

## THE BIG IDEAS

### Live Your Dharma

How about now?

### Fire & Smoke

It's part of the process.

### Seeing Truly

God is everywhere!

### The Power of Our Will

Re-shape your life.

### Two Paths

Choose wisely.

### Results

& Non-attachment.

### Temperance of a Yogi

The Middle Way.

### Meditate

Pretty, please.

### How's Your Faith?

Well, how is it?

### There Is No Failure

On the path.

### Selfless Service

Give yourself!!

*"By devotion to one's own particular duty, everyone can attain perfection."*

~ Krishna

# The Bhagavad Gita

## Classics of Indian Spirituality

BY TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY EKNATH EASWARAN · NILGIRI PRESS © 2007 · 296 PAGES

"Be fearless and pure; never waver in your determination or your dedication to the spiritual life. Give freely. Be self-controlled, sincere, truthful, loving, and full of the desire to serve... Learn to be detached and to take joy in renunciation. Do not get angry or harm any living creature, but be compassionate and gentle; show good will to all. Cultivate vigor, patience, will, purity; avoid malice and pride. Then, you will achieve your destiny."

~ Krishna from *The Bhagavad Gita*

*The Bhagavad Gita* is incredible.

A principal book of Hinduism, inspiration to Gandhi and overall "must-read" for any big thinking seeker, if you haven't read it yet, I \*highly\* recommend you add it to your list.

(I personally love Eknath Easwaran's translation and commentary.)

In these brief six pages, we'll barely scratch the surface of the depth of the *Gita* and, as always, we'll focus on the Big Ideas we can *immediately* grasp and, most importantly, apply to our lives.

## QUICK CONTEXT

*The Bhagavad Gita* is believed to have been written between the 5th and 2nd centuries BCE and its 700 verses are part of the longer *Mahabharata*.

The content of the *Gita* consists of a conversation between [Krishna](#), the supreme manifestation of the Lord Himself, and the warrior prince Arjuna before the start of the Kurukshetra war. Krishna is advising Arjuna as he hesitates in moral confusion over the challenge of going to war with his own family.

Viewed allegorically, the war represents the perennial struggle between good and evil within each of us and Krishna's wisdom points the way to following the yogic path of living in harmony with universal laws as we strive to live our highest truths.

## LIVE YOUR DHARMA

"It is better to strive in one's own dharma than to succeed in the dharma of another. Nothing is ever lost in following one's own dharma. But competition in another's dharma breeds fear and insecurity."

*Dharma.*

It comes from the Sanskrit *dhri*, which means "to support, hold up or bear."

The word means many things, but according to Eknath Easwaran, dharma "implies support from within: the essence of a thing, its virtue, that which makes it what it is."

*" Relying on internal discipline,  
meditate on me always."*

~ Krishna

On a larger scale, dharma means *"the essential order of things, an integrity and harmony in the universe and the affairs of life that cannot be disturbed without courting chaos. Thus it means rightness, justice, goodness, purpose rather than chance."*

There's also a (highly) personal application of dharma. In essence, we all have our own "dharma" or purpose and reason for being alive. As Krishna states in the *Gita*, following someone else's dharma is dangerous. If you live your life trying to impress others and not fulfilling what you're here to do, you'll feel the pain.

So... How about you?

Are you living your dharma?

Or struggling to fulfill someone else's ideas about who you should be and what you should do?!

In his great book, *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success* (see [Notes](#)), Deepak Chopra dedicates a chapter to his 7th Law: *The Law of Dharma*. In that chapter, he has a bunch of great questions to help us discover and live our dharma. One of my favorites: *"If you had all the money and all the time in the world, what would you do?!!?"*

So... If you had all the money and all the time in the world, what would you do?

\* journal time! \* :)

## FIRE & SMOKE

*" One person in many  
thousands may seek  
perfection, yet of these only  
a few reach the goal and  
come to realize me."*

~ Krishna

**"It is better to perform one's own duties imperfectly than to master the duties of another. By fulfilling the obligations he is born with, a person never comes to grief. No one should abandon duties because he sees defects in them. Every action, every activity, is surrounded by defects as a fire is surrounded by smoke."**

So, we've established the importance of following YOUR dharma and not someone else's. Sweet. Now, what about if you're not *perfectly* following your path?

