is to perform a *niṣkāma karma* and have a true, unconditional universal love, then one must go beyond the boundary of *kāma*. But again, the question comes- how can one transcend the boundary of the *kāma*? As far as the Sāṅkhya Philosophy is concerned, it is stated that the root cause of all the *ṣaḍarīpus* like *kāma* (desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (attachment), *mada* (ego), and *mātsarya* (jealousy) is the three *guṇas*, i.e., *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. The *guṇas* are the cause, and our *ṣaḍarīpus* (six enemies) are their effects. We know no effect can be eliminated without removing its cause. So if we are to transcend the boundary of the *kāma*, including the other five *arīpus*, then first of all we have to transcend the boundary of the *guṇas*.

Keeping this in view, *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* teaches us to transcend the boundary of the *guṇas*.<sup>3</sup> In fact, there are two worlds in front of us. One is the world of *guṇas* and *prakṛti*, which is otherwise variously known as the material world, the world of space and time, the world of sense organs, the world of creation and destruction, and so on. Besides this world, there is also another world. This world is the world of *puruṣa* or the soul, which is again variously known as the spiritual world, non-spatiotemporal world, non-material world, non-sensual world, the world of God, the internal world, and so on. The former world is the conditional world; it is a world of business and selfishness. There is no room for unconditional universal love in this world. The love of this world is the shadow love since it depends upon the fulfilment of some conditions. In this world, there is neither true love nor true lover and beloved. A lover continues to love her beloved as long as the demands of the lover are fulfilled by his beloved. In the same way, the beloved continues to love her lover as long as her lover fulfils her demands. So the 'love' is not an appropriate term to designate this kind of relation; the appropriate term to designate the same is 'businesses. The real love, i.e., the love in the true sense of the term, is possible only in the later world, i.e., in the spiritual world, the world of soul and God. In essence, this world is unconditional. It is the abode of pure love and sacrifice. One who enters into the kingdom of this world only knows how to sacrifice for others and how to love the whole world without having any desire to get something in return. Ramakrishna Deva, Swami Vivekananda, and Gautam Buddha are the people who enter this world and sacrifice their whole lives for the betterment and well-being of the whole society. One becomes capable of entering into this spiritual world only when one becomes a *sthitaprajña* in the terminology of the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*. That is why Śrī Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to be a *sthitaprajña*. But Arjuna wants to know from Śrī Kṛṣṇa what the characteristics of a *sthitaprajña* are, how one can be identified as a *sthitaprajña*.<sup>4</sup> Śrī Kṛṣṇa has given the answer to this question in the immediate subsequent verses, i.e., 2/55,56,58. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that a *sthitaprajña* is qualified by several properties, but the fundamental ones are that he transcends the boundary of *kāma* and enters into the world of soul, the sorrow and the suffering are the same to him, his senses are controlled, and so on.

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<sup>3</sup> *traiguṇyaviṣayā vedā nīstraiguṇyobhavārjuna nirdvandvo nityasattvastho niryogaḥkṣema ātmavān. Gītā-2/45*

<sup>4</sup> *sthitaprajñasya kā bhāṣā samādhīsthasya keśava sthitadhīḥ kiṁ prabhāṣeta kimāsīta vrajeta kim. Gītā-2/54*

