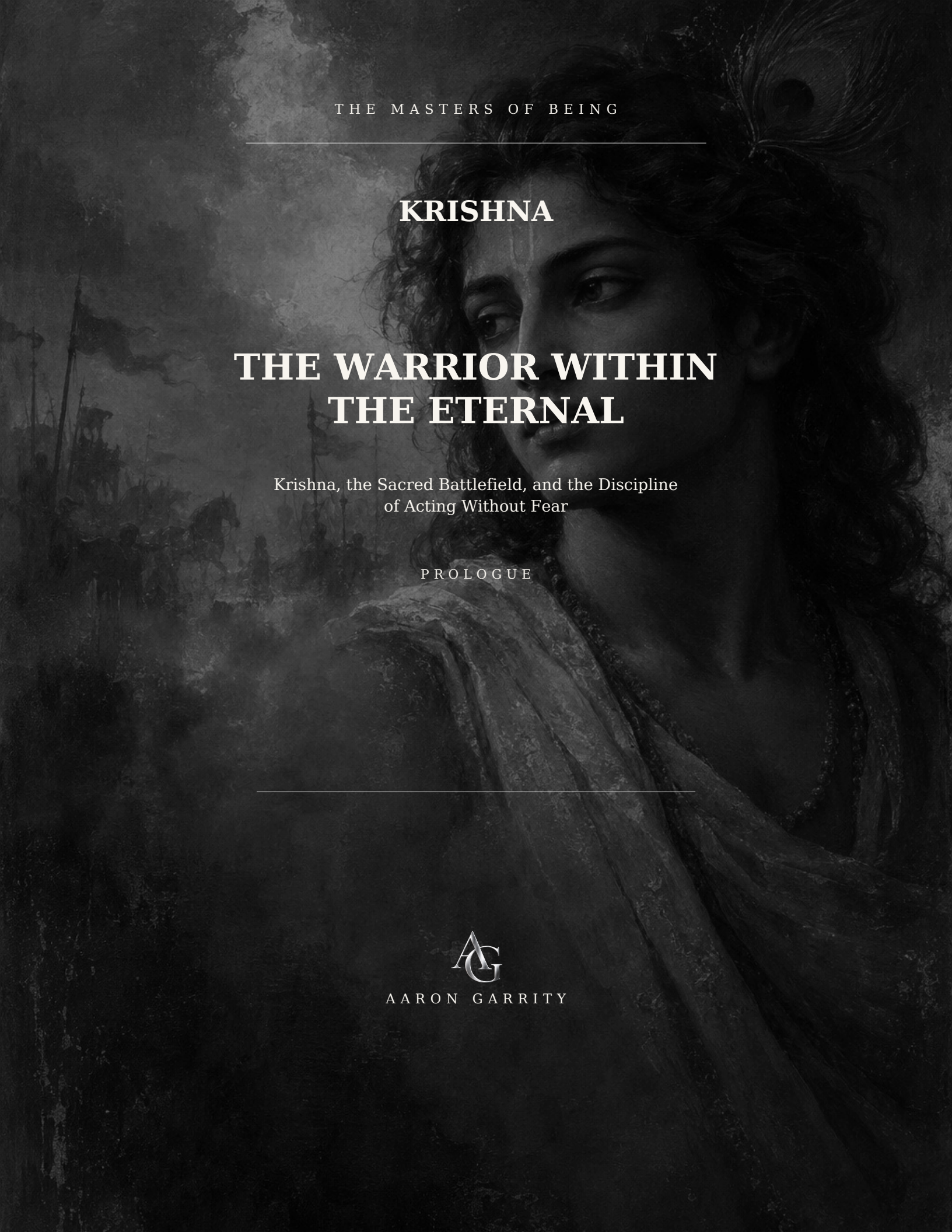




THE MASTERS OF BEING

KRISHNA

**THE WARRIOR WITHIN
THE ETERNAL**

Krishna, the Sacred Battlefield, and the Discipline
of Acting Without Fear

PROLOGUE



AARON GARRITY

THE MASTERS OF BEING

KRISHNA

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BETWEEN THE ARMIES



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The Masters of Being

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PROLOGUE

BETWEEN THE ARMIES

There are moments when life refuses to offer us an innocent choice.

We may still have alternatives, advisers to consult, principles to remember, and consequences to weigh. But the clean path has disappeared. Whatever we do will cost something. Someone may be wounded. Something we love may be lost. Even refusing to decide will shape what happens next.

The Bhagavad Gita begins inside such a moment. Two armies have assembled on the field of Kurukshetra. The conches have sounded. Warriors wait beside horses, chariots, weapons, and men they have prepared themselves to kill. Years of rivalry, humiliation, injustice, failed negotiation, and contested rule have narrowed history into consequence.

Arjuna, a master archer and proven warrior, asks Krishna, his friend and charioteer, to drive between the armies. He wants to see those who have come to fight.

Krishna takes him to the center.

