Gītāsāram

Gokulmuthu Narayanawamy
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Philosophy of Bhagavad Gita

The philosophy of Bhagavad Gita is the philosophy of the Veda, which is the philosophy of Hinduism. There are various divergent concepts thriving under the name of Hinduism. Hinduism welcomes the diversity. However, there are some high-level common salient concepts, about which almost all Hindu saints and leaders agree. Some of them are listed here. References to the relevant verses from the Gita are given in brackets.

1. All creatures, including human beings seek happiness. If questioned under what conditions we want happiness, the answer is always, everywhere and unconditional. If unconditional happiness is possible, it should be here and now. The only reason we are not happy is because we are not availing the intrinsic happiness and fulfillment. Problems will be there in life. Even in the worst of situations, we always have the freedom to put up a brave, cheerful face and handle the problems head on. This emotional independence by which we can assert our happiness that is independent of people, objects and situations is the goal. This is called Moksha. (2.11, 2.55-2.57, 2.71)

2. We are not able to avail the happiness because of wrong assumption about our identity. If we know and assert our real identity, we will be happy naturally, because that is our true nature. We need to go step by step from where we are. First, we need to get out of lethargy into activity. Second, we have to turn selfish activity into selfless activity. Third, we need to develop the capacity to be introvert. Finally, we need to find deep within ourselves our real nature. (5.7, 6.3, 6.10, 6.27, 4.33, 4.34, 18.20)

3. Hinduism gives a philosophy, and a way of life based on the philosophy. Most of modern Hinduism is based on the Vedanta philosophy. Almost all of the saints and leaders of Hinduism in the past 5000 years agree upon some basic tenets of Vedanta. They are presented here. On this foundation, Hinduism allows people to have variations in the details and encourages diverse practices to suit different temperaments of people. Hinduism believes in the principle of Unity in Diversity. (4.1-4.3, 4.11, 7.21, 9.14, 9.15, 12.8-12.11)

4. The individual, called jiva is the possessor of freewill. As freewill is "free" from matter, memories and emotions, the jiva is not a part or product or property of the body or mind. The jiva is an independent entity, who expresses and
experiences through the body and mind. (15.7, 15.8, 15.9, 15.16, 2.12, 2.13, 2.22)

5. The jiva is wholly responsible for all the situations faced in life. (6.5) The present situation faced by the jiva is the result of the past actions (physical, verbal and mental) of the jiva. The future situations that will be presented to the jiva will be the result of the past and present actions of the jiva. The jiva cannot escape the good and bad consequences of its actions, even by death. (6.41, 6.42, 16.18, 16.19, 16.20, 9.3, 13.22) This is called the Law of Karma.

6. Isvara is the sum total of all that exists. (7.4, 7.5, 11.7, 11.13, 11.38) Isvara is that Supreme Being, to whom, the entire material Universe is the body, the sum total of the minds of all jivas is the mind and identifies with the whole of existence. So, Isvara is everywhere as everything. (11.5, 9.4, 13.14, 13.15, 13.16, 13.17)

7. Devataas are the cosmic equivalents of the various faculties of an individual. For example, the sum total of the seeing faculty of all the jivas put together forms the seeing faculty of the Isvara, and is represented by the Surya devataa. Worship with a desire for specific worldly security and prosperity is done to the corresponding devataa. This kind of worship is inferior to worshiping the Isvara. (7.22, 7.23, 9.25)

8. Isvara has created, or rather has become or appears as, the jagat (Universe) for the benefit of the jivas to express and experience, by which they will mature in wisdom, which is the purpose of the existence of the Universe. For this, Isvara creates, sustains and recycles the Universe. (9.17, 10.20, 13.17) The jivas continue to exist with all their past effects and impressions intact even on recycling of the Universe. (8.19)

9. Isvara knows the innermost thoughts and intentions of every jiva. (10.20, 18.63) Isvara oversees the reward of every physical, verbal and mental action of every jiva in a fair and appropriate manner. (4.11, 9.19, 7.21, 7.22) This does not make Isvara judgmental because, Isvara is not different from the whole of existence. It is Isvara, as it were, that enjoys or suffers as the jiva itself. (13.15, 13.23, 9.24) Isvara is compassionate to every jiva because the jiva is not apart from Isvara. (7.7) It is just the Law of Nature that results in the reward. Isvara wants every jiva to learn from the good and bad experiences encountered in life and grow in wisdom. (4.33)
10. Isvara's teachings are available in the form of the **Vedas**, which was revealed to rishis in the distant past. (4.1) Isvara teaches the jivas through various saints in all places and in all ages. (4.2, 4.3, 4.34) Isvara is accessible to any sincere jiva in any place in any age. (7.21, 4.10) Occasionally, Isvara comes in the midst of the jivas in the garb of another jiva (incarnation) to help and teach the jivas. Isvara has come innumerable times in the past and will come innumerable times in the future. (4.6, 4.7, 4.8) Any teaching of anyone in any age is acceptable as authentic if it does not contradict the Vedas. (13.25, 16.23, 16.24)

11. By having a relationship with Isvara, which is based on faith, gratitude and love, the jivas can face the ups and downs of life with poise. The relationship will help them to be honest, compassionate, disciplined, unselfish, peaceful and happy even under extreme situations in life. With this equanimity and poise, the jivas will be able to learn from the various experiences, grow in wisdom and understand that they are not apart from Isvara. (12.13-12.20, 9.34, 12.6, 12.7) This relationship is called **Bhakti**.

