

Hinduism

Notes for Huston Smith's, *The World's Religions*, Ch. 2

“You can have what you want” (p. 31). We want four things:

Path of desire

1. Pleasure. Worthy goal, but “too trivial to satisfy one’s total nature” (p. 32)
2. Worldly success: wealth, fame, power, etc. Worthy goal. Longer lasting than pleasure, source of income, source of pride, etc. But there are four problems:
 - i. “exclusive, hence competitive, hence precarious” (p. 33)
 - ii. “The drive for success is insatiable” (p. 34).
 - iii. Meaning comes only to self. One wants more.
 - iv. “You can’t take it with you” (p. 35) after bodily death.

Path of renunciation

People on the Path of Renunciation are more psychologically mature. They have lived more lives in the cycle of reincarnation. For them, pleasure and worldly success cannot give the kind of “meaning to life” they are looking for.

When . . . they find themselves crying, ‘Vanity, vanity, all is vanity!’ it may occur to them that the problem stems from the smallness of the self they have been scrambling to serve. What if the focus of their concern were shifted? Might not becoming a part of a larger, more significant whole relieve life of its triviality? [p. 38]

3. Serve the community.

Its rewards require maturity to be appreciated, but given maturity, they are substantial. Faithful performance of duty brings respect and gratitude from one’s peers. More important, however, is the self-respect that comes from doing one’s part. But in the end even these rewards prove insufficient. For even when time turns community into history, history, standing alone, is finite and hence ultimately tragic. It is tragic not only because it must end—eventually history, too, will die—but in its refusal to be perfected. [p. 39]

4. What people *really* want.

Being: “None of us take happily to the thought of a future in which we shall have no part” (p. 40)

Knowledge: “even monkeys will work longer and harder to discover what is on the other side of a trapdoor than they will for either food or sex” (p. 40)

Joy: “a feeling tone that is the opposite of frustration, futility, and boredom” (p. 40)

(People want these three things to an “infinite” extent.)

In sum, people really want *moksha*: “release from the finitude that restricts us from the limitless being, consciousness, and bliss our hearts desire” (p. 41).

What people most want, that they can have. Infinite being, infinite awareness, and infinite bliss are within their reach. Even so, the most startling statement yet awaits. Not only are these goods within peoples’ reach, says Hinduism. People already possess them. [p. 41]

Underlying the human self and animating it is a reservoir of being that never dies, is never exhausted, and is unrestricted in consciousness and bliss. This infinite center of every life, this hidden self or *Atman*, is no less than *Brahman*, the Godhead. Body, personality, and *Atman-Brahman*—a human self is not completely accounted for until all three are noted.

But if this is true and we really are infinite in our being, why is this not apparent? Why do we not act accordingly? “I don’t feel particularly unlimited today,” one may be prompted to observe. “And my neighbor—I haven’t noticed his behavior to be exactly Godlike.” How can the Hindu hypothesis withstand the evidence of the morning newspaper?

The answer, say the Hindus, lies in the depth at which the Eternal is buried under the almost impenetrable mass of distractions, false assumptions, and self-regarding instincts that comprise our surface selves. A lamp can be covered with dust and dirt to the point of obscuring its light completely. The problem life poses for the human self is to cleanse the dross of its being to the point where its infinite center can shine forth in full display. [p. 41-2]

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Passing Beyond Imperfection

“We are limited in joy, knowledge, and being, the three things people really want” (p. 42).

What prevents us from being unlimited in joy? “physical pain, frustration that arises from the thwarting of desire, and boredom with life in general” (p. 43)

1. *Physical pain.* Least troublesome of the three:

- “As pain’s intensity is partly due to the fear that accompanies it, the conquest of fear can reduce pain concomitantly” (p. 43)
- “Pain can also be accepted when it has a purpose, as a patient welcomes the return of life and feeling, even painful feeling, to a frozen arm” (p. 43). Another example: a weightlifter might welcome the pain of lifting heavy weights.
- “pain can be overridden by an urgent purpose, as in a football game” (p. 43)
- Anaesthesia can be used (see p. 43)