There Arjuna sees what the abstraction of war had protected him from seeing. The opposing force contains teachers who formed him, elders he revered, cousins who share his blood, and companions whose faces carry memories. He is not looking across at strangers. He is looking at the human cost of his own duty.

The bow slips from his hand. The Gita begins when certainty collapses.

WHEN EVERY PRINCIPLE HAS A FACE

Most lives do not unfold as contests between obvious good and obvious evil. They move through competing duties, divided loyalties, incomplete knowledge, and decisions whose effects exceed our control. A father may owe truth to one person and protection to another. A leader may need to end what others are still pleading to preserve. A person may forgive and still recognize that reconciliation would be destructive.

Eventually, every serious life arrives between the armies.

There have been times in my own life when every available decision seemed to break faith with someone. Leadership did not present itself as choosing between courage and cowardice. It presented itself as choosing which obligation I could not abandon and which consequence I would have to carry.

I have sat with decisions after the room had emptied, after the confident language of strategy had fallen away, when the names and faces of the people affected were all that remained. At that hour, leadership no longer felt like authority. It felt like standing alone with consequence and asking whether I could live truthfully with what my decision would set in motion.

In those moments, the wish to be understood by everyone became its own form of paralysis. No explanation could remove the pain from the decision. There was only the possibility of acting honestly within it.

Arjuna wants a righteousness that will leave him clean. Krishna offers him no such thing.

There are decisions after which we may remain faithful, but not untouched.

THE INNOCENCE WE CANNOT KEEP

Much of what we call indecision is the effort to preserve a favorable image of ourselves. We want truth without disruption, boundaries without disappointment, leadership without opposition, and endings without grief. When life refuses these terms, we may continue searching for an answer long after the essential answer has become visible.

We say we are waiting for clarity. Sometimes we are waiting for innocence.

But innocence is not always available to adults entrusted with consequence. This does not excuse cruelty. It does not make every difficult action courageous or every claim of duty sacred. Human beings are remarkably skilled at blessing their appetites with moral language.

The setting of the Gita refuses comfort. Krishna is counseling a warrior who will participate in killing. We should not convert that fact too quickly into metaphor, nor use divine command to excuse the surrender of conscience. The teaching demands severe examination: What is the duty? What alternatives have been attempted? What harm is foreseen? What motive seeks permission?

Moral maturity begins when we stop asking which choice will preserve our innocence and begin asking which responsibility is truly ours.

WHAT IS MINE TO CARRY?

The Sanskrit word dharma resists easy translation. It can suggest duty, righteousness, order, the sustaining pattern of reality, and the responsibility appropriate to one's nature and place.

Modern readers often reduce it to personal purpose: discover what you love and pursue it. Dharma is more demanding than preference. It includes obligations we did not invent and may not enjoy. It asks what has been placed within our care.

A capacity no one else possesses may create a responsibility. A vow may remain binding after the emotion that inspired it has changed. Leadership creates duties that applause does not. Fatherhood does not cease when it becomes inconvenient.

Some responsibilities arrive through achievement. Others arrive through love. A child does not ask whether we feel fully prepared to become a father. A person who trusts us does not become weightless because our own life has grown complicated. Dharma begins where preference is no longer large enough to explain why we remain.

Yet institutions can define duty in ways that preserve the institution. Traditions can sanctify injustice. Leaders can demand loyalty while betraying the purpose that made loyalty meaningful. The role assigned by society is not automatically the responsibility given by truth.

Krishna does not ask Arjuna to stop seeing. He asks him to see from a place deeper than the frightened personality that wants relief more than truth.

What is mine to carry? The question waits beneath every title we hold.

ACTION WITHOUT OWNERSHIP

Krishna's central demand is not detachment from care. It is action without possession of the result. We are responsible for preparation, competence, courage, correction, and the quality of what we give. We are not sovereign over the entire field into which the action enters.

Results emerge from other people, timing, conditions, prior decisions, hidden information, chance, and forces we may never see. We contribute our action. We do not own the field.

This teaching has become more real to me with age. I have built at a scale I once could scarcely have imagined. I have also watched structures change, relationships fracture, reputations shift, and identities that appeared permanent dissolve. I can prepare the field. I can tell the truth as clearly as I know it. I can give the work everything worthy of being given. I cannot force the world to receive it.

That recognition does not diminish ambition. It purifies ambition of desperation.

Arjuna stands between the armies asking whether he can act without losing his soul to the action. Krishna's answer will unfold across the battlefield, but its first demand is already before us:

See clearly. Discern what is yours. Act fully. Release what was never yours to possess.

The warrior within the eternal is born at that threshold.

A NOTE ON THE SOURCE

This prologue is a literary and contemplative encounter with Krishna and the Bhagavad Gita. Its opening scene draws principally from the first chapter: Arjuna asks to be placed between the armies, sees teachers, elders, relatives, and companions on both sides, and is overcome by grief before the battle begins.

The reflections on dharma, disciplined action, and freedom from possession of results anticipate teachings developed throughout the Gita, especially in its second chapter. The language here is interpretive and original. It is not presented as a formal translation or as a substitute for traditional study.

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