12. To develop the relationship with Isvara, **puja** (worship) is a very effective exercise. Isvara can be worshiped as without form or through any form. It depends on the temperament of the worshiper. (12.2, 12.3, 12.4) The worship can be physical, verbal or mental. As Isvara is everywhere, knows the innermost thoughts and is compassionate, all that is needed is love and sincerity. (9.26) Isvara will know even if the jiva calls by any name. Isvara can be worshiped as male or female or neither or beyond. Isvara can be worshiped as any aspect of Nature or any form. (11.5) Different forms of mental worship are called **upaasana** (meditation). Hinduism has developed a detailed system of preparations and procedures of meditation that is suitable to people of different temperaments. (6.10-6.28) Usage of images and other representations of Isvara helps to concentrate the mind and form a personal emotional relationship with Isvara. Stories of incarnations, saints and devotees, stories of divine personalities which incorporate various aspects of Isvara, allegories that help meditation on various qualities of Isvara and various legends help forming a personal relationship with Isvara. Any form of worship invoking an all-pervading, all-knowing and all-powerful entity is accepted as worship of Isvara. (7.21, 7.22)
13. As Isvara is the whole of existence, anything that the jiva does is an offering to Isvara and any situation that the jiva faces in life is from Isvara only. Thus, every moment of life is an interaction with Isvara only. So, doing full justice to the current situation in which the jiva is placed by doing its duty as an offering to Isvara, is itself a form of worship of Isvara. (18.46, 9.27, 11.55) This is called *Karma Yoga*.

14. When the jiva understands fully and deeply that it is not apart from Isvara, the goal is reached. Freed from the cycle of desire, action and result, the jiva merges with Isvara and attains real peace. This goal is called *moksha* - freedom. (13.31, 13.32, 6.29, 6.30, 6.31, 2.71, 2.72)

15. The Hindu way of life is harmonious living with the world, people and other living beings in it, knowing the interconnectedness of everything, considering everything as divine. Hinduism encourages and celebrates diversity. All daily rituals, traditional customs, festivals, stories, legends, pilgrimages and art forms of Hindus are designed to imbibe these principles. Engaging with them knowing how they are connected to the principles given here will lead to a rich cultural, emotional, intellectual and fulfilling life. This is the Hindu *Way of Life*.

**Message of the Upanishads**

*Satyam Jnaanam Anantam Brahma (Taittiriya Upanishad 2.1.1)*

The Vedas declare that reality (Brahman) is pure Existence (Sat or Satyam), Consciousness (Cit or Jnaanam) and Infinite (Aananda or Anantam). Here is a way to understand this.

1. **Satyam**
What we see as the world is based on the sense organs and the instruments that extend the sense organs. The human eye can see only a limited range of frequencies. Similarly the ears can hear only a limited range. There are other animals which have a different range of vision and sound. Also, they have much more powerful sense of smell than us. So their world is an entirely different one. For example, when a cat enters a room, it knows who was sitting in the sofa an
hour back based on the smell. It also knows if you have gone to the park or not based on the smell of the flowers on you. Sharks can detect the electrical current in the bodies of animals swimming in the water a few meters away. Even with all the modern technology to extend our access to the various physical phenomenon in the world, there is no reason to assume that what we detect in the world is all that actually exists. There can be entirely new kinds of matter and energy that so far we do not have senses or instruments to detect.

What we see and interpret depend on the state of our mind. If we like someone, we see them as beautiful. The chemicals and hormones in our blood affect the way we think and judge. Also, all our past experience affects our interpretation of the people, objects and situations in the world. Thus, though the world seems to appear outside us objectively, what we know of the world is only what our instruments (senses and mind) show us. We have no access to the bare naked reality that exists. This fundamental reality is referred to as Existence.

What is the nature of Existence which is beyond these apparent properties like color, sound, smell, mass, temperature, charge, momentum, etc.? We know that properties like color, sound, texture, etc. are all emergent phenomenon. When we look at things at their minutest constituents known today like quarks and leptons, these properties do not exist. There are a different set of fundamental properties, which give rise to the perceivable properties at various composite grosser levels.

Vedanta extends this concept and says, “As long as properties are experienced, you have not reached the most fundamental level.” So, every property is only an emergent phenomenon. At the ultimate fundamental level, Existence would necessarily be free from any properties. Vedanta gives an example to understand this: pot-ness does not exist in the clay out of which pot is made.

This fundamental entity, of which the whole universe is made of, is called Sat or Satyam. It cannot have any properties (nirguna). Any two objects are distinguished
only based on properties. As Sat does not have any properties, is has to be only one (ekam eva adviteeyam). Any change is only change of properties. So Sat has to be changeless (nirvikaara). Changeless with respect to space and time. So Sat is all-pervading (sarvagata) and eternal (nityam). Parts of an entity are based on properties of constituents. So Sat is partless (akhanda). So, Sat is One, Infinite, All-pervading, Eternal, Changeless, Partless, Property-less, Absolute Existence.

2. Jnaanam
Let us analyze the subject-object relationship in perception. When I see a flower, I (subject) am the body, including the eye. The flower is the object. Form and color of the flower are properties. When I want to judge the properties of the eye like myopia or color-blindness, I put one step back. The eye is the object. “I”, including the mind, is the subject. Extending this further, the real “I” is the ultimate subject, which can never become an object of perception by the senses or conception by the mind. [Drg Drsya Viveka - 1-5] This ultimate subject is called Cit or Jnaanam.

In any subject-object relationship, properties always belong to the object. To judge the property of anything, it has to be given the status of an object. I need to extend myself to the edge of the instrument that is in contact with the object (internal or external) to experience and evaluate the properties of the object. Thus, I, the Cit, being the ultimate subject, cannot have any properties.

Applying the same logic that we applied to Sat, Cit also is One, Infinite, All-pervading, Eternal, Changeless, Partless, Property-less, Absolute Existence. So, Sat and Cit are not different. They are the same entity.

Thus, real I, the Consciousness is the fundamental entity from which the whole universe has emerged. This is conveyed in innumerable statements in the various Upanishads belonging to various Vedas. As a sample, four statements, each one taken from one of the Vedas, are called mahaavaakyaas.
3. Anantam
To understand the relationship between the infinite (Anantam) Sat-Cit and the finite world, let us take an example.

We have the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, ... The existence of these finite numbers indicate that we can go on counting forever. So we have the concept of “infinity” in mathematics. From the point of view of infinity, we cannot distinguish finite numbers like 1, 2, 3, etc. This can be seen from the equations below:

(1) \( \text{inf} - 1 = \text{inf} \)
(2) \( \text{inf} - 2 = \text{inf} \)

From (1) and (2),
\[ \text{inf} - 1 = \text{inf} - 2 \]

Thus from the point of view of infinity, 1, 2, 3, etc do not exist as discrete numbers. As the number line is homogeneous, any point on it is only imaginary. There is really no difference between one point and another point. Thus, from the point of view of the infinite, finite does not exist. But from the point of view of finite, the infinite exists.