2. *Psychological pain from the thwarting of desires* (wanting things and not getting them). More serious, but manageable. “If the ego were to have no expectations, there would be nothing to disappoint” (p. 43). If this sounds like ending an ailment by killing the patient, the same point can be stated positively. What if the interests of the self were expanded to the point of approximating a God’s-eye view of humanity? Seeing all things under the aspect of eternity would make one objective toward oneself, accepting failure as on a par with success in the stupendous human drama of yes and no, positive and negative, push and pull. Personal failure would be as small a cause for concern as playing the role of loser in a summer theater performance. How could one feel disappointed at one’s own defeat if one experienced the victor’s joy as also one’s own; how could being passed over for a promotion touch one if one’s competitor’s success were enjoyed vicariously? Instead of crying “impossible,” we should perhaps content ourselves with noting how different this would feel from life as it is usually lived, for reports of the greatest spiritual geniuses suggest that they rose to something like this perspective. [p. 43]

3. *Boredom with life.* One can avoid boredom in the same way that one can avoid psychological pain: Detachment from the finite self or attachment to the whole of things—we can state the phenomenon either positively or negatively. When it occurs, life is lifted above the possibility of frustration and above ennui . . . for the cosmic drama is too spectacular to permit boredom in the face of such vivid identification. [p. 43-4]

What prevents us from being unlimited in knowledge? Not “knowing of That the knowledge of which brings knowledge of everything.” What is the *That*? The true self, the ground of everything: Brahman.

What prevents us from being unlimited in being? What is the spatiotemporal boundary of the self? Larger than the human in space, and longer than a single lifetime in the cycle of reincarnation.

What the realization of our total being is like can no more be described than can a sunset to one born blind; it must be experienced. The biographies of those who have made the discovery provide us with clues, however. These people are wiser; they have more strength and joy. They seem freer, not in the sense that they go around breaking the laws of nature (though the power to do exceptional things is often ascribed to them) but in the sense that they seem not to find the natural order confining. They seem serene, even radiant. Natural peacemakers, their love flows outward, alike to all. Contact with them strengthens and purifies. [p. 47]

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Paths to the goal of *moksha*

All of us dwell on the brink of the infinite ocean of life's creative power. We carry it within us: supreme strength, the fullness of wisdom, unquenchable joy. It is never thwarted and cannot be destroyed. But it is hidden deep, which is what makes life a problem. The infinite is down in the darkest, profoundest vault of our being, in the forgotten well-house, the deep cistern. What if we could bring it to light and draw from it unceasingly?

This question became India's obsession. Her people sought religious truth not simply to increase their store of general information; they sought it as a chart to guide them to higher states of being. Religious people were ones who were seeking to transform their natures, reshape them to a superhuman pattern through which the infinite could shine with fewer obstructions. [p. 47-8]

In sum, the goal of *moksha* is to get to the infinite in ourselves, and to "let it shine." Hindu *paths* to the goal of *moksha* are called *yogas*. There are *yogas* of the body and *yogas* of the mind.

Yogas of the body: *Yogas of the body* aim for "precision and control, ideally complete control over the body's every function" (p. 48-9). Not very interesting for our purposes.

Yogas of the mind: *Yogas of the mind* aim "to unite the human spirit with the God who lies concealed in its deepest recesses" (p. 49). The aim is "to become identified with Brahman, living out of it . . . become divine while still on earth—transformed, reborn adamant while on the earthly plane; that is the quest that has inspired and deified the human spirit in India throughout the ages" (p. 49).

The four paths (yogas) to *moksha*: Altogether there are four paths—*yogas*—that correspond to the four basic personality types: reflective, emotional, active, and the experimentally inclined:

The number of the basic spiritual personality types, by Hindu count, is four. (Carl Jung built his typology on the Indian model, while modifying it in certain respects.) Some people are primarily **reflective**. Others are basically **emotional**. Still others are essentially **active**. Finally, some are **experimentally inclined**. For each of these personality types Hinduism prescribes a distinct *yoga* that is designed to capitalize on the type's distinctive strength. [p. 50-1]

All four paths begin with moral preliminaries. As the aim of the *yogas* is to render the surface self transparent to its underlying divinity, it must first be cleansed of its gross impurities. . . . Selfish acts coagulate the finite self instead of dissolving it; ill-will perturbs the flow of consciousness. The first step of every *yoga*, therefore, involves the cultivation of such habits as non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, self-control, cleanliness, contentment, self-discipline, and a compelling desire to reach the goal. [p. 50-1]

Path 1: The Way to God through Knowledge

Reflective types can "pierce the innumerable layers of . . . personality until, having cut through them all, . . . reaches the anonymous, joyfully unconcerned actress who stands beneath" (p. 53).