So far as our foregoing discussion is concerned, it is seen that a *sthitaprajña*, who is otherwise known as a *yogi*, transcends the boundary of *śaḍarīpus* like *kāma*, *krodha*, and so on, and to transcend the boundary of the *śaḍarīpus*, he has to transcend the boundary of the *guṇas* and *prakṛti*. But how can one transcend the boundary of the *guṇas* and the *prakṛti*? Here comes the necessity of *jñāna* and *bhakti*. In the very first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa teaches Arjuna that essentially, we are the soul, not the body. The materialists, along with the common people, think that we are a body. Consciousness is the accidental and adventitious property of our body. In this regard, the Cārvāka School says that there is no soul different from and independent of the body. Our body qualified by consciousness stands for the soul (*caitanya viśiṣṭa deha = ātmā*). As long as one continues to believe in this theory of the Cārvāka School, he cannot transcend the boundary of the *guṇas* and the *śaḍarīpus*. For them, *niṣkāma karma* or unconditional universal love is nothing but a dream. To perform *niṣkāma karma*, which is otherwise known as unconditional universal love, one must be a *sthitaprajña* or *yogi*. But if one is to be a *sthitaprajña* or a *yogi*, then he must transcend the world of *guṇas* and *prakṛti*. One cannot transcend the boundary of *guṇas* if one agrees with the Cārvāka view as mentioned. In this regard, *Bhagavadgītā* teaches that we are essentially a soul, not a body. Our body is something like our dress. Our old torn dress is replaced by a new one. Likewise, our old and diseased body is replaced by a new one.<sup>5</sup> Our body, including our sense organs, mind, intellect, and ego, is nothing but the evolutes of *prakṛti* and *guṇas*. This knowledge about our true nature leads us to transcend the boundary of the *guṇas*. Here, one may raise a question – how does this knowledge about the fact that we are essentially soul lead us to transcend the boundary of the *guṇas* and the boundary of *śaḍarīpus*? I think the answer is very simple and clear. In our day-to-day life, we see that our behaviour or actions are determined by our knowledge about who we are. The action and behaviour of a sweeper must be different from the action and behaviour of a teacher. The action and behaviour of a king must necessarily be different from the action and behaviour of his subjects. If a subject one day becomes a king, then his behaviour and actions must be like those of a king. In the same way, if one knows that he is a body qualified by consciousness, then his behaviour and action will be of one type, but if one and the same person comes to know that he is a soul qualified by body, then his behaviour and action

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<sup>5</sup> *vāsānsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya navāni gṛhṇāti naro 'parāṇi tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇānyā nyāni sanyāti navāni dehī. Gītā- 2/22*  
*NBPAJAHS/ 1(2), 1-12*

will be of another type. Soul and body are fundamentally different in their nature. Our body is the subject of creation and destruction; it is limited, material, and so on, but our soul is eternal, beyond creation and destruction, spiritual, infinite, universal, and so on. The moment we come to know that we are the soul, all the properties or characteristics of the soul are turned into the properties and characteristics of our own. This knowledge that we are souls has another implication. Soul in Hinduism is identical with *Brahman*. In this context, we may remember what is said by our *sāstras*. *Chāndagyo Upaniṣad* says ‘*tat tvam asi*’, *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* asserts ‘*aham bramāsmi*’, *Māndukya Upaniṣad* advocates ‘*ayam ātma brahman*’, *Brahmasūtra* says ‘*jīva brahmaiva na paraḥ*’, Swami Vivekananda declares ‘*jatra jīva tatra śīva*’, ‘*nararupe nārāyana*’. Thus, it is established that we ourselves are *Brahman* or God. So our characteristics should be like the characteristics of God. Keeping this in view, *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* advises the whole society through Arjuna that we should possess the properties of God.<sup>6</sup> God by the essence is infinite and unlimited. So he is perfect and fulfilled. He cannot have any desire for anything. But in spite of that, He cannot remain without any action. So far as the teaching of our *sāstra*, including *Bhagavadgītā*, is concerned, God is always engaged with action. But the objective of His actions is not to fulfil His own demand and need, but to establish the well-being of society.<sup>7</sup> More or less, we come across the same picture in Christianity. John Hick, in his book *Philosophy of Religion*, beautifully depicts the picture of the characteristics of God of Christianity. John Hick points out some of the fundamental characteristics of God. Say, for example, he says that God is Omnipotent, Omniscient, and after all, Loving. To illustrate the characteristic of God called Loving, Hick says that the love of God is unique; it is not something like the love of common people. The love of common people is always conditional, but the love of God is unconditional. He loves the whole world without any condition. He loves the world just for the sake of love. In order to differentiate the love of God from the love of us, John Hick uses two different terms. In order to designate the

