



Name: _____

Date: _____

Grade: _____

THE YOGA OF DEVOTION

ANSWER KEY FOR CLASS ONE

1. Describe in a general way the various components of what is meant by “karma yoga” in the Bhagavad Gita.”

The first meaning to the term “karma yoga” involves disciplining one’s actions to avoid creating new bad karma and to maximize the creation of new good karma. It would include knowing the “laws” of karma (karma is definite; it grows; there can be no karmic result without a karmic cause; and there must be a karmic result for every karmic cause). A second meaning of “karma yoga” is to take responsibility for and work with your own karmic situation instead of always wishing you were someone else: “Better to do your own duty poorly than another person’s well.” Third, karma yoga involves not worrying about the apparent short term results and with every action in the present be gardening for the future. This is what is meant by maintaining “equanimity” and being “detached from the fruits of one’s actions.” Karma yoga can also mean “impersonal action” in the sense of realizing that there is ultimately no actor who acts: the Gita says that “all actions are done just by the constituents of nature” and only a deluded person says “I am the doer.” Yet another way to depersonalize one’s action is to do action entirely altruistically. The Gita says that a person “whose sense of self is identified with all beings acts without being stained by action.” Karma yoga also entails “sacrificial action,” dedicating one’s actions all day long to a higher purpose or being. Finally, the Gita urges us to act like Lord Krishna does – entirely detached and selfishly, while simultaneously understanding the emptiness of all action.

2. Describe the “chain of pain” that begins with ignorance and leads us to experience suffering over and over again.

We are born with ignorance. This ignorance forces us to see things the wrong way, as if they had self-existence. Because we see things wrong, we react to them with ignorant liking and disliking (*raga* and *dvesha*) and then grasp to these things as if they had inherent likeability or dislikeability. Finally, we commit acts of body, speech, or mind in relation to these objects which plants new karmic seeds that reinvigorate the whole cycle. The “weak link” in the cycle is where we see things wrong. We can overcome the inborn ignorance by truly understanding that things have no self-existence – that they are all coming from me and not at me – and thereby no longer react to them with ignorant liking and disliking.

3. What does it mean to say that the person of wisdom sees that “all beings, without



The whole world and everything and everyone in it exists in exactly the same way: as a projection or imputation on the parts of that thing or being. The projections, the “wholes” that are constructed out of the parts, are coming from the perceiver. In this sense, everything and everybody in your world “are in yourself.”

4. What is the definition of yoga given at Bhagavad Gita 6.23?

“The disconnecting from the connection to suffering is what is called yoga.”

5. Give the classical monastic textbook definition of what it means to “go for refuge.”

“A state of mind in which, of your own accord, you put all your hopes into some other object to be of assistance to you.”

6. The Gita says that those “whose wisdom has been carried off by their desires” take refuge in “other deities.” Give some examples of such “deities” that such a one might take refuge in.

One might take refuge in the “deities” of one’s work or profession, money, hobbies or other recreational activities, entertainment, or in one’s worldly interpersonal relationships.

7. Describe the taking of Buddhist refuge which is shared with practitioners of a lesser, medium, and greater scope.

1) Buddhist refuge for practitioners of a lesser scope: First, you feel a personal fear that you will be reborn in one of the births of misery. Second, you believe that the Three Jewels can protect you from this suffering. Finally you hope that one or more of the Three Jewels will be able to protect you from these sufferings. 2) Refuge for those of medium scope: You fear, for yourself, all the various kinds of pain in the cycle of suffering life. You believe that the Three Jewels possess the power to protect you from this pain, and so you put all your hopes in these Three Jewels to be of assistance to you. 3) The refuge of those of greater scope is your mind, of its own accord, puts all its hopes in any one or number of the Three Jewels to be of assistance, in order to protect every living being from the pain of the cycle of suffering life.

8. Give the Sanskrit word for “pride” and summarize Master Shantideva’s comments from the *Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life* on the two different kinds of pride and how one can overcome the other.



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The Sanskrit word for pride is *mana*. The following verses (7.55-56; 59) are found in the seventh chapter of Master Shantideva's classical work, telling us that we must use a good kind of pride to overcome the bad sort of pride:

Everything should be conquered by me;
I should be defeated by nothing!
I should carry myself with confidence,
For I am the child of the Conquering Lions.

Those pitiable beings who are defeated by pride
Are not those who possess pride.
Those of confidence never become
Slaves of the enemy, pride;
Others have turned to slaves.

Those possessing real self confidence,
These real conquering heroes,
Use pride to vanquish the enemy, which is pride.

9. List the karmic consequences of pride according the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*.

Those whose hearts are filled up with
The affliction of pride are by this thought
Dragged to the lower realms;
The feast of a human life is too
Destroyed for them; as servants then
They eat the crumbs from another's table;
They are stupid, and ugly, and always feel
Uncertain of themselves; and every
Person they meet abuses them. (7.57)

10. Give the four reasons the Bhagavad Gita lists as to why someone would take themselves to a guru.

Bhagavad Gita 7.16 lists “four kinds of virtuous persons who devote themselves to me – those in distress, those who are driven by intellectual inquiry, those who are seeking their own advantage, and the wise.”