Well, that's a good time to check in with the *Gita* and remember: **"No one should abandon duties because he sees defects in them. Every action, every activity, is surrounded by defects as a fire is surrounded by smoke."**

And how about Abraham Maslow (see [Notes](#) on *Motivation and Personality*) who studied the greatest people of his generation (from Einstein to Eleanor Roosevelt) as he identified the hallmarks of what he called "self-actualizing" individuals? He taught us: *"There are no perfect human beings! Persons can be found who are good, very good indeed, in fact, great. There do in fact exist creators, seers, sages, saints, shakers, and movers...even if they are uncommon and do not come by the dozen. And yet these very same people can at times be boring, irritating, petulant, selfish, angry, or depressed. To avoid disillusionment with human nature, we must first give up our illusions about it."*

And [Rumi](#) (see [Notes](#)) who advises: *"There is no worse sickness for the soul, o you who are proud, than this pretense of perfection."*

The moment we allow ourselves to be less than perfect, we open ourselves up to the opportunity to grow.

Here's to many of those moments! :)

## SEEING TRULY

**"He alone sees truly who sees the Lord the same in every creature... seeing the same Lord everywhere, he does not harm himself or others."**

*"Calmness, gentleness, silence, self-restraint, and purity: these are the disciplines of the mind."*  
~ Krishna

The end result of following Krishna's wisdom and living the yogic truths is simple: we see "the Lord the same in every creature." We experience the beauty and the power of seeing the interconnectedness of our existence and do no harm to ourselves or others.

Reminds me of more of Maslow's mojo: "Self-actualizing people have a deep feeling of identification, sympathy, and affection for human beings in general. They feel kinship and connection, as if all people were members of a single family."

And Einstein's statement: "A human being is part of the whole, called by us 'Universe'; a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison."

And, what about Donne's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*? "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee."

We're all ONE. Let's see truly.

And, why not emulate Walt Whitman who tells us: "In the faces of men and women, I see God."

*"Giving simply because it is right to give, without thought of return, at a proper time, in proper circumstances, and to a worthy person, is sattvic giving."*  
~ Krishna

## THE POWER OF OUR WILL

"Reshape yourself through the power of your will... Those who have conquered themselves... live in peace, alike in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, praise and blame... To such people a clod of dirt, a stone, and gold are the same... Because they are impartial, they rise to great heights."

Self-mastery.

Another theme echoed (again and again!) throughout these Notes.

The Buddha (see [Notes](#) on *The Dhammapada*) says: "One who conquers himself is greater than another who conquers a thousand times a thousand men on the battlefield."

Jesus says: "He who rules his spirit has won a greater victory than the taking of a city."

[Rumi](#) (see [Notes](#)) says: "The lion who breaks the enemy's ranks is a minor hero compared to the lion who overcomes himself."

How's YOUR self-mastery? Are you re-shaping yourself through the power of your will?

Perhaps the quickest, simplest and most powerful way to begin re-shaping yourself starting NOW is to ask yourself these two questions:

1. What's one thing your Highest Self would like to be doing you're not currently doing?

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2. And, how about something that you *are* doing that you know you need to *stop* doing?!?

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Let's diligently, patiently and persistently re-shape ourselves through the power of our will, my friend!

*"I continue to act, but I am not driven by any need of my own."*

~ Krishna

## TWO PATHS

"Be fearless and pure; never waver in your determination or your dedication to the spiritual life. Give freely. Be self-controlled, sincere, truthful, loving, and full of the desire to serve... Learn to be detached and to take joy in renunciation. Do not get angry or harm any living creature, but be compassionate and gentle; show good will to all. Cultivate vigor, patience, will, purity; avoid malice and pride. Then, you will achieve your destiny."

That's from a chapter called "Two Paths."

A description of the other path?

"The demonic do things they should avoid and avoid the things they should do... Hypocritical, proud, and arrogant, living in delusion and clinging to their deluded ideas, insatiable in their desires, they pursue unclean ends... Bound on all sides by scheming and anxiety, driven by anger and greed, they amass by any means they can a hoard of money for the satisfaction of their cravings... Self-important, obstinate, swept away by the pride of wealth, they ostentatiously perform sacrifices without any regard for their purpose. Egotistical, violent, arrogant, lustful, angry, envious of everyone, they abuse my presence within their own bodies and in the bodies of others."

So, which one are *you* choosing?

## RESULTS & NON-ATTACHMENT

"The awakened sages call a person wise when all his undertakings are free from anxiety about results."

You ever notice that your stress comes from CLINGING to your idea of what should happen and when it should happen?

(Me, too. :)

Russell Simmons, the vegan-yogi-hip-hop-mogul brings the point home brilliantly in his great book, *Do You!* (see [Notes](#)): *"I know some people say 'Keep your eyes on the prize,' but I disagree. When your eyes are stuck on the prize, you're going to keep stumbling and crashing into things. If you really want to get ahead, you've got to keep your eyes focused on the path."*

So, next time you're stressed, take a peak and see if it's because you're WAY TOO worried about the RESULTS.