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<sup>6</sup> *vītarāgabhayakrodhā manmayā māmupāśhrītāḥ bahavo jñānatapasā pūtā madbhāvamāgatāḥ. Gītā- 4/10 idam jñānamupāśritya mama sādharṃyamāgatāḥ sarge 'pi nopajāyante pralaye na vyathanti ca. Gītā- 14/2*

<sup>7</sup> *na me pārthāsti kartavyam triṣu lokeṣu kiñcana nānavāptamavāptavyam varta eva ca karmaṇi, yadi hyaham na varteyam jātu karmaṇyatandritaḥ mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ, utsīdeyurime lokā na kuryām karma cedaham saṅkarasya ca kartā syām upahanyānimāḥ prajāḥ. Gītā- 3/22-24*

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānam sṛjāmyaham. Gītā- 4/7*

NBPAJAHS/ 1(2), 1-12

unconditional universal love of God, he uses the term ‘agape’. The moment one converts into God and possesses the quality of God, then the love of God towards society turns into unconditional universal love, which can be attributed as agape in the terminology used in the *Philosophy of Religion* written by John Hick. The goal of *dharma* is to convert a brute into a man and a man into a God. This fact is substantiated by the definition of *dharma* given by Swami Vivekananda and Bankim Chandra.

Vivekananda, to define *dharma*, says, ‘religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man’. This definition implies that the divinity or Godly nature is already there within human beings, but that divinity remains in man in the unmanifested, latent, or hidden form. Hen is already there within an egg of a hen, but it is there in the egg in the unmanifested or potential form. Fire is already there within the matchstick in its potential form. In the same way, divinity is already there within the human being in the potential form. The egg is turned into a hen when all the necessary conditions for the same are fulfilled. The matchstick is turned into fire when a collision occurs between the matchstick and the matchbox. In the same way, the unmanifested divinity underlying a human being becomes manifested when it comes in contact with proper religion. More clearly to say, when a man follows either the path of *karma yoga* or the path of *jñāna yoga* or the path of *bhakti yoga* or all of them, then the divinity remaining in the potential unmanifested form becomes manifested, and thereby the man turns into as good as God. We come across almost the same type of observation in the concept of *dharma* propounded by Ṛṣi Bankim Chandra. Like Vivekananda, Bankim Chandra also believes that human beings are a potential form of God. He says that human beings have four faculties, which are otherwise called *vṛttis* by him, and the four faculties are: physical faculty, knowledge-acquiring faculty, work-inducing faculty, and mind-gratifying faculty. At the initial stage, these faculties are in the underdeveloped stage, but those faculties can be developed through continuous, unbroken cultivation or culture of these faculties. The harmonious optimum development of all four faculties is called *dharma*, according to Bankim Chandra. This harmonious optimum developed state of all faculties is otherwise called as *manuṣatya* by Bankim. It is worth noting that apparently, one may think that the definition of *dharma* of Bankim Chandra is different from that of Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda describes the manifested state underlying human beings as divinity, but the manifested state brought by *dharma*, according to Bankim, is *manuṣatya*, not divinity. But if one carefully goes through the whole concept of *dharma*



of Bankim Chandra, he can easily understand that the term *manuṣatya* used by Bankim is very much similar to the term *divinity* used by Vivekananda, so far as their import is concerned. So far as our discussion goes, it is understood that *dharma* transforms one individual into a divine being. At the culminating state of *dharma*, one attains almost all the qualities of God. It is already stated that God is infinite and unlimited in all respects. He transcends the boundary of all kinds of needs. In the same way, in the highest state of *dharma*, one transcends the boundary of all one's personal needs and necessities. This kind of man has been described by *Bhagavadgītā* as *sthitaprajña* or *yogi* or true *jñāni* and an ideal *bhakta*. As long as one continues to perform his actions to satisfy his own needs, he cannot think of promoting well-being for others. But one who does not have any need to fulfill for his own self can very well think of promoting wellbeing (*lokasaṁgraha*) for others. This *sthitaprajña* or *yogi* goes beyond his need; his only motive is to ensure betterment and well-being for others, the whole world. His actions at that state must necessarily be unconditional since he cannot have any desire to get something in return. A *sthitaprajña* or a *yogi* is very much similar to God so far as his characteristics are concerned. The perfect and infinite God, due to this loving nature, is engaged with His activities in order to ensure the well-being of the world. Similarly, a true *yogi* or *sthitaprajña* is engaged with his works for the sake of *lokasaṁgraha* due to his loving nature. Here, one may ask — does the loving nature of God and *sthitaprajña* not imply the lack of love in them? The answer is negative. Their loving nature does not imply any lack in them. Loving nature is the essence or *svabhāva* of them. Fire burns; here, the burning nature of fire does not imply any kind of limitation of the fire; it is the essence or *svabhāva* of the fire. In the like manner, the unconditional universal love is nothing but the essence or *svabhāva* of them.

