



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

## THE YOGA OF WISDOM

### ANSWER KEY FOR CLASS FIVE

1. Why does Lord Krishna say that “The learned do not grieve for either the dead nor the living”?

**The process of death and rebirth exists as everything else does: as a projection or imputation, directed by our karma, on an otherwise blank screen. A wise person – one who has a good realization of emptiness – knows that the appearance of death and rebirth cannot exist the way it seems and does not get overly attached to the illusory nature of appearances.**

2. Lord Krishna notes in Bhagavad Gita 2.12 that we have existed since beginningless time and will continue to exist forever. What is the proof of beginningless rebirth and why is this a necessary concomitant of causality itself?

**The proof of past lives consists of the reasoning that, if every moment of consciousness has as its immediate cause the moment of consciousness that came right before it, then that process has no beginning. Every result requires a cause, and there is no cause that is not a result of a previous cause.**

3. Does that statement that “there will never be time in the future when we all will cease to be” mean that we will always exist as suffering beings? What is the proof that samsara will have an end?

**Although our mindstreams will never end, our suffering eventually will. According to Buddhism, we will all reach Buddhahood and enlightenment (although it may take a long time!). The proof for this is that suffering is based on falsehood and untruth. The truth will eventually win out since we have the potential to reach it, due to the emptiness of our nature.**

4. What possible implication might there be in Lord Krishna’s observation that someone who is equanimous or detached from the ups and downs of this suffering life is “really ready for immortality”?

**First, equanimity and detachment are dimensions of renunciation, and without renunciation of this suffering life one cannot and will not obtain liberation from it. Secondly, detachment from the idea that the mortal, physical body exists in any other way than as a projection, and has no**



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**intrinsic or inherent reality on its own, is a necessary precondition to being able to live without it.**

5. The Gita (2.16) says that “What isn’t truly real cannot come into existence, and what is truly real cannot go out of existence.” Explain.

**That which exists only dependently (and therefore is not “truly real”) cannot “truly” or “really” come into existence by itself or own its own. And causality itself, the process by which arise, last, and come to an end, exists only as a projection and is not happening “out there.” What is truly real never ceases to be because it has never arisen and does not change. Emptiness, which is ultimate reality, is uncreated and therefore unchanging. But emptiness also much adhere to something, and when the something that is empty goes out of existence the emptiness of that something also must go out of existence.**

6. What are the two basic parts of what I call “me”? Is there any part of “me” that is truly real?

**The two components that make up the self are the physical parts – the atoms that, at any given moment, make up what we call our physical bodies – and the mental parts -- the stream of present moments of awareness that, over a lifetime, make up what we call our minds. Neither one of these two main components consist of anything that is truly real. What we imagine as the most basic building blocks of all physical matter – atoms – are only a projection onto smaller parts, each side of the atom, and so on, endlessly. What we imagine as the most basic unit of awareness -- the present moment -- is only a projection onto its start, its duration, and its end, and so on, endlessly.**

7. The Gita says that “Death is certain for those who are born, and rebirth is certain for those who die.” Discuss how it is possible to “beat death” and obtain a state of immortality in light of this statement.

**The ego or self that we are attached to – which has no true reality and does not exist in any other way than as a projection or an idea on the basis of the physical and mental parts of a person – will not “beat death” and achieve immortality. We must lose this self by ceasing to grasp to it if we are to achieve the enlightened state where there is no death.**

8. Lord Krishna states that “the origins of living beings are imperceptible, their middles are perceptible, and their ends are again imperceptible.” Relate this statement to the famous saying from the *Heart Sutra* that “form is emptiness and emptiness is form.”

**All form – the “middles” of all living beings – is made possible by the fact that things are empty of having any self nature. Things can exist the way**



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**they do – as impermanent, changing, functioning things – because they have no essence or nature of their own. Forms are empty of having any true nature (their beginnings and ends are “imperceptible”) but emptiness is form in the sense that were things not empty they could not exist the way they do.**

9. Explain the mechanism of rebirth as a normal person comes to the end of his or her life, and explain the radical alternative given in the Bhagavad Gita.

**A normal person has emotions of ignorant desire or craving in their mind as they die. This emotion causes their mind to cross the line into the next life as a continuation of the current, suffering mind. This is sometimes called the “craving for existence: an emotion of craving where you desire that the “me” continues to exist, which happens at the moment of death, when you are gripped by fear that your being is ending. The Gita’s radical alternative is to fully identify with Krishna, your guru, an Enlightened Being, which “is the very being he attains, Arjuna; that is the being one becomes.”**