It helps to practice thinking in the third-person.

Our word "personality" comes from the Latin *persona*, which originally referred to the mask an actor donned as he stepped onto the stage to play his role, the mask through (*per*) which he sounded (*sonare*) his part. The mask registered the role, while behind it the actor remained hidden and anonymous, aloof from the emotions he enacted. This, say the Hindus, is perfect; for roles are precisely what our personalities are, the ones into which we have been cast for the moment in this greatest of all tragi-comedies, the drama of life itself in which we are simultaneously coauthors and actors. As a good actress gives her best to her part, we too should play ours to the hilt. Where we go wrong is in mistaking our presently assigned part for what we truly are. We fall under the spell of our lines, unable to remember previous roles we have played and blind to the prospect of future ones. The task of the *yogi* is to correct this false identification. Turning her awareness inward, she must pierce the innumerable layers of her personality until, having cut through them all, she reaches the anonymous, joyfully unconcerned actress who stands beneath. [p. 52-3]

Thinking of oneself in the third person does two things simultaneously. It drives a wedge between one's self-identification and one's surface self, and at the same time forces this self-identification to a deeper level until at last, through a knowledge identical with being, one becomes in full what one always was at heart. "That thou art, other than Whom there is no other seer, hearer, thinker, or agent. [p. 54]

The *yoga* of knowledge is said to be the shortest path to divine realization. It is also the steepest. Requiring as it does a rare combination of rationality and spirituality, it is for a select few. [p. 55]

Path 2: The Way to God through Love

Love God and you'll end up acting in the right way on the path toward *moksha*.

people tend to become like that which they love, with its name written on their brows. The aim of *bhakti yoga* is to direct toward God the love that lies at the base of every heart. [p. 55]

First, as healthy love is out-going, the *bhakta* will reject all suggestions that the God one loves is oneself, even one's deepest Self, and insist on God's otherness. As a Hindu devotional classic puts the point, 'I want to taste sugar; I don't want to be sugar.' [p. 56]

We come finally to the worship of God in the form of one's chosen ideal. The Hindus have represented God in innumerable forms. This, they say, is appropriate. Each is but a symbol that points to something beyond; and as none exhausts God's actual nature, the entire array is needed to complete the picture of God's aspects and manifestations. But though the representations point equally to God, it is advisable for each devotee to form a lifelong attachment to one of them. Only so can its meaning deepen and its full power become accessible. The representation selected will be one's *ishta*, or adopted form of the divine. The *bhakta* need not shun other forms, but this one will never be displaced and will always enjoy a special place in its disciple's heart. The ideal form for most people will be one of God's incarnations, for God can be loved most readily in human form because our hearts are already attuned to loving people. Many Hindus acknowledge Christ as a Godman, while believing that there have been others, such as Rama, Krishna, and the Buddha. Whenever the stability of the world is seriously threatened, God descends to redress the imbalance. [p. 60-1]

Path 3: The Way to God through Work

Acting with disattachment, and by a sense of duty.

Such people are not broken by discouragements, for winning is not what motivates them; they want only to be on the right side. They know that if history changes it will not be human beings that change it but its Author—when human hearts are ready. Historical figures lose their center when they become anxious over the outcome of their actions. "Do without attachment the work you have to do. Surrendering all action to Me, freeing yourself from longing and selfishness, fight—unperturbed by grief" (*Bhagavad-Gita*). [p. 64]

Work as a path toward God takes a different turn for people whose dispositions are more reflective than emotional. For these too the key is work done unselfishly, but they approach the project differently. Philosophers tend to find the idea of Infinite Being at the center of one's self more meaningful than the thought of a divine Creator who watches over the world with love. It follows, therefore, that their approach to work should be adapted to the way they see things. [p. 65]

*He who does the task
Dictated by duty,
Caring nothing
For the fruit of the action,
He is a yogi.
[Bhagavad-Gita, VI:1]*