Now, we can apply the same logic to the whole of existence. We have seen that Sat-Cit is the Infinite. The world that we see is finite. From the point of view of infinite Sat-Cit, the finite world does not exist. From the point of view of the finite world, the existence of infinite Sat-Cit cannot be denied. So, Sat-Cit has absolute existence and the empirical world has only relative existence.

This relationship between the infinite and finite is called Maaya.

4. Jivanmukti
Thus, the whole universe exists in Me, the pure Consciousness, as a relative appearance. My existence is of a higher order of reality compared to the world.
Vedanta gives an example to understand this: When a rope is mistakenly perceived as a snake in dim light, the rope is not affected by the perceived snake.

So, the world and its problems cannot affect me, just like the water in the movie does not wet the screen on which it is projected. The world is just a relative emergent superimposition which exists using me, the Sat-Cit-Ananda – Infinite Conscious Existence, as the support. This understanding frees me from all psychological defects like insecurity, anxiety, sorrow, fear and desire. This freedom is called Jivanmukti.

5. Sankara’s Summary
The three points we have seen here has been summarized as the three famous statements by the great teacher Sankara:

- Brahma satyam (from 1) – Infinite Consciousness is the fundamental reality.
- Jagat mityaa (from 3) – The finite universe is a relative appearance.
- Jeevah brahma eva na aparah (from 2) – The real ‘I’ is not different from Infinite Consciousness.

6. Jeevaatmaa and Paramaatmaa
The whole finite universe of name (conception by mind) and form (perception by senses) exists as an apparent emergent phenomenon in the pure infinite Consciousness. The Consciousness reflected on a particular body-mind complex is called Jeevaatmaa. The Consciousness reflected on the whole universe is called Paramaatmaa or Isvara.

As long as the person considers himself as an individual, Isvara cannot be denied. When the person understands and identifies himself as the real ‘I’, which is pure Consciousness, he understands that the real Isvara and the real Substratum of the world are also the same pure Consciousness, which is his own real nature.
Thus, the Absolute Reality is not in conflict with the Empirical Reality. They are complementary to each other. This allows us to deal with the everyday life in the world keeping the knowledge of the Absolute Reality in the back of our mind.

7. Saadhana and Moksha
A mind that has strong likes and dislikes and is attached to the body, mind, other people, objects and situations cannot understand and accept the real nature of the Self. The mind needs to relax a bit so that the teaching can be absorbed. The way to relax the mind from its strong likes, dislikes and attachments is called spiritual saadhana or spiritual life. Saadhana is in the form of:

- leading a moral, ethical and useful life in the spirit of service and sacrifice
- worship of Isvara as an expression of gratitude and love
practicing equanimity in accepting the dualities of life like success and failure
practice of concentration of the mind
being in the company of holy people
reading books on spiritual life, devotion and philosophy
listening to talks and participating in discussions on spiritual life

With sufficient purity of mind (freedom from strong likes and dislikes) and by continual exposure to the concepts in the Upanishads mentioned above, the mind will imbibe them and the person will be able to clearly identify himself with the Pure Consciousness. This switch in identity is called Moksha and he will live the rest of his life as a Jivanmukta.

Chanting and Study

One of the popular and effective ways to understand and imbibe the principles of Hinduism is to chant an assortment of verses everyday remembering the meaning. This sequence of selected verses from the Gita is put together for this purpose.

Gita has about 700 verses spanning 18 chapters. The main topics covered are

Nature of the individual
Nature of God
Nature of world
Relationship between the individual and God
Right action with right attitude
Meditation
Self-effort
God’s grace
Moral and ethical values

In this selection of 73 verses, almost all the important topics in the Gita are covered in a systematic sequence. I hope this helps the reader to grasp the message of the Gita and inspires to put them into practice.

Gokulmuthu Narayanaswamy
28-03-2015 (Ramanavami)
Arjuna’s surrender to Sri Krishna, asking Him to teach, induces the Lord to reveal the Gita.

1. कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः
पृच्छामि त्वं धर्मसम्मूटचेताः।
यच्छे: श्यातिशिचितं ब्रह्म तनमे
शिष्यस्तं हि शाधि मां त्वा प्रपत्तम्॥ २-१॥

1. kārpanyadoṣopahatasvabhāvaḥ
praccāmi tvāṁ dharmaṃ sammūḍhachatāḥ ||
yachchreyah syāniścitarān brūhi tanme
śisyaste 'ham śādhi mām tvām prapannam || 2-7 ||

This verse, composed by Sri Madhusudhana Saraswati as a salutation to Krishna, summarizes the entire Gita teaching.

2. प्रपत्त्कारिजाताय तोत्रवेत्रैकपाणये ।
ज्ञानमुद्राय कृष्णाय गीतामुत्तुहे नमः ॥

2. prapattāparijātāya totavetrākapāṇaye |
jñānamudrāya krṣṇāya gītāmrtdauhe namaḥ ||

This verse, composed by Sri Madhusudhana Saraswati as a salutation to Krishna, summarizes the entire Gita teaching.
senses, झ़ान मुद्राय = to the one showing jnaana mudraa, कृष्णाय = to Krishna, गीतामूर्त दुहे = to the giver of the Gita nectar, नमः = salutations.

The Lord Himself talks to us through the Gita. So we celebrate the words:

श्रीभगवानुवाच

श्रीभगवान = the Lord, उवाच = said

मुक्त लक्षणम् – mukta lakṣaṇam

This is where the actual teaching starts. Mukti, the goal, is defined and the means is stated. It is made very clear that the goal is to be free from sorrow arising out of the transiency of things and the means to that goal is wisdom.

3. अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्वत्व प्रजावादांश्च भाषसे
   गतासूनन्वगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः || 2-11 ||
   अशोच्यान् अन्वशोचः = (you) are lamenting about that which is not worthy of lamentation, त्वम्
   प्रजावादान् च भाषसे = you are speaking like the learned, गतासून् = (about) the gone, अगतासून् च =
   न अनुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः = the wise do not lament.

The description of the goal, which is to be a man of wisdom is presented in the next few verses.

