

# Quiz 2

RLST 286 Intro to Hinduism - Shaan Shah

*Thursday, April 26th, 2012*

## **1. Puranas**

The Puranas are historical texts that highlight a certain deity. The texts include stories of gods that outline the various Brahmin teachings. Two examples of Puranas include the Bhagavad, which we have extensively discussed in class. This Purana changed people's basic belief on dharma and provided a purpose for mankind. Puranas also changed the beliefs of the role of women in society with the Purana of Siva. The Puranas also helped the average person understand the important teachings of Brahmins because stories were easy to tell and understand for a number of people.

## **2. Avatara**

An Avatara is the descent of a deity on earth. The purpose is to reestablish dharma by protecting the righteousness and punishing the wicked. One example of an Avatara that we discussed in class is Raam. Raam descended to earth, because Avatars do so when there is a pivotal time on earth that needs an Avatara. Another example is Krishna. Raam showed how to be an ideal king, ideal husband, and the Raam Rajya system, and Krishna gave us the Gita and provided us with an understanding of our duty.

## **3. Ideals of Ramayana versus Mahabharat**

Both teach similar ideals in they underlying express the dharma of a human, but each highlights different aspects. The Ramayana has Raam as well as Sita providing mankind the basis of an ideal man and woman and ideal husband and wife. In contrast, Krishna uses his godly powers in Mahabharat to provide mankind an understanding of social duty and the temporary material world versus the permanent soul.

## **4. Sectarianism**

The Puranas gave rise to sectarianism by creating a split between vaishnavites and shivaites. This pushed the people into a social and religious segregation, because some believed that Vishnu was the main god while others thought Siva was. In addition, this caused conflict and these Puranas continuously praised certain gods over others in certain Puranas which continued the sectarianism.

## **5. Arjuna's dilemma.**

Arjuna's dilemma is when he steps on to the battlefield of Kurukshetra he finds that as he wants to fight for the Pandavas and righteousness he must fight against his family and teachers. At this point, he finds himself in the biggest dilemma and is tempted not to fight. His charioteer

Krishna then convinces Arjuna that the right action is to fight by explaining a number of things. First he explains that Arjuna's decision of inaction is an action that is not acceptable. He explains that the righteousness of society is above all and it is Arjuna's duty to protect it. In addition, as Arjuna cannot fathom fighting his family Krishna explains that death of the material body is only temporary and each body has a permanent soul which cannot be killed.

#### **6. Chapter 4, Verse 7-8**

This verse discusses the importance of dharma. It goes on to mean that the harmony of society and the world depends on dharma. Dharma is important, because it is about each individual acting upon in their own right way, their dharma. The verse also discusses the importance of the ultimate coming down to restore righteousness; however, the other aspect of equality is most important. The topic of dharma brings into discussion the aspect that each person has their own perspective of the cosmic order and their own dharma. As a result, whether a person is Jain or Hindu, it is their perspective of the cosmic order, but all are treated equally. And all are headed towards the ultimate divine: divinity.

#### **7. Chapter 2, Verse 20**

In verse 20, Krishna is referring to the soul as "it." The body is understood to be born, take on changes, and eventually disappear. In contrast, the soul does not face change. The soul doesn't get old with the body. The body simply takes on a soul upon its birth. The body develops because of the soul's presence, but the soul doesn't face any of the effects of the body. It does not die or become born.

#### **8. Chapter 4, Verse 13**

Krishna is addressing the problem of the caste system. He addresses the different castes differences in responsibilities, qualities, and roles. He is trying to tell people that each role or caste is different but equal. Each caste plays a pivotal role in society with no hierarchal mention. Rather the castes are like the body (head, arms, etc.) all playing a pivotal role for the body/society.