Then, take a deep breath in, exhale. One more time. Breathe in. Breathe out.

Then get back to doing your best and follow the wisdom of the *Gita*: "Abandon all attachment to the results of action and attain supreme peace."

## TEMPERANCE OF A YOGI

"Those who eat too much or eat too little, who sleep too much or sleep too little, will not succeed in meditation. But those who are temperate in eating and sleeping, work and recreation, will come to the end of sorrow through meditation."

Buddha calls it the "Middle Way" and Aristotle calls it the "Virtuous Mean."

Whatever YOU call it, pay attention. :)

And ask yourself these questions: What am I doing too much of? What I am doing too little of?

Then re-shape yourself through the power of your will!

*"The ignorant work for their own profit... the wise work for the welfare of the world, without thought for themselves... Perform all work carefully, guided by compassion."*

~ Krishna

## MEDITATE

"When meditation is mastered, the mind is unwavering, like the flame of a lamp in a windless place."

How's your mind?

Is it still? Under your control?

Can you point your attention where you wish or do you find your mind swinging from one thought to the next like a drunken monkey going from vine to vine?

Controlling our minds is an ESSENTIAL component to living our greatest lives and creating a life of beauty, service and balanced bliss. And, meditation is perhaps THE most powerful tool to aid us in the process of achieving mastery of our thoughts.

If you don't have a meditation practice and you've been meaning to develop one, what're you waiting for? Now's a good time to get going. Take the next step. Sign up for a class. Download a guided meditation. Sit in stillness. (I personally love Holosync!)

If you're meditating: How's your practice? How can you take it to the next level?

As Krishna advises: "Strive to still your thoughts. Make your mind one-pointed in meditation."

## HOW'S YOUR FAITH?

"When a person is devoted to something with complete faith, I unify his faith in that. Then, when his faith is completely unified, he gains the object of his devotion."

How's *your* faith?

When our faith reaches a level of *knowing*, of total expectation, magical things happen.

Thoreau tells us: "*If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with success unexpected in common hours. He will put some things behind, will pass an invisible boundary: new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him; or old laws will be expanded and interpreted in his favor in a more liberal sense, and he will live with license of a higher order of beings.*"

And Eric Butterworth tells us (see [Notes](#) on *Spiritual Economics*): "*Faith is expectancy. You do not receive what you want; you do not receive what you pray for, not even what you say you have faith in. You will always receive what you actually expect.*"

So...

(Echo) How's your faith?

Are you wavering in your intentions/desires or are you devoted with complete faith to the object of your desire?

Know that: "When a person is devoted to something with complete faith, I unify his faith in that. Then, when his faith is completely unified, he gains the object of his devotion."

## THERE IS NO FAILURE

"On this path effort never goes to waste, and there is no failure. Even a little effort toward spiritual awareness will protect you from the greatest fear."

I love that.

Are you feeling disillusioned?!? KNOW that on this path, effort never goes to waste!

And, in times of pain, remember Rumi's beautiful poem:

*"No mirror ever became iron again;  
No bread ever became wheat;  
No ripened grape ever became sour fruit.  
Mature yourself and be secure from a change for the worse.  
Become the light."*

... and TAKE THE NEXT STEP as you re-shape yourself with the power of your will and joy in your heart assured that your effort is never wasted!

## SELFLESS SERVICE

**"Strive constantly to serve the welfare of the world; by devotion to selfless work one attains the supreme goal of life. Do your work with the welfare of others always in mind."**

Beautiful.

Reminds me of Marcus Aurelius, the 2nd century Stoic Philosopher/Emperor (see [Notes](#) on *Meditations*): *"Let your one delight and refreshment be to pass from one service to the community to another, with God ever in mind."*

And of Martin Seligman, author of *Authentic Happiness* (see [Notes](#)) and a leader of the Positive Psychology movement, who tells us that if we want a scientifically measurable meaningful life, we need to use our strengths in service to something bigger than ourselves.

So, I ask you: How can you work with the welfare of others always in mind while you fully give your greatest gifts in the greatest service to the world?

B

**Brian Johnson,**  
*Heroic Philosopher CEO*

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## About the Author of This Note

BRIAN JOHNSON



Brian Johnson is the Founder + CEO of Heroic. He's spent half of the last 25 years as a Founder/CEO and the other half as a Philosopher. Brian loves integrating ancient wisdom and modern science to help YOU become the best, most heroic version of yourself so we can create a world in which 51% of humanity is flourishing by 2051. Learn more at [heroic.us](http://heroic.us).