Hence the story of the *yogi* who, as he sat meditating on the banks of the Ganges, saw a scorpion fall into the water. He scooped it out, only to have it bite him. Presently, the scorpion fell into the river again. Once more the *yogi* rescued it, only again to be bitten. The sequence repeated itself twice more, whereupon a bystander asked the *yogi*, "Why do you keep rescuing that scorpion when its only gratitude is to bite you?" The *yogi* replied: "It is the nature of scorpions to bite. It is the nature of *yogis* to help others when they can." [p. 66]

Karma yogis will try to do each thing as it comes as if it were the only thing to be done and, having done it, turn to the next duty in similar spirit. Concentrating fully and calmly on each duty as it presents itself, they will resist impatience, excitement, and the vain attempt to do or think of half a dozen things at once. Into the various tasks that fall their lot they will put all the strokes they can, for to do otherwise would be to yield to laziness, which is another form of selfishness. Once they have done this, however, they will dissociate themselves from the act and let the chips fall where they may. [p. 66]

Mature individuals do not resent correction, for they identify more with their long-range selves that profit from correction than with the momentary self that is being advised. Similarly, the *yogi* accepts loss, pain, and shame with equanimity, knowing that these too are teachers. To the degree that *yogis* repose in the Eternal, they experience calm in the midst of intense activity. Like the center of a rapidly spinning wheel, they seem still—emotionally still—even when they are intensely busy. It is like the stillness of absolute motion. [p. 66-7]

Path 4: The Way to God through Psychophysical Exercises

1. "five abstentions: from injury, lying, stealing, sensuality, and greed." [p. 71]

2. “five observances: cleanliness, contentment, self-control, studiousness, and contemplation of the divine. . . the five finger exercises of the human spirit in anticipation of more intricate studies to come.” [p. 71]
3. Bodily posture. Lotus position seems to be the best posture.
4. Breathing techniques. “On the whole the exercises work toward slowing the breath, evening it, and reducing the amount of air required.” [p. 73]
5. “Turn the spotlight inward.” – Gandhi [p. 75]
6. Concentration
7. Meditation: “separateness vanishes” [p. 77]
8. *samadhi*:

The distinctive feature of *samadhi* is that all of the object’s forms fall away. For forms are limiting boundaries; to be one form others must be excluded, and what is to be known in *raja yoga*’s final stage is without limits. The mind continues to think—if that is the right word—but of no thing. This does not mean that it is thinking of nothing, that it is a total blank. It has perfected the paradox of seeing the invisible. It is filled with that which is “separated from all qualities, neither this nor that, without form, without a name. [p. 78]

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Caste System

There are four general castes (from <http://philosophy.lander.edu/oriental/caste.html>):

1. **Brahmin**: the seers, the reflective ones, the priests.
 - a. The intellectual and spiritual leaders.
 - b. In our society, they would correspond to the philosophers, religious leaders, and teachers.
2. **Kshatriyas**—(pronounced something like "kshot ree yahs") the born administrators (formerly nobles, rajahs, and warriors).
 - a. The protectors of society.
 - b. In our society, the politicians, police, and the military.
3. **Vaisyas**: (pronounced something like "vy sy us") the producers, the craftsmen, artisans, farmers.
 - a. The skillful producers of material things.
 - b. In our society, the merchants.
4. **Shudras**—(pronounced something like "shoo drrahs") the unskilled laborers or laboring class.
 - a. The followers or the maintenance people.
 - b. The so-called menial workers or hard laborers.

Seers: Such people are rightly called seers in the literal sense of this word, for they are the eyes of the community. As the head (administrators) rests on the body (laborers and technicians), so the eyes are placed at the top of the head. Members of this class must possess enough willpower to counter the egoism and seductions that distort perception. They command respect because others recognize both their own incapacity for such restraint and the truth of what the seer tells them. It is as if the seer sees clearly what other types only suspect. But such vision is fragile; it yields sound discernments only when carefully protected. Needing leisure for unhurried reflection, the seer must be protected from overinvolvement in the day-to-day exigencies that clutter and cloud the mind. [p. 89]

Is it bad, in a racist way, to have servants?