4. प्रजहाति यदाकामान् सर्वन्पार्थ मनोगतान्
   आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रजहात्रोच्यते || 2-55 ||
   prajahāti yadā kāmān sarvānparthā manogataṁ
   ātmanyevātmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthitaprajñastadocye || 2-55 ||
when one gives up, कामानु = all desires, पार्थ = Arjuna, मनोगतानु = occurring in the mind, आत्मनि एव आत्मना तुष्टः = satisfied in himself by himself, स्थित प्रज्ञा तदा उच्छ्वते = then he is said to be a man of firm wisdom.

5 || दुःख्लेनुद्विनुभग्नानाः सुखेषु विगतस्प्रहः ||
दुःख्लेनु अनुद्विनु मनः = whose mind is unperturbed in troubles, सुखेषु विगत स्प्रहः = who is free from craving amidst pleasures, बीत = who is free from, राग = attachment, भय = fear, कोधः = and anger, स्थित धी = whose knowledge is firm, मुनि: उच्छ्वते = is called a sage.

6 || यः सर्वत्रानमित्वेषस्तत्तत्त्वाय शुभाशुभम् ||
नाभिनन्दति न स्वे तत्व प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता || २-५७ ||
यः = one who, सर्वत्र अनिमित्वः = is unattached everywhere, तत्तः तत्तः प्राप्त = on facing various situations that are, शुभ = favourable, अशुभम् = and unfavourable, न = neither, अभिनन्दति = rejoices, न = nor, स्वे तत्व प्रज्ञा = knowledge, प्रतिष्ठिता = is firm.

7 || विहाय कामान्: सर्वानु पुमांश्चरति निःस्प्रहः ||
निर्ममो निरह्स्वः = स शान्तिमधिगच्छति || २-७१ ||
विहाय कामान् यः सर्वानु = he who, having given up all desires for sense objects, पुमान् = that person, चरति = moves, निःस्प्रहः = without getting affected by them, निर्ममः = without a sense of ownership, निरह्स्वः = without a sense of individuality, सः = he, शान्तिः अधिगच्छति = enjoys peace.
This is one of the several verses that summarize the steps towards the goal.

8. yogayukto viśuddhātma vijītātma jītendriyāḥ
   sarvabhūtātmabhūtātmā kurvannapi na līpyate

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   sarvabhūtātmabhūtātmā kurvannapi na līpyate

The path is broadly divided into two stages.

9. ārurukṣormuneryogam karma kāraṇamucyate
    yogārūḍhaśya tasyāiva śamaḥ kāraṇamucyate

9. ārurukṣormuneryogam karma kāraṇamucyate
    yogārūḍhaśya tasyāiva śamaḥ kāraṇamucyate

We are not merely the body.

10. dehiṇoḥ sīmānyathā đehi kūmarā yāvane jara
    tatha dehāntaragratāṁśottarāṁ n mūhyati

10. dehiṇoḥ sīmānyathā đehi kūmarā yāvane jara
    tatha dehāntaragratāṁśottarāṁ n mūhyati
10. dehino'sminyathā dehe kaumāram yauvanam jarāḥ

tathā dehāntarapraṅptirdhīrastatra na muhyati || 2-13 ||

The mind is our instrument. A mind that is under our control is a good instrument.

11. uddhareṇātmanātmānāṁ nātmānamvasādayet || 6-5 ||

A dharmaic life is necessary for purity of mind.

12. yajñadānatapaḥkarma na tyājyaṁ kāryameva tat || 18-5 ||
The golden rule of all morality:

The golden rule of all morality:  

13. ātmāupamyena sarvatra samāṁ paśyati yo'ṛjuna । 

Best form of charity is defined:

14. dātavyamiti yaddānāṁ diyate'nupakāriṇe ।

deshē kālē ca pātre ca taddānāṁ sāttvikam smṛtam । 17-20 ।

Physical, verbal and mental austerities are listed:

15. devadvijagurupräjïa pūjanaà ca saucamārjavam ।

16
Focus on your contribution. Be contribution-centric instead of consumption-centric. Long-term inner development by learning from success and failure is more important than the short-term external result. The next two famous verses say that.

16. anudvegakaraṁ vākyam satyam priyahitam ca yat
svādhyāyābhyaśanaṁ caiva vānmayam tapa ucyyate

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत्।
s्वाध्यायाभ्यासं चैव वाङ्मयं तपं उच्यते ॥ १७-१५ ॥

अनुद्वेगकरम् = not agitating, वाक्यम् = words, सत्यम् = truthful, प्रियम् = pleasant, हितम् च = and beneficial, यत् = which, स्वाध्याय अभ्यासनम् च = and regular study of scriptures, एव = certainly, वाङ्मयम् तपः उच्यते = is said to be verbal austerity.

17. manah prasādah saumyatvam maunamātmavīnistā
bhāvasamśuddhirityetat tapo mānasamucyate

मनः प्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिधः।
भावसंशुद्भिरित्येतत् तपो मानसमुच्यते ॥ १७-१६ ॥

मनः प्रसादः = contentment of the mind, सौम्यत्वम् = gentleness, मौनम् = silence, आत्म विनिधः = mind-control, भाव संशुद्धि = purity of motive, इति पतः = all this, तपः मानसम् उच्यते = is said to be mental austerity.

18. karmayeṣvādhyākārsate mā phaleṣu kadaçana
mā karmaphalhetubhūḥ mā te saṅgo'ṣtvakarmanī
daçana = at any time, म = never, पालेशु = over the results, कदाचन = at any time, म = never, कर्म फल हेतु: भू: = become motivated by the results of action, म = never, ते = your, सञ्ज: = inclination, अस्तु = should be, अकर्मिणि = towards inaction.

19. योगस्थः कूरु कर्मिणि सञ्ज्ञ त्यात्वा धनञ्जयः ॥

_yogastha kuru karmiṇa sankṣaḥ tyaṭvamā dhanaṇjay_
19. yogasthaḥ kuru karmāni saṅgam tyaktvā dhanañjaya |
   siddhyasiddhyoh samo bhūtvā samatvam yoga ucyate || 2-48 ||

By offering the fruits of all action to God, work becomes Karma Yoga, the means to the goal of mukti (freedom from all sorrow). The next two verses show that.

