

Yaksha Prasna
(Questions of Yaksha)
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(During the time when the Pandavas were living in the forest, a deer took away the stick used to make fire from the sage's home in the forest in its antlers. The saint tried to recover it but could not. He then requested the Pandavas (sons of Pandu) to trace the deer by its hoof marks and recover it. The Pandavas followed the hoof marks of the deer throughout the day and reached deep in the forest. Dharma Puthra the eldest of the Pandavas became very tired and wanted to drink some water before carrying on the chase any further. Sahadeva the youngest brother volunteered to bring the water. He spotted a lake near by. The lake was bare of any living beings except a crane. When Sahadeva tried to drink water from the lake, the crane spoke to him, Oh sahadeva, the water of this lake is poisonous, if you drink it without answering my questions. Sahadeva did not bother and drank the water from the lake and died. After some time Nakula came in search. And was surprised at seeing the dead Sahadeva. He too decided to drink water and was warned by the crane and he too died on drinking the water. The same thing, happened to Arjuna and Bheema. Seeing that all his four brothers are missing, Dharma Puthra came in search. Since he was very thirsty, he too tried to drink the water from the lake. But when the crane warned him, he decided to answer the questions of the crane. Before asking questions, the crane revealed himself as a Yaksha. All the questions asked by the Yaksha was answered by Dharma Puthra to the Yaksha's satisfaction. Then the Yaksha gave a boon to Dharma Puthra. Dharma wanted, Nakula to be made alive. The surprised Yaksha asked him, "Oh king, why did you choose Nakula, when you could have chosen Bheema and Arjuna. Dharma Puthra replied, " I am alive and so my mother Kunthi has one son. I wanted my other mother Madhri also to have a son alive,"

The Yaksha was very much pleased and gave life back to all the Pandavas., Given below are the pointed questions asked by the Yaksha and the pithy and very direct replies given by Dharma Puthra. These are a store house of knowledge and termed as "Yaksh Prasna(Questions of Yaksha)". I have not been able to get the Sanskrit originals for doing the translation but depended on a tamil book called "Yaksha Prasna compiled by Sri.P.N.Parsuraman and published by General Publications, Madras(2001).

This is the first time the translation of the entire Yaksha Prasna " is being uploaded in the web.)

1 . Who makes the Sun rise?

The Brahman (the formless, all pervading God) makes the sun rise.

2. Who travel on both sides of the Sun?

Devas travel on both sides of the Sun.

(Sun travels in the sky , frequented by celestial beings called Devas.)

3. Who makes the Sun to set?

Dharma makes the Sun to set.

4. Where does the Sun establish himself?

Sun establishes himself in truth.

5. How does a man become expert in reciting Vedas?

He becomes an expert in reciting by learning it.

6. How does man become great?

Man becomes great by austerities.

7. How does man become secure?

Man becomes secure by courage.

8. How does man become wise?

He becomes wise by living with learned wise men.

9. What is godliness to Brahmanas?

Learning of Vedas is Godliness to the Brahmanas (people with knowledge as vocation)

10. What is the duty of Brahmanas?

Austerity is the duty of Brahmanas.

11. What is the human side of Brahmanas?

Pride and selfishness is the human side of Brahmanas.

12. What is sinful action for the Brahmanas?

Finding fault with others is the sinful action to Brahmanas.

13. What is godliness to Kshatriyas?

Weapons are the Godliness to Kshatriyas (Fighters and defenders)

14. What is the Dharma for Kshatriyas?

Carrying out fire sacrifices is the Dharma of Kshatriyas.

15. What is the human side of Kshatriyas?

Fear is the human side of Kshatriyas.

16. What is sinful action to Kshatriyas?

Not giving protection to those who seek it from them is sin for Kshatriyas.

17. Which is the sama veda for fire sacrifices?

Soul is Sama Veda of fire sacrifices.

18. Which is the most important Rik vedic chant for fire sacrifice?

Mind is the most important Rik for fire sacrifice.

19. How do you make a fire sacrifice?

Rik Veda is the one which makes the fire sacrifice.

20. What does Fire sacrifice obey always?

It always obeys the tenets of Rik Veda.

21. What is the best for farmers?

Rain is the best for farmers.

22. What is the best for those who sow seeds?

Quality seed is the best for them.

23. What wealth is the best for those who want to live stable lives?

Growing cows is the best that gives stable wealth.

24. What is the best for those who give birth?

Son is the best for those who give birth.