Such people are better off, and actually happier, working for others than being on their own. We, with our democratic and egalitarian sentiments, do not like to admit that there are such people, to which the orthodox Hindu replies: What you would *like* is not the point. The question is what people actually are. [p. 87]

Unless unequals are separated in some fashion, the weak must compete against the strong across the board and will stand no chance of winning anywhere. Between castes there was no equality, but within each caste the individual's rights were safer than if he or she had been forced to fend alone in the world at large. Each caste was self-governing, and in trouble one could be sure of being tried by one's peers. Within each caste there was equality, opportunity, and social insurance. [p. 87-8]

Justice was defined as a state in which privileges were proportionate to responsibilities. In salary and social power, therefore, the second caste, the administrators, rightly stood supreme; in honor and psychological power, the *brahmins*. But only (according to the ideal) because their responsibilities were proportionately greater. In precise reverse of the European doctrine that the king could do no wrong, the orthodox Hindu view came very near to holding that the shudras, the lowest caste, could do no wrong, its members being regarded as children from whom not much should be expected. Classical legal doctrine stipulated that for the same offense "the punishment of the Vaishya [producer] should be twice as heavy as that of the shudra, that of the *kshatriya* [administrator] twice as heavy again, and that of the *brahmin* twice or even four times as heavy again." In India the lowest caste was exempt from many of the forms of probity and self-denial that the upper castes were held to. Its widows might remarry, and proscription against meat and alcohol were less exacting. [p. 88]

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Ineffability

“Thou Before Whom All Words Recoil”

People are forever trying to lay hold of Reality with words, only in the end to find mystery rebuking their speech and their syllables swallowed by silence. The problem is not that our minds are not bright enough. The problem lies deeper. Minds, taken in their ordinary, surface sense, are the wrong kind of instrument for the undertaking. The effect, as a result, is like trying to ladle the ocean with a net, or lasso the wind with a rope. The awe-inspiring prayer of Shankara, the Thomas Aquinas of Hinduism, begins with the invocation, “Oh Thou, before whom all words recoil.”

The human mind has evolved to facilitate survival in the natural world. It is adapted to deal with finite objects. God, on the contrary, is infinite and of a completely different order of being from what our minds can grasp. To expect our minds to corner the infinite is like asking a dog to understand Einstein’s equation with its nose. [p. 91]

And yet words and concepts cannot be avoided. Being the only equipment at our mind’s disposal, any conscious progress toward God must be made with their aid. Though concepts can never carry the mind to its destination, they can point in the right direction.

We may begin simply with a name to hang our thoughts on. The name the Hindus give to the supreme reality is *Brahman*, which has a dual etymology, deriving as it does from both *br*, to breathe, and *brih*, to be great. The chief attributes to be linked with the name are *sat*, *chit*, and *ananda*; God is being, awareness, and bliss. Utter reality, utter consciousness, and utterly beyond all possibility of frustration—this is the basic Hindu view of God. [p. 92]

Hinduism

Coming of Age in the Universe

Law of karma

The present condition of each interior life—how happy it is, how confused or serene, how much it sees—is an exact product of what it has wanted and done in the past. Equally, its present thoughts and decisions are determining its future experiences. Each act that is directed upon the world has its equal and opposite reaction on oneself. Each thought and deed delivers an unseen chisel blow that sculpts one's destiny. [p. 96-7]

This idea of *karma* and the completely moral universe it implies carries two important psychological corollaries. First, it commits the Hindu who understands it to complete personal responsibility. Each individual is wholly responsible for his or her present condition and will have exactly the future he or she is now creating. Most people are not willing to admit this. They prefer, as the psychologists say, to project—to locate the source of their difficulties outside themselves. They want excuses, someone to blame so that they may be exonerated. This, say the Hindus, is immature. Everybody gets exactly what is deserved—we have made our beds and must lie in them. Conversely, the idea of a moral universe closes the door on chance or accident. Most people have little idea how much they secretly bank on luck—hard luck to justify past failures, good luck to bring future successes. How many people drift through life simply waiting for the breaks, for that moment when a lucky lottery number brings riches and a dizzying spell of fame. If you approach life this way, says Hinduism, you misjudge your position pathetically. Breaks have nothing to do with protracted levels of happiness, nor do they happen by chance. We live in a world in which there is no chance or accident. Those words are simply covers for ignorance. [p. 97]

