

Phil 410/846: Introduction to Indian Philosophy

Possible Topics for Essay 2

October 27, 2010

1. Chapter 3 of the Bhagavadgita outlines the basic principles of Karma Yoga. What are action, non-action and inaction according to the Gita? Discuss these principles and explain how non-attachment and work are to be combined in this yoga.
2. In Karma Yoga, Krishna emphasizes that we should work without desiring the fruits (or rewards) for our work. Is this possible or even something to aim for? Discuss in detail.
3. Chapter 6 of the Bhagavadgita highlights the fundamentals of Raja Yoga, or the yoga of psychic control. Compare and contrast the principles outlined in this chapter with Patanjali's Yoga Sutras.
4. Chapter 12 of the Gita emphasizes the role of devotion in the spiritual journey. Is this essential? What are the positive and negative aspects of Bhakti Yoga in this context? Discuss.
5. Several scholars have viewed each of the eighteen chapters of the Gita as defining a yoga. Is this viewpoint accurate? Why or why not?
6. What role do concentration and creative work play in the four yogas? Are they an integral part of yoga? Discuss in detail.
7. The Dhammapada plays an essential role in Buddhist thought. What are the main principles outlined in the Dhammapada. Compare this with the Bhagavadgita. What are the similarities and differences.
8. The Nyaya system is a philosophy of logic. What are the central ideas in this system. Is there any intersection with Upanishadic thought? Discuss.

9. The Samkhya system is described as a dualistic philosophical system. Is this view correct? Discuss in detail.
10. The Vedanta system of philosophy claims to include all of the systems preceding it and all of the systems yet to be. Is this claim valid? What is the meaning of Vedanta? How does this meaning support or refute this claim?