So far as our discussion goes, it is seen that the *jñāna yoga* has a great role to play so far as the *sthitaprajña* or a *yogi* is concerned, it is the true knowledge of the self that helps to turn an individual into a *sthitaprajña* or a *yogi*. But this knowledge alone is not sufficient to the same, more clearly to say *jñāna yoga* is a necessary condition for converting a common man into a *yogi* or *sthitaprajña*, but it is not a sufficient condition for the same. This implies the necessity of another condition. Here comes the relevance and necessity of *bhakti yoga*. In our previous discussion, it was already stated that to perform *niṣkāma karma*, one must transcend the boundary of the *kāma* and the other five enemies (*riṣus*). But to do the same, one must transcend the boundary of the *guṇas* or *prakṛti*. This *prakṛti* or the *guṇa* is otherwise called as *māyā*. We, the common man, are

under the control of the *guṇas* or *māyā* (*māyādhīna*). Since we are under the control of *guṇa* or *māyā*, we cannot win the battle with them. The knowledge of the theory of *māyā* or *guṇa*, the relation between the *māyā* and the human being, is no doubt a necessary condition. If we do not know all these things, then we cannot try at all to free ourselves from the control of *māyā* or *guṇa*. But our effort to do the same always falls short. Here we have to take the help of some power of an agency superior to *māyā*. That superior agency is nothing but God Himself. *Māyā*, as it is stated by our śāstra, including Bhagavadgītā, is the creating power of God. So this *māyā* is under the control of God (*māyādhīsa*). In this situation, we can be free from the control of *māyā* and thereby transcend the boundary of it only with the help of God.<sup>8</sup> But when God comes forward to help us to win the battle with *māyā*? He will come forward to help us only when we surrender to Him. It is clearer to say when we turn into a *bhakta*. A true *bhakta* turns into a slave of God. A slave cannot have his own agency; all the belongings of a slave turn into the belongings of his master. Whatever a slave does, he does for the sake of his master. Similarly, whatever a *bhakta* does, he does for the sake of God.<sup>9</sup> The love of a *bhakta* towards God must be unconditional. A *bhakta* always considers himself a slave of God, which is why, like a slave, a *bhakta* cannot have any desire to get something in return from God. But it is important to note that, as far as the teaching of the Gītā is concerned, *bhakta* is of four kinds – *ārta*, *jijñāsu*, *arthārthī*, and *jñāni*.<sup>10</sup> All four kinds of *bhakta* do not belong to the same level. The first three kinds of *bhakta* belong to the lower grade since their love is conditional. They surrender to God to get something from God. But the fourth kind of *bhakta* is the best *bhakta* of God. The fourth kind of *bhakta* is a *jñāni* *bhakta*, the *bhakti* of whom towards God is unconditional since he does not have any desire to get anything back from God. His *bhakti* is only for the sake of *bhakti* and for nothing else. Here, one may say that so far as our discussion goes, we come to know that the love of a true *bhakta* is unconditional, but the love of a *bhakta* towards God is individual love since this love is confined within a devotee and God. So how can the love taught by the Bhagavadgītā be universal love? To understand the same, we have to go back to *jñāna yoga* again. If we have clear knowledge about the nature of God, then we can understand that the love between a *bhakta* and a *Bhagavāna* is not only unconditional, but it is