20. aham hi sarvayajñānāṁ bhoktā ca prabhurev ca ||
   n tu māmabhijānanitī tattvenātatrachyāvatī te || 9-24 ||

By offering the fruits of all action to God, work becomes Karma Yoga, the means to the goal of mukti (freedom from all sorrow). The next two verses show that.

21. bhoktām yajñatapasāṁ sarvalokamaheśvaram ||
   suhṛdāṁ sarvabhūtānāṁ jñātvā mām sāntimṛcchati || 5-29 ||

Summary of Karma Yoga:

22. máyī sarvāṇi karmāṇi sāntvasthāvyātmaḥchetasā ||
   nirāśriṁmamō bhūtvā yuṣṭasya vinīgatajvar: || 3-30 ||
22. mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi sannyasyādhyātmacetasā 

nirāśirnirmamo bhūtvā yudhyasva vigatajvaraḥ  || 3-30  ||

मयि = to Me, सर्वाणि कर्माणि सन्त्यस्य = offering all actions, अध्यात्म चेतसा = with a devout mind, निराशी: = without expectations, निर्मम: = without possessiveness, भृत्वा = so being, युध्यस्य = fight (do your duty), विगत ज्वर: = without anxiety.

Special advantage of Karma Yoga compared to mere action:

23. nehaśikramanāśo'sti pratyavāyo na vichyate |

स्वल्पमाप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात्  || 2-30  ||

23. nehaśikramanāśo'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate |

svalpamapysya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt  || 2-40 ||

न इह अभिक्रम नाशा: अस्ति = in this pursuit there is no failure, प्रत्यवायः न विचयते = there is no adverse result, स्वल्पम् अपि = even a little, अस्त्य = of this, धर्मस्य = discipline, त्रायते = protects, महत: भयात् = from the great fear (of bondage, sorrow and death).

भक्ति योगः = bhakti yogaḥ

Different types of devotees:

24. caturvīdhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukrūtinorjuna ārto jīñāsurarthārthi jñāni c bhartarṣabha  || 7-16  ||

24. caturvīdhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukrūtinorjuna ārto jīñāsurarthārthi jñāni c bhartarṣabha  || 7-16  ||

चतुर्विधा: भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोर्जुनः = four types of virtuous people worship me, अर्जुन = Arjuna, आर्तः = the distressed, जिज्ञासुः = the seeker of knowledge, अर्थर्थिः = the seeker of wealth, ज्ञानी च = and the wise, भरतर्षभम् = Arjuna.
Jnani is the best among devotees.

25. udārāḥ sarva evaite jñānī tvātmaiva me matam

āsthitāḥ sa hi yuktātmā māmevānuttamāṁ gatim || 7-18 ||

Who is a Jnani?

26. bahūnāṁ jannманāmante jñānavānmaṁ prapadyate

vāsudevaḥ sarvamiti sa mahātmā sudurlabhāḥ || 7-19 ||

How is Vasudeva everything? The next two verses say that.

27. bhūmirāpo'nalo vāyuḥ khaṁ mano buddhirēva ch

ahāṅkāra itīyaṁ me bhinnā prakṛtiraśṭadhā || 7-4 ||

20
28. Apareyamitastvanyām prakṛtim viddhi me parām
jīvabhūtām mahābāho yayedā dhāryate jagat ॥ 7-5 ॥

28. Apart from this (eightfold nature) is lower (nature), besides this, but another nature (which is), me = My, higher nature, in the form of sentient beings, Arjuna, by which, this universe (made of lower nature) is sustained.

The idea is elaborated further:

29. Mattāḥ parataram nānyatkiñcidasti dhanañjaya
mayi sarvamidam protam sūtre manigaṇā āvaj ॥ 7-7 ॥

29. Apart from Me, fundamental cause, there is nothing else, Arjuna, in Me, all, this, is strung, on a thread, like pearls.

30. Ahamatma guḍaśesārveśaṃ mābhūtāsayasthitah
ahāmādiśca madhyam ca bhūtānamanta eva ca ॥ 10-20 ॥

30. Apart from Me, all, fundamental cause, the middle and the rest are sustained thereby, and Me and the middle all, sustaining everything, thereby.
अहम आत्मा = I am the Consciousness, मुडकेश = Arjuna, सर्व भूत आशय स्थितः = residing in the heart of all beings, अहम = I am, आदि: = the origin, च = and, मध्यम् = middle, च = and, भूतानाम अन्तः = end of all beings, एव = certainly, च = and.

31. pitāhamasya jagato mātā dhātā pitāmahaḥ |
vedyam pavitramoṅkāra rksāma yajureva ca || 9-17 ||

More details of the Lord as the dispenser of the results of secular and spiritual actions:

32. tapāmyahaham varṣāṁ nigṛḥhaṁyutsrjāmi ca |
amṛtāṁ caiva mṛtyuśca sadasaccāhamarjuna || 9-19||

tapāmi अहम् = I give heat, अहम् = I, वर्ष निग्रहम् उत्स्रजामि च = withhold and release rain, अमृतम् च एव = I alone am the cause of immorality, मृत्युः च = as well as mortality, सदृस्ती अस्तं च अहम् = I alone am the manifest and unmanifest, अर्जुन = Arjuna.

Whenever people lose faith in the righteousness, the Lord comes into the world to reestablish righteousness by teaching everyone and handling the violaters.

33. yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānirbhavati bhārata |
abhyutthānamadhamasya tadātmānāṁ sṛjāmyaham || 4-7||
God can be worshiped in any form by any method.

Three stages of bhakti are presented in the next three verses. Doing action in the world and offering the fruits of action to God is the first stage. Devotion and purity is more important than grandeur.

Three stages of bhakti are presented in the next three verses. Doing action in the world and offering the fruits of action to God is the first stage. Devotion and purity is more important than grandeur.
Worshiping God as the world by offering the action itself to God is the second stage.

37. यत्करोषि यद्वशासि यज्ञहोषि ददासि यत्।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्य मद्दर्पणम्। ९-२७॥

37. yatkaroṣi yadānaśi yajjuhoṣi dadāsi yat
yattapasyasi kaunteya tatkuruṣva madarpanam 9-27

The final stage is to offer the doership itself and thus be free from all bonds of actions.

