



Name: _____

Date: _____

Grade: _____

THE YOGA OF DEVOTION

ANSWER KEY FOR CLASS SIX

1. Arjuna says at the beginning of Chapter 11 that Krishna has previously taught him the “highest secret.” What is this “highest secret” and what relevance might it have here at the beginning of the chapter where Krishna reveals his “true form” to Arjuna?

The “highest secret” is what the Gita calls the “innermost essence of things” (*adhyatman*). This could be a reference to the infinite potential that lies at the heart of all things, the “emptiness” of all things. It is perhaps not coincidental that Chapter 11 begins with this reminder: things are empty of being hard-wired as one thing or another and exist as they do for each individual due to the karma that forces the particular perception of things upon the perceiver. It would take particularly good karma to have the vision that Arjuna will have in this chapter!

2. What request does Arjuna make of Krishna at the beginning of this chapter? Speculate a bit as to why he would make such a request.

Arjuna asks Krishna to show His “sovereign form,” His “imperishable essence.” He is asking Krishna to reveal the ultimate reality that lies behind mere appearances. Such a revelation, a “direct perception of ultimate reality,” would have a dramatic positive effect on the perceiver.

3. Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that he won’t be able to see “the whole universe concentrated in one place, in My body,” with his own ordinary eyes, so Krishna endows Arjuna with “divine eyes.” Discuss the meaning of this in terms of the definitions of “deceptive” and “ultimate” realities.

Basically, Lord Krishna is saying that ultimate reality cannot be perceived by ordinary perception. Ultimate reality and the “deceptive” reality of mere appearances are different. Ultimate reality is how things truly exist – as empty of having any self-nature. Deceptive reality is how things appear to exist to an ordinary person – as if they had some sort of self-nature.

4. Give a special quality of ultimate truth, as described by the great Gyaltsab Je, heart discipline of Je Tsongkapa.



It is "That object which is such that, if you realize it directly, this functions to allow you to finish off every impurity," and reach nirvana and enlightenment within a specified time of this direct perception.

5. Describe the four different "bodies" or parts of an Enlightened Being.

a) The Essence Body: The emptiness of the other three "bodies" or parts of an enlightened being; this "body" is very important, since it provides the *potential* for the enlightened beings to perceive themselves as enlightened beings: the "movie screen" on which these people project their perception of being an enlightened being.

b) The Enjoyment Body: The perfect physical body which an enlightened being has in their own paradise: exquisite sheer light with no gross physical organs.

c) The Emanation Body: The physical forms which an enlightened being sends—automatically, without any conscious thought to do so—into suffering worlds, appearing to us in any way (as a living being or an inanimate object) which may be of benefit to us. The "classic" Emanation Body is a physical form such as that which Shakyamuni Buddha displayed on our planet.

d) The Wisdom Body: The omniscient mind of an enlightened being, which can perceive all things of all times—past, present, and future—in the universe, and both normal reality and ultimate reality, in every single moment.

6. Arjuna says that Krishna in his highest form is also the "highest of all knowable things, the most precious of all treasures." What is realization describe in the Buddhist texts as the "highest of all existing things" or the "highest dharma" (*chuchok* in Tibetan) and what is the possible correlation between this concept and what Arjuna sees when Krishna reveals His "true form"?

The spiritual level known as the "highest dharma" occurs at the very end of the second path, the path of preparation, shortly before (say on the same day a few hours before) a person goes to sit in deep meditation and perceive emptiness directly. At this level the person for the first time understands perfectly, directly, the process by which he is constantly perceiving indications of an object, then idealizing them as a "general" or whole thing in his mind, and mistaking this idealization for the actual object. This process is the exact way in which deceptive reality operates. So although the person has been living in deceptive reality forever up to this moment, he has never seen directly what he is doing.

One way to understand what Arjuna is seeing when Krishna reveals His "highest



form” is the nature of deceptive reality itself. He is seeing that all forms, all appearance, come from the same source – ultimate reality – and their variegated appearances are due to the perceiver and his or her karma.

7. What reaction does Arjuna have to seeing Krishna’s “great form,” and what regrets does he have about how he used to think about and treat his “friend,” Lord Krishna?

Arjuna first is “terrified from head to toe” and begs for mercy and then is filled with regret about treating Lord Krishna disrespectfully in the past.

8. Arjuna laments that “Because of carelessness and blind infatuation I was ignorant of Your greatness.” Relate this to the Tibetan saying that the Guru is like fire.

The Tibetan proverb is: “A guru is like a fire. If you get too close you get burned; if you stay too far way you don’t get enough heat.” Arjuna feels he was too familiar in the past with Krishna – too close to the fire – and is now “burned” by retrospectively realizing who his boyhood friend really was.

9. Arjuna praises Lord Krishna as “the most weighty of all gurus” (*guru gariyan*). Explain the Sanskrit pun in this phrase.

The Sanskrit word “guru” is related to words in Sanskrit for “heavy” (like *gariyan*). A guru is “heavy” in the sense of being a “weighty with qualifications” (according to Tsarchen’s A Commentary on [Ashvaghosha’s] “Fifty Stanzas [on the Guru]). Gurus are also “heavy” in that they have substantial presence in one’s life and play a “weighty” role.

10. After having the remarkable epiphany, Arjuna begs Krishna to revert back to His previous, and really deceptive, form. Krishna agrees, telling Arjuna to “be again free from fear, with your mind filled with love.” What statement is the Gita making here about how and why the Divine appears in our world in seemingly “ordinary” forms?

The Gita is indicating here that the Divine Beings in our lives take the seemingly “ordinary” forms they do out of love and grace for us who perhaps would not be able to bear the sight of the more awesome forms they could take.

11. Lord Krishna says that the revelation Arjuna has had is not brought about through study of sacred texts, austerities, gift-giving, or sacrifices. What is the cause for having such a transformative vision of the Divine occur in one’s life according to Lord Krishna?



“It is only through single-minded devotion that I can be seen in such a form, Arjuna, and be truly known, truly seen, and truly entered into.”

12. How do we “reach” the Divine according to Bhagavad Gita 11.55? Talk also about the “inner Guru” according to Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche.

Lord Krishna says we will “reach” the Divine (and thus *become* the Divine ourselves) when we are thoroughly devoted to our Guru (dedicating our lives to Him or Her and regarding the Divine as “the most important thing”). He also says we must “relinquish all attachments” and free ourselves from “enmity toward any being.”

Trungpa Rinpoche writes in his classic, *Spiritual Materialism*, “The spiritual friend becomes part of you, as well as being an individual, external person. . . The guru can be a person who acts as a mirror, reflecting you, or else your own basic intelligence takes the form of the spiritual friend. When the internal guru begins to function, then you can never escape the demand to open.”

13. How does Master Patanjali in the *Yoga Sutra* characterize a successful relationship with a one’s Guru?

He says in Chapter 1, verse 25, “Herein lies, in the most excellent way of all, the seed for knowing all things,” or achieving the state of an enlightened Angel who can serve all beings on all planets.