25. Which strong, rich and clever man is considered as not breathing, even if he breaths?

The one who does not look after Gods, guests, servants, ancestors and his own self is considered as not breathing , even if he breaths.

26. Which is heavier than earth?

Mother is heavier than earth.

27. Which is taller than the sky?

Father is taller than the sky.

28. Which is faster than wind?

Mind is faster than wind.

29. Which is more in number than grasses?

Worries outnumber grasses.

30. Which does not close its eyes even while sleeping?

Fish does not close its eyes while sleeping.

31. What does not move even after birth?

Eggs do not move even after birth.

32. What does not have a heart?

A stone does not have a heart.

33. What grows further with speed?

The river grows with speed.

34. Who is the friend , for he goes abroad?

Education is the only friend of people who grow abroad.

35. Who keeps company to the one who stays in his house?

Only his wife keeps company to such a person.

36. Who is the friend for the sick person?

Doctor is the friend of the sick person.

37. Who is the friend of the one who is going to die?

Charity is the only friend to such a person.

38. Who is the welcome guest to all?

Fire is the welcome guest to all.

39. What is the good deed which is stable?

That deed which leads to salvation is the stable good deed.

40. What is nectar?

Milk of the cow called "Somam", is the nectar.

41. How is all the world?

All the world is filled with air.

42. Who travels alone?

Sun travels alone.

43. Who takes birth again and again?

The moon takes birth again and again.

44. What is the antidote for mist?

Fire is the antidote for mist.

45. Which is the vessel that can contain everything?

Earth is the vessel which can contain everything.

46. Where does "just action" normally reside?

"Just action" resides mainly in cleverness.

47. Where does "fame" normally reside?

"Fame" resides mainly in charity.

48. Where does "heaven" normally reside?

“Heaven” normally resides in truth.

49. Where does “pleasure” normally reside?

“Pleasure” normally resides in good conduct.

50. What is the soul for man?

Son is the soul for man.

51. Who is the companion made by God?

Wife is the companion made by God.

52. What aids man in “making a living”?

Rain helps man in making a living.

53. What is the place where man ultimately reaches?

“Charity” is the place where man ultimately reaches.

54. Which is the best giver of wealth?

“Tireless effort ” is the best giver of wealth.

55. What is the best among things?

The knowledge that we get from learned is the best thing.

56. What is the best among “blessings”?

“life without sickness” is the best among blessings.

57. What is the best among ” pleasures”?

“Contentment ” is the best among pleasures

58. Which is the best among “just actions”?

Non violence is the best among “just actions”.

59. Which action always gives good results?

The fire sacrifice done by three fires(Vedas) always gives results.

60..By controlling which man will never be sad?
By controlling the mind man will never become sad.

61.Friendship with whom lasts for ever?

Friendship with godly persons will last for ever.

62.By leaving which will man never become sad?

By leaving anger man will never become sad.

63.By leaving which will man become rich?

By leaving out desires, man becomes rich.

64.By leaving which , man will be able to lead a happy life?

By leaving out miserliness , man would be able to lead a happy life.

65.Why should we give to Brahmins?

It is to do "just action".

66.Why should we give to dancers and actors?

It is for attaining fame.

67.Why should we give it to servants?

It is for making them obey you.

68.Why should we give to the king?

It is to avoid fear.

69.By which is the world covered?

World is covered by ignorance.

70. What is the world?

The soul is the world.

71.Why does not the world shine?

World does not shine because of bad behaviour.

72. Why do friends go away?

When they get nothing from you, they go away.

73. Why does not man reach heaven?

Man does not reach heaven due to attachment.

74. When does man live like the 'dead'?

When he is poor he lives like the "dead".

75. When does a country does not have life?

When it does not have good rulers, it does not have life.

76. Which ritual to please manes does not have any result?

When it is done without Vedic pundits, it does not give results.

77. When does a fire sacrifice does not yield results?

When adequate compensation is not given, it does not have results.

78. What is the way?

The way of Godly men is the only way.

79. What is water?

Sky is water

80. What is food?

Food is beings

81. What is poison?

Begging from others is poison.

82. What is the proper time to carry death anniversary?

When you see a learned Brahmin, it is the proper time..

(At this stage Dharma Puthra asks the Yaksha, “what do you think?”..Instead of answering Yaksha continues with his questions.)

83. What is the grammar for austerity?

Standing in one’s own Dharma (prescribed just action) is austerity.