38. शुभाशुभफलेरेव मोक्ष्यासे कर्मवन्धनेः।
संन्यासयोग्युक्तात्म विमुक्तो मामुपेष्यसि। ९-२८॥

38. śubhāśubhaphalahirevaṃ mokṣyase karmabandhanaiḥ
sannyāsayogayuktātma vimsukto māmupaiṣyasi 9-28

The next two verses describe how to be a bhakta who is dear to the Lord.

39. अद्वैता सर्वभूतानां मेत्रः करुण एव च।
निर्ममो निरहद्धारः समहुःकसुखः क्षमी। १२-१३॥
39. adveṣṭa sarvabhūtānāṁ maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca
   nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ samaduḥkhasukhaḥ kṣamī ॥ 12-13॥

अद्वेष = (My devotee) is non-hater, सर्व भूतानां = of all beings, मैत्र = friendly, करुण = and compassionate, निरहंकार = free from ‘mine’-notion, निर्दुःख = free from ‘I’-notion, सम = same in comfort and discomfort, क्षम = and forebearing,

40. सन्तुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा द्रढ़निश्चयः।
    मय्यार्पितामनोबुद्धियों मद्यः स मे प्रियः ॥ १२-१४ ॥

40. santuṣṭaḥ satataṁ yogī yatātmā ċṛḍhaṇiścayah |
    mayyarpitanobuddhiryo madbhaktah sa me priyah ॥ 12-14 ॥

सन्तुष्टः सततम् = always contented, योगी = tranquil, यतात्मा = self-restrained, द्रढनिश्चयः = with determination, मय्यार्पितामनोबुद्धियों मद्यः = mind and intelligence fixed upon Me, स = one who is such a, मद्यः = devotee of Me, स = he, मे प्रियः = is dear to Me.

_Bhakti Yoga is summarized in one verse:_

41. manmanā bhava madbhakto madyājī māṁ namaṅkuru |
    māmevaiśyasī yuktvaiwam ātmānāṁ matparāyaṇam: ॥ ९-३४ ॥

41. manmanā bhava madbhakto madyājī māṁ namaṅkuru |
    māmevaiśyasī yuktvaiwam ātmānāṁ matparāyaṇam: ॥ 9-34 ॥

मन्मता: = fix the mind on Me, मद्यः = (be) My worshipper, माम = surrender to Me, मांगूँ एवं एविष्टम् = you will reach Me alone, युक्तवा एवम् = thus fixing (the mind), अत्मानम् = on the Self, मत्परायणम् = (keeping) Me as the supreme goal.

_God takes care of the needs people who choose Him instead of the world._

42. अनन्याधिशिवन्तं मू मे जना पर्युपासेते।
    तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ ९-२२ ॥
42. ananyāścintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate
   teṣām nityābhiyuktānāṁ yogākṣemaṁ vahāmyaham || 9-22 ||

Having no other goal, those people who, dwelling on Me, offer worship, of those ever-steadfast ones, I carry.

Even a person who has led a bad life earlier, if he chooses God instead of the world, he will become a saint soon. The next two verses mention that.

43. api cetsudurācāro bhajate māmananyabhāk ||
   sādhureva sa mantavyaḥ samyagvyavasito hi saḥ || 9-30 ||

Even if a person who has the worst conduct worships Me, seeking nothing else, he should be considered a saint only, (because) he has made the right resolution.

44. kṣipram bhavatī dharmātmā śaśvacchāntim nigacchati ||
   kaunteya pratijanīhi na me bhaktāḥ prāṇasyati || 9-31 ||

Very soon, (he) becomes a noble person, attains lasting peace, Arjuna, My devotee never, perishes.
Meditation can be towards one of the following:

(1) calm the mind, develop concentration or form a personal relationship with God
(2) assimilate the Vedantic teaching after learning it from a Guru

The former is called Upasana. The latter is called Nididhyasana. The preparatory steps are almost the same for both. They are presented in detail in the next few verses.

45. yogī yuñjīta satatamātmānam rahasi sthitā || 6-10 ||

45. yogī = a yogī, yuñjīta = should engage, satatamātmānam = constantly, rahasi = in solitude, sthitā = remaining, ekākī = alone, yatacittatma = with a restrained mind and body, nirāśīparigrahaḥ = without any desire, parigrahaḥ = without any possessions.

46. sucau dese pratiṣṭhāpya sthiramāsanamātmanah ||

46. sucau = in a clean, dese = place, pratiṣṭhāpya = one should firmly place, asanam = his own seat, n = not, ati = too, nīcchātma = high, n = nor, ati = too, cailajinaṇakusūtratarmaḥ = which consists of cloth, skin, grass, nīcchātma = low, caila = cloth, ajina = kusūtra = one over the other.

47. tatraikāgraṁ manāḥ kṛtvā yatacittendriyakriyāḥ ||

47. tatraikāgram manāḥ = kṛtvā = yatacittendriyakriyāḥ = which consists of cloth, skin, grass, one over the other.
there, making the mind one-pointed, having controlled the activities of the mind and sense organs, sitting, should practice, dhyaana yoga, for mental purity.

48. samāṁ kāyaśīrogrīvam dhārayannacalam sthirāḥ | samprekṣya nāsikāgram svāṁ diśaścānavalokayan || 6-13 ||

49. praśāntātmā vigatbhīrbrāhmaṇarātvate sthitat āśīta matparaḥ || 6-14 ||

50. saṅkalpaprabhavāṅkāmāṃstṛtyatva sarvāṇeṣhoṣat: | manasaivendriyagrāmam vinīyamya samantataḥ || 6-24 ||

नंम = there, एकाग्रम = making the mind one-pointed, यत चित्र इन्द्रिय क्रिया = having controlled the activities of the mind and sense organs, उपविश्य = sitting, आसने = on the seat, योगम् = dhyaana yoga, आत्म विचुदये = for mental purity.