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<sup>8</sup> *daivī hyeṣhā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā māmeva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te. Gītā- 7/14*

<sup>9</sup> *yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kuruṣva madarpaṇam. Gītā- 9/27*

<sup>10</sup> *chaturvidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukṛtino 'rjuna ārto jijñāsur arthārthī jñānī ca bharatarṣabha. Gītā- 7/16*

universal as well. The *Bhagavadgītā* believes in *advaitavāda*. According to the philosophy of the *advaitavāda*, the ultimate reality is one, i.e. the God or *puruṣattama* in the terminology of the *Bhagavadgītā*. The whole world is nothing but the manifestation of one and the same reality. This view has been expressed in different verses of the different chapters of the *Bhagavadgītā*. Some of the verses among them are given, verse no-7/3-10, 19; 13/3, 14, 16, 28, 29, which substantiate the same view. It is already stated in our previous discussion that *karma yoga*, *jñāna yoga*, and *bhakti yoga* are the three different steps of one and the same continuous process of the teaching of the *Bhagavadgītā*. *Karma yoga* is the first step, *jñāna yoga* is the second step, and *bhakti yoga* is the third, highest, and last step. So a *bhakta* reaches the state of *bhakti yoga* by passing through *karma yoga* and *jñāna yoga*. Thus, a true *bhakta* is a *karma yogi* and a *jñāna yogi* as well. A *bhakta* with the help of *jñāna* already knows the whole world is the manifestation of God. There is nothing other than God. Whatever we come across is God Himself. Keeping this view in mind, Śrī Kṛṣṇa beautifully says ‘*yo mām paśyati sarvatra sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati tasyāhaṁ na praṇaśyāmi sa ca me na praṇaśyati*’ (*Gītā*-6/30). So to love God is to love the whole universe. Thus, it is established that love taught by *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* is unconditional universal love. This view has been beautifully expressed by Mahanambrata Brahmachari in his book *Gītādhyāna*. He says that a lady, through marriage, becomes related to a man. Though this relation is held between two persons, husband and wife, in reality, this relation transcends the boundary of the couple and becomes multidimensional. The wife becomes related to her husband, and through her husband, she becomes related to the parents, sisters, brothers, and the other relatives of her husband. In the same way, a *bhakta* becomes related with God, and through God, he becomes related with the whole universe since God is related with the whole universe.<sup>11</sup> Thus, Mahanambrata Brahmachari shows how the love taught in the *Bhagavadgītā* becomes unconditional universal love. The same view is seen to be echoed in the very first verse of the *Īśopaniṣad*.<sup>12</sup> It says that each and every thing in the changing world is covered by God. Enjoy through renunciation, do not covet the wealth of others. Vivekananda gives a unique interpretation of this verse. He holds that this verse forms the foundation of *advaitavāda* (monism). Vivekananda observes that this verse consists of two units. The first unit is the premise, and the second unit is the conclusion. If the world is pervaded by God,

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<sup>11</sup> *mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñcidasti dhanañjaya mayi sarvamidaṁ protaṁ sūtre mañigaṇā iva. Gītā- 7/7*

<sup>12</sup> *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyām jagat tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā mā grdhaḥ kasya svid dhanam. NBPAJAHS/ 1(2), 1-12*

then from this premise, two concepts necessarily follow as conclusion—enjoyment through renunciation and non-coveting the wealth of others. Real enjoyment comes through renunciation alone. The premise shows that there is no room for duality. Everything is ultimately one. It is already stated that renunciation comes from true love. True love, in turn, takes its birth in the sense of identity. Since the premise here establishes identity, eliminating all sorts of duality, it gives birth to identity, unconditional universal true love, and service to the whole world, the consequence of which is enjoyment. The premise in question results in the second conclusion, i.e., the non-coveting of the wealth of others. Actually, the question of coveting comes only when there is the sense of duality, the sense of others. But the premise already shows that there is no room for others. So, the question of coveting the wealth of others is pointless. Thus, the above verse of the *Īsopaniṣad* encourages unconditional universal love for the world.

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