The World—Welcome and Farewell

good and evil, pleasure and pain, knowledge and ignorance, interweave in about equal proportions. And this is the way things will remain. All talk of social progress, of cleaning up the world, of creating the kingdom of heaven on earth—in short, all dreams of utopia—are not just doomed to disappointment; they misjudge the world's purpose, which is not to rival paradise but to provide a training ground for the human spirit. The world is the soul's gymnasium, its school and training field. What we do is important; but ultimately, it is important for the discipline it offers our individual character. We delude ourselves if we expect it to change the world fundamentally. Our work in the world is like bowling in an uphill alley; it can build muscles, but we should not think that our rolls will permanently deposit the balls at the alley's other end. They all roll back eventually, to confront our children if we ourselves have passed on. The world can develop character and prepare people to look beyond it—for these it is admirably suited. But it cannot be perfected. "Said Jesus, blessed be his name, this world is a bridge: pass over, but build no house upon it." [p. 102]

Maya

the issue of salvation divides those who anticipate merging with God from those who aspire to God's company in the beatific vision. In cosmology an extension of the same line divides those who regard the world as being from the highest perspective unreal from those who believe it to be real in every sense.

All Hindu religious thought denies that the world of nature is self-existent. It is grounded in God, and if this divine base were removed it would instantly collapse into nothingness. For the dualist the natural world is as real as God is, while of course being infinitely less exalted. God, individual souls, and nature are distinct kinds of beings, none of which can be reduced to the others. Non-dualists, on the other hand, distinguish three modes of consciousness under which the world can appear. The first is hallucination, as when we see pink elephants, or when a straight stick appears bent under water. Such appearances are corrected by further perceptions, including those of other people. Second, there is the world as it normally appears to the human senses. Finally, there is the world as it appears to *yogis* who have risen to a state of superconsciousness. Strictly speaking, this is no world at all, for here every trait that characterizes the world as normally perceived—its multiplicity and materiality—vanishes. There is but one reality, like a brimming ocean, boundless as the sky, indivisible, absolute. It is like a vast sheet of water, shoreless and calm. [p. 103]

The non-dualist claims that this third perspective is the most accurate of the three. By comparison, the world that normally appears to us is *maya*. The word is often translated "illusion," but this is misleading. For one thing it suggests that the world need not be taken seriously. This the Hindus deny, pointing out that as long as it appears real and demanding to us we must accept it as such. Moreover, *maya* does have a qualified, provisional reality. [p. 103]

Many Paths to the Same Summit:

"the various major religions are alternate paths to the same goal" (p. 107).

The Vedas say: "Truth is one; sages call it by different names" (p. 108).

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Bhagavad-Gita

“He who thinks this self kills and he who thinks it killed, both fail to understand; it does not kill, nor is it killed.” [p. 32]

“Look to your own duty; do not tremble before it; nothing is better for a warrior than a battle of sacred duty.” [p. 34]

“Always perform with detachment any action you must do; performing action with detachment, one achieves supreme good.” [p. 43]

“No wise man disturbs the understanding of ignorant men attached to action; he should inspire them, performing all actions with discipline.” [p. 44]

“*Arjuna*: Krishna, what makes a person commit evil against his own will, as if compelled by force?”

“*Lord Krishna*: It is desire and anger, arising from nature’s quality of passion; know it here as the enemy, voracious and very evil!” [p. 46]

“A man who sees inaction in action and action in inaction has understanding among men, disciplined in all action he performs.” [p. 51]

“When ignorance is destroyed by knowledge of the self, then, like the sun, knowledge illumines ultimate reality.” [p. 59]

“Learned men see with an equal eye a scholarly and dignified priest, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and even an outcaste scavenger.” [p. 59]

“The self is the friend of a man who masters himself through the self, but for a man without self-mastery, the self is like an enemy at war.” [p. 64]

“A man who dies remembering me at the time of death enters my being when he is freed from his body; of this there is no doubt.” [p. 77]

“Reaching me, men of great spirit do not undergo rebirth, the ephemeral realm of suffering; they attain absolute perfection.”

“Even in Brahma’s cosmic realm worlds evolve in incessant cycles, but a man who reaches me suffers no rebirth, Arjuna.” [p. 79]

“The whole universe is pervaded by my unmanifest form; all creatures exist in me, but I do not exist in them.” [p. 83]

“I am immortality and death; both being and nonbeing am I.” [p. 85]

“If they rely on me, Arjuna, women, commoners, men of low rank, even men born in the womb of evil, reach the highest way.” [p. 87]

“I am the source of everything, and everything proceeds from me; filled with my existence, wise men realizing this are devoted to me.” [p. 90]

“You are supreme, the infinite spirit, the highest abode, sublime purifier, man’s spirit, eternal, divine, the primordial god, unborn, omnipotent.” [p. 90]

“Knowledge is better than practice, meditation better than knowledge, rejecting fruits of action is better still—it brings peace.”