48. सम्म कायशिरोग्रीवधारयनम स्थिरः || 6-13 ||

सम्प्रेक्ष्य नासिकायं स्वं दिशाश्चानवलोकयनु ||

49. प्रशान्तत्त्वा विगतभीर्भ्राह्मचारिते स्थितः ||

मन: संयम्य मच्छितो युक्त आसीत मत्परः || 6-14 ||

50. संख्ल्यप्रभवान्कामांस्त्रयतवः सर्वानेशोषतः ||

मनसेवेन्द्रियाः विनियम्य समन्ताः || 6-24 ||

संख्ल्य प्रभवानु कामाः = desires born out of fancies, त्यत्त्वा रवानु अभोषणः = all being completely given up, मनसा = by the mind, एव = certainly, इन्द्रिय ग्रामम् = the group of sense organs, विनियम्य = one should restrain, समन्ताः = from all sides.
51. शानिः शानिरुपांस्थितम् बुद्ध्याः धृतिगृहीतयाः।
आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किष्ठिदपि चिन्तयेत। ६-२५।

52. यतो यतो निष्ठरति मनः अध्वलमस्थिरम्।
ततस्ततो नियम्येतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत। ६-२६।

The culmination of Upasana:

53. यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेः न कर्मस्वस्वनुषज्ञते।
सर्वस्मृत्तिपरस्तन्यासी योगयुद्धस्तदोच्यते। ६-४।

54. प्रशान्तमस्बं हृदं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम्।
उपेति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्पस्तम्। ६-२७।

The culmination of Nididhyasana:
54. praśāntamanasaṁ hyenaṁ yoginam sukhamuttamam |
   upaiti śāntarajasāṁ brahmabhūtamakalmañam || 6-27 ||

अत्यन्त मनस् = whose mind is totally calm, हि = certainly, एतम् = to this, योगिनम् = yogi,
सुखम् उत्तमम् = the highest bliss, उपेति = comes, शान्त रजस् = whose agitations have
subsided, ज्ञान भूतम् = who has become Brahman, अक्लमपम् = who is free from impurities.

झानम् - jñānam

All activities are only preparations for knowledge.

55 || श्रेयांद्रव्यमयाद्याज्ञानयज्ञः परन्तप ।
   सर्वं कर्माविलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते || 8-33 ||

श्रेयान् = greater, द्रव्यमयात् यज्ञात् = than the sacrifice involving materials, ज्ञान यज्ञः = (is)
pursuit of knowledge, परन्तप = Arjuna, सर्वं = all, कर्मं = activities, अविलम् = without
exception, पार्थ = Arjuna, ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते = attain their culmination in knowledge.

Three levels of knowledge are presented in the next three verses.

56 || सर्वभूतेषु चेनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते ।
   अविभक्तं विभक्तेः जड्ठानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥ १८-२० ॥

56. sarvabhūteṣu yenaikam bhāvamavyayamikṣate |

अविभक्तं विभक्तेः = by which one sees the non-dual imperishable Self in
all beings, अविभक्तम् = (which is) undivided, विभक्तेः = in all the divided beings, तत् ज्ञानम् =
= know that knowledge, सात्त्विकम् = as the highest.
What is knowledge? It is presented in two verses.

57. prthaktvena tu yajñānam nānābhāvāniṣṭhāvādān ||
vetti sarveṣu bhūteṣu tajjñānam vidhi rājasam || 18-21 ||

prthaktvena tu yastu jñānam nānābhāvāniṣṭhāvādān : but that knowledge by which one sees the various jivas as different, sarveṣu = in all, bhūteṣu = beings, tatu jñānam vidi rājasam = know that knowledge as lower.

58. yatū kṛṣṭavastreṇekiminkaṁjye saktamahaitukam ||
atattvārthavetalpān ca tattāmasamudāhṛtam || 18-22 ||

yatū = but that (knowledge) which, kṛṣṭavastreṇekiminkaṁjye = considers everything (centered), saktamahaitukam = is unreasonable, atattvārthavetalpān ca tattāmasamudāhṛtam = is said to be the lowest.

What is knowledge? It is presented in two verses.

59. dvāvimau puṛuṣau loke kṣarāśca kṣara eva ca ||
kṣaraś ca sarvāṇi bhūtāṇi kūṛṣṭvānāścar ucyate || 15-16 ||

dvāvimau puṛuṣau loke kṣarāśca kṣara eva ca = these are two, puṛuṣau = (levels of) personalities, loke = in the world, kṣaraś ca = imperishable, kṣara eva = certainly, ca = and, kṣara = imperishable, sarvāṇi bhūtāṇi = the perishable is in the form of all living entities, kūṛṣṭvānāścar = deeper causal personality is called the imperishable.
60. uttamaḥ puṣuṣṭacarman: paramātmeyaudāḥat:।
yo lokatravādeśāṃ vitmārtyavypASYa ĪŚ الحر:। १५-१७।।

yttamaḥ = the supreme, puṣuṣṭa = personality, त्र अन्यः = is different (from the perishable and imperishable), paramātma इति उदाहरत: = it is called the Supreme Self, यः = who, लोक त्रयं आविष्य = by entering the three worlds (of waking, dream and sleep), विभरति = is maintaining (them), अच्यः = it is the inexhaustible, ĪŚ हर=: the Lord.

Seeing the One-ness is knowledge. This is emphasised again.

61. yadā bhūtapṛthaghbhaṃvamakṣasthamanupasyati।
tat eva ch vistārāṃ bhūṃ sampadyate tadā। १३-३१।।

yadā = when, bhūṭa पृथकः भावम् = the separate identities of living beings, एकस्तमुः अनुपस्यति = are seen as existing in the one Self, tat: eva ch vistārām = their emergence is seen as from that one Self alone, bhūṃ sampadyate tadā = then one becomes Brahman.

Knowledge is freedom.

62. anāditvāñnirgūṇatvātparamātmāmyamavyaḥ।
śarīrastho’pi kauntey na karoti n lipyate। १३-३२।।

anāditvā = Being birthless, निर्गुणत्वात् = and without attributes, paramātma अयम् = this Supreme Self, अच्यः = is changeless, śarīrastha: अष्टि = though dwelling in the body, kauntey = Arjuna, n karoti = it never acts, n lipyate = nor is affected.
The discipline and preparations of knowledge are presented.