84. What is “Dhama”?

“Dhama” is controlling the mind.

85. What is the “best patience”?

Bearing pleasures, sorrow, becoming great, being downgraded with equanimity is the “best patience”.

86. What is Jnana?

Jnana(wisdom?) is knowing the real truth.

87. What is “Sama” ?

Being peaceful within mind is “Sama”.

88. What is the “best mercy”?

Wishing for pleasures for all is the “best mercy”.

89. What is righteousness?

Having the same attitude towards everybody is righteousness.

90. Who is the enemy who can be defeated by man?

Anger is the enemy that cannot be defeated by man.

91. Which is the disease that has no end?

Avarice is the disease that has no end.

92. Who is considered as a holy man?

He who loves all and does good for all , is considered as a holy man.

93. Who is considered as “not holy”?

He who does not have mercy is considered as “not holy.”

94. Which is considered as insensibility?

Not understanding Dharma(just action?) is considered as insensibility.

95. What is honour?

The pride in oneself is called honour.

96. What is laziness?

Not doing Dharma(just action?) is laziness.

97. What is sorrow?

Ignorance is sorrow.

98. What is considered as stability by holy men and sages?

Steadfastly following one's own Dharma is defined as “stability” by them.

99. What is courage?

Controlling the five senses is “courage”.

100. What is a good bath?

Cleaning the mind of the accumulated dirt is the good bath.

101. What is the best charity one can do?

Saving life's of others is the greatest charity one can do.

102. Who is fit to be considered as a scholar?

He who knows Dharma(just action)) can be considered as a scholar.

103. Who can be considered as an atheist?

He who does not believe in other worlds is an atheist.

104. Who is considered as an arrogant fool?

An atheist can be considered as an arrogant fool.

105. What is passion?

That which leads to birth and death is called "passion".

106. Which is considered as "unhealthy competition"?

Unnecessary turmoil of the mind is "unhealthy competition."

107. What is pride?

Ignorance is pride.

108. What is snobbishness?

Telling others that "I am the only follower of Dharma" is snobbishness.

109. What is considered as the special God called luck?

The result of charity done by oneself is considered as "the special God called luck."

110. What is considered as "fault finding, telling lies about others etc."?

Enjoying telling news about others is this bad character.

111. When will the contradictory notions of wealth, passion and Dharma come together?

When your wife and dharma agree with each other, then these concepts come together.

112. Which man will reach the indestructible hell? Please reply me quickly.

Indestructible hell is continuously being born and dying in this world again and again. Some of the causes are:-

a. Tempting a poor Brahmin with charity of wealth and not giving it.

b. Telling lies in the practice of Vedic rituals.

c. Not enjoying our own wealth and not using to help others also.

113. Tell me after careful thought how Brahminism is born. Is it through birth, character, learning Vedas or knowledge of sciences?

Birth, learning of Vedas and knowledge of science are not necessary aspects of Brahminism. It is due to one's own character. One with good character never becomes

bad and one with bad character is always considered as bad. He who is interested in rituals and who also has full control over his senses is the real Brahmin.

114. What does one who tells sweet words get?

He becomes friends for everybody.

115. What does one who does planned actions get?

He attains success.

116. What does one who has many friends get?

He lives happily.

117. What does one who is attached to Dharma get?

He attains salvation

118. Who attains happiness?

He who does not take loan, does not go to a foreign country for living and one who can cook and eat atleast green leaves, is the one who attains happiness.

119. What is surprise?

. The fact that people thinking themselves as stable and permanent, in spite of seeing several deaths daily is surprising.

120. What is the path?

There is contradiction in teaching of Vedas as well as the teaching of several great sages. Apart from this the path of Dharma as explained by the learned is difficult to understand.

121. What is the event that happens daily?

The earth is a very big cooking vessel. Sky is the lid to this vessel. The cook called Time puts all movable and immovable things in to this vessel. He takes the firewood of night and day and lights them up with Sun. He stirs it with ladles called seasons and months This happens daily.

122. Who is called “purusha(man)” among those who are living and with all his desires fulfilled?

Good deeds done with no interests in the fruits or with interests in its fruits, make one's name spread in heaven and earth. Till his fame lasts , he is called "Purusha"

123. Who pervades in everything?

He who considers desire and hatred, pleasure and pain, what is coming and what is being lost etc with equanimity is called "Brahma Jnanai (knower of Brahman)" and he is the one who pervades in everything.