“One who bears hate for no creature is friendly, compassionate, unselfish, free of individuality, patient, the same in suffering and joy.” [p. 112]

“Impartial to foe and friend, honor and contempt, cold and heat, joy and suffering, he is free from attachment.” [p. 113]

“Persistence in knowing the self, seeing what knowledge of reality means—all this is called knowledge, the opposite is ignorance.”

“I shall teach you what is to be known; for knowing it, one attains immortality; it is called the supreme infinite spirit, beginningless, neither being nor nonbeing.” [p. 116]

“Knowing nature and the spirit of man, as well as the qualities of nature, one is not born again—no matter how one now exists.” [p. 118]

“He really sees who sees that all actions are performed by nature alone and that the self is not an actor.” [p. 118]

“Beginningless, without qualities, the supreme self is unchanging; even abiding in a body, Arjuna, it does not act, nor is it defiled.” [p. 119]

“Lucidity, passion, dark inertia—these qualities inherent in nature bind the unchanging embodied self in the body.” [p. 122]

“From lucidity knowledge is born; from passion comes greed; from dark inertia come negligence, delusion, and ignorance.” [p. 123]

“When a man of vision sees nature’s qualities as the agent of action and knows what lies beyond, he enters into my being.” [p. 123]

“Transcending the three qualities that are the body’s source, the self achieves immortality, freed from the sorrows of birth, death, and old age.” [p. 124]

“He remains disinterested, unmoved by qualities of nature; he never wavers, knowing that only qualities are in motion.”

“Self-reliant, impartial to suffering and joy, to clay, stone, or gold, the resolute man is the same to foe and friend, to blame and praise.” [p. 124]

“I am the infinite spirit’s foundation, immortal and immutable, the basis of eternal sacred duty and of perfect joy.” [p. 125]

“There is a double spirit of man in the world, transient and eternal—transient in all creatures, eternal at the summit of existence.”

“Other is the supreme spirit of man, called the supreme self, the immutable lord who enters and sustains the three worlds.”

“Since I transcend what is transient and I am higher than the eternal, I am known as the supreme spirit of man in the world and in sacred lore.” [p. 130]

“Fearlessness, purity, determination in the discipline of knowledge, charity, self-control, sacrifice, study of sacred lore, penance, honesty.”

“Nonviolence, truth, absence of anger, disengagement, peace, loyalty, compassion for creatures, lack of greed, gentleness, modesty, reliability.”

“Brilliance, patience, resolve, clarity, absence of envy and of pride; these characterize a man born with divine traits.”

“Hypocrisy, arrogance, vanity, anger, harshness, ignorance; these characterize a man born with demonic traits.”

“The divine traits lead to freedom, the demonic traits lead to bondage.” [p. 133]

“The three gates of hell that destroy the self are desire, anger, and greed; one must relinquish all three.”

“Released through these three gates of darkness, Arjuna, a man elevates the self and ascends to the highest way.”

“If he rejects norms of tradition and lives to fulfill his desires, he does not reach perfection or happiness or the highest way.”

“Let tradition be your standard in judging what to do or avoid; knowing the norms of tradition, perform your action here.” [p. 135]

“But if one performs prescribed action because it must be done, relinquishing attachment and the fruit, his relinquishment is a lucid act.” [p. 144]

“When one fails to discern sacred duty from chaos, right acts from wrong, understanding is passionate.” [p. 147]

“When it sustains with attachment duty, desire, and wealth, craving their fruits, resolve is passionate.” [p. 148]

“Better to do one’s own duty imperfectly than to do another man’s well; doing action intrinsic to his being, a man avoids guilt.” [p. 149]

“Arjuna, a man should not relinquish action he is born to, even if it is flawed; all undertakings are marred by a flaw, as fire is obscured by smoke.” [p. 150]

“Relinquishing all sacred duties to me, make me your only refuge.” [p. 152]

“Where Krishna is lord of discipline and Arjuna is the archer, there do fortune, victory, abundance, and morality exist, so I think.” [p. 154]