63. \[अमानित्वमदभित्वमहिः \text{क्षणितराजवमू्म} \text{।} \]

अच्छायोपासनां शौच स्थैर्यमात्मविनियम। १३-८। 63. Amānitvamadambhitvamahimsā kṣāntirārjavam।

ācāryopāsanam śaucaṁ sthairyamātmavinigrahaḥ। १३-८।

अमानित्वमू = humility, अदभित्वमू = unostentatiousness, अहिंसा = nonviolence, क्षणितिः = forbearance, आर्जनमू = integrity, आचार्योपासनमू = service to the teacher, शौचमू = purity, स्थैर्यमू = steadfastness, आत्म विनियमः = self-control,

64. \[इन्द्रियाद्यथैव \text{वेरागमनहंकार \text{एव} \text{च}} \text{।} \]

जनममृत्युजरायवथिधिः \text{kādōṣपानुदर्शनमू। १३-९।} 64. Indriyārtheṣu vairāgyamanahāṅkāra eva ca।

jannmaṁtyujarājāravathidhiḥ khādōṣpānudarśanam। १३-९।

इन्द्रिय अर्थेशु वेराग्य = detachment from the sense objects, अनह्वहः = एव च = and absence of egoism, जन्म मृत्यु जरा व्याधि दुःख देश अनुद्राशन = observing the defects and pain in birth, death, old age and disease,

65. \[असक्तिरनन्यप्रेषः \text{पुत्रदासगृहादिदिम} \text{।} \]

नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमित्वानिद्विगपतित्वसु। १३-१०। 65. Asaktiranabhiṣvaṅgaḥ putradāragrāhādiṣu।

nityam ca samacittatvamāṣṭaniṣṭopapattiṣu। १३-१०।

असक्ति = dispassion, अनभिध्वसः = non-identification with, पुत्र = son, दास = wife, गृह आदिदिश = home, etc., नित्यमू च = and always, सम चित्तत्वमू = being equanimous, इष्ट = in the desirable, अनिष्ट = and undesirable, उपपतित्व = situations,
66. Mayi cānanyayogena bhaktiravyabhicārini
   viviktadeśasevitvamaratirjanasamsadi ॥ १३-११ ॥

66. undivided attention to Me, unswerving devotion, seeking seclusion, non-indulgence, in (worldly) people’s company,

67. Adhyātmajñānanityatvān tattvajñānarthadarśanām
   etatjanamitam proktamajñanānam yadato'nyathā ॥ १३-१२ ॥

67. Constant Self-enquiry, having sight on the value of Self-knowledge, all this, is said to be jnana (yoga), that which is opposed to this is not jnana yoga.

We have to approach a Guru to get knowledge.

68. Taddhīdim prāṇipātena pariprāśena sevaya
   upadeśyānām te jñānastattvadarśinaḥ ॥ ४-३४ ॥

68. may you understand That, by prostration, by proper enquiry, by service, (they) will teach, to you, knowledge, the wise, knowers of truth.

The pre-requisites and benefit of knowledge is given.

69. Abhavaṁbhate jñānānattvaratīrya
   jñānān luhḍa pāraṁ shāntimachīrṇadhānchātā ॥ ४-३९ ॥
69. śraddhāvāṁllabhate jñānam tatparaḥ samyatendriyaḥ
   jñānam labdhvā parām sāntimacirenādhigacchati || 4-39 ||

The three steps to knowledge – hearing, understanding and assimilating – are listed.

70. tadbuddhayastadātmānastanniñūhätatparāyaṇāḥ |
   gacchantyapunarāvṛttīṁ jñānanirdhūtalakṣmaṇāḥ || 5-17 ||

70. The Absolute and the way to reach it are summarized.

71. ye tvakṣaramanirdeśyamavatyaktā paryuṇpāsate |
   sarvatragamacintyam ca kūṭasthamacalandhruvam || 12-3 ||

71. Ye tvakṣaramanirdeśyamavyaktam paryupāsat
   sarvatragamacintyam ca kūṭasthamacalandhruvam || 12-3 ||

35
72. sanniyamyendriyagrāmām sarvatra samabuddhayaḥ
   te prāpnuvanti māmeva sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ || 12-4 ||

Having restrained all the senses, being even-minded towards all, they achieve being interested in the welfare of all.

_Gita teaching finishes by asking for complete surrender._

73. sarvadharmānparityajya māmekā śaraṇām vraja
   aham tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ || 18-66 ||

(Mentally) abandoning (the fruit and doership of) all good (and bad) actions, surrender your identity completely to Me (the Self), I will free you from all (good and) bad results, do not worry.

प्रपन्नपारिजाताय तोत्रेवेत्रेकपणयेः
ज्ञानमुद्राय कृष्णाय गीतामृततः हेमः ||

हरि: अः तत् सदा श्री कृष्णार्पणमस्तु ||
Acknowledgements
All my knowledge and inspiration comes from my teachers – Sri V. Ramamurthy, Swami Swayambodhanandaji, Rev. Swami Gahananandaji Maharaj, Swami Paramarthanandaji and Swami Paramasukhanandaji. I am thankful to the inspiring discussions at Vivekananda Study Circle, IIT Chennai, Vivekananda Yuvak Sangha, Ramakrishna Math, Halasuru, Bengaluru and Vivekananda Study Circle, IISc Bengaluru. These discussions helped me to organize these ideas with clarity.

The devanagari and roman text in this book was prepared using the files in ITRANS format from the website www.sanskritdocuments.org. Transliteration was done using the software at www.oah.in

The main sources of translations and commentaries used are those by Swami Paramarthananda, Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Vireshwarananda and Swami Gambhirananda.

About the author
I am a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna. Most of my understanding of religious, spiritual and philosophical ideas comes from the tradition Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The traditional foundation in Vedanta comes from the tradition of Swami Paramarthanandaji. You can visit the website for more details.

http://www.practicalphilosophy.in
He who hates no creature, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from attachment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain, forbearing and forgiving, ever content, steady in meditation, self-controlled, possessed of firm conviction, with mind and intellect dedicated to Me, he, My devotee, is dear to Me.

Bhagavad Gita – 12.13, 12.14

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