**“Philosophy and Spiritual Discipline” from the *Bhagavad-Gita* (469)**

**Background/terms**

* The *Bhagavad-Gita* is a **didactic verse**—poetry meant to convey a philosophy
* A **paradox** is an apparent contradiction that is actually true; example from the text:

Krishna instructs Arjuna, “our bodies are known to end,/but the embodied self is enduring/ indestructible and immeasurable.”

*How can something come to an end, but also be eternal?*

* In this excerpt, Krishna urges the warrior-hero Arjuna to fulfill his **dharma.**
* The teachings of this poem played a major role in shaping the philosophy of **Mahatma Ghandi** (1869-1948), the charismatic leader who led India to independence from Britain in 1947. He called the *Bhagavad-Gita* his “spiritual dictionary”—as it taught him to free himself of money, property, and ambition.

**Quickwrite:**

Have you ever had to fulfill a duty that created an internal conflict for you? Explain.

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**Reading Check:**

1. What is dharma?
2. Why does Arjuna hesitate to fight?
3. According to Krishna, why is death unimportant?
4. According to Krishna, what will people do if Arjuna does not fight?
5. According to Krishna, what results from giving up all desires?

**Reflect:**

What do you think is the most important teaching, or lesson, in Krishna’s advice to Arjuna? Briefly explain your choice.

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