

## **Aarambh se anth tak (start to end) – the Hindu Mythology Quiz**

(Karthik Narayan)

1. Lets go the beginning of it all. This special person in the Mahabharata is also known by a different name owing to his complexion and that he was born on an island. Who?

2. Lord Vishnu was once challenged by X that Maya affected only mortals and X was beyond lust, lure, human values and sentiments. The Lotus footed Great One took X to a pond and told X to take a dip to clear his mind of all doubts about Maya. X came out as beautiful out a maiden as beautiful as an Apsara, the scenery changed to a forest and the icing on the cake was that X had no memory. Obviously, Vishnu became invisible and waited to watch the fun. A king named Thaladhwaaja happened to come hunting, fell for X, gave her the name Soubhagya Sundari and made her his chief Queen. Years rolled by, X brought forth children. One fine day, in a war, X's brave sons died. X received the news and rushed to the battlefield and wept bitterly. A brahmin appeared before X and took her to the Ganges to get solace. X came out in true colours, but with memories of X being the beautiful maiden. Vishnu, now triumphatically and with a twinkle in his eye remarked that nobody was beyond Maya. Who is X, otherwise not so arrogant in front of Vishnu?

3. There was an asura named Tripura who was so terrifying and powerful no celestial being could even face him in person. It took only an equally terrifying God to take him on, and all the Gods directly went to Lord Shiva. Now cometh the hour, cometh the special weapon - Lord Shiva had a special weapon named Aghhora (from which we get the word for ugly/ disfigured). Using the weapon, the Lord saved the world from the asura who became shapeless and lifeless and fell to the ground, dead. But as Shiva's heat had to be totally used in summoning the weapon, He closed his eyes. The heat was too much, even for Shiva. His eyes melted from the heat and became the \_\_\_\_\_

4. It is said that Bheeshma made the first official recital of 1000 names for Lord Vishnu to Yudishtra (The Vishnu Sahasranama). He was on the battlefield, his body pierced with the sharpest of arrows, but his mind was sharper than any of them. Legend goes that the first recital of the 1000 names or the Sahasranama of Lord Balarama was done sometime later. Written by sage Garga, this was the first time it was recited to a kshatriya by a sage. Which famous Mahabharata character had the great privelege of hearing those names first?

5. The name X was given to him at birth by his "father" because only he could roar like a wild elephant and strike fear in the hearts of all his opponents. This was further enhanced when X met his brother in the forest and was bestowed upon the power of a thousand elephants and whenever X roared, the decibel level would be amplified thousand times (Move aside Dolby DTS!!). This was later explained by Bheeshma to Yudishtra that Lord Vishnu was the only one who had such roaring success during his Varaha avatar. Needless to say, the power was transferred via his most trusted devotee. Identify X.

6. This name of Lord Vishnu comes from the fact that Mother earth and all the worlds were formed from his belly (Bellies are definitely not popular with fitness freaks). What name?

7. On one occasion, Sri Lakshmi left Vaikuntam in anger to do penance, and Lord Vishnu also left Vaikuntham and took his abode in an ant-hill on the Thirumala Hill under a tamarind tree beside a Pushkarini. Soon an anthill covered him. Siva and Brahma took the forms of a cow and calf to serve him. The cow everyday poured milk over the ant hill and thus fed the Lord. Noticing the yield being less, the cowherd discovered that the cow was emptying her udder over the ant-hill. In his anger, the cowherd aimed a blow with his axe on the head of the cow, but struck Vishnu who rose from the ant-hill to save the cow. Seeing his head bleed, Goddess Parvati used her long hair to bandage his wound. What practice is said to have risen from this?

8. This town has its roots steeped in Hindu mythology. Very close to the Thimmamma Marrimanu, listed in the Guinness Book of world Records for being having the world's biggest banyan tree (spanning a whopping 5 acres of land!!), this is also the location where Lord Narasimha emerged to kill Hiranyakasyapu. And if that isn't enough, amongst some famous personalities from this place, one is a musician playing a jazz instrument. Which town in India?

9. In the 'Ramayana', Lord Rama went to 'Lanka' to rescue his abducted wife, Sita, from the grip of Ravana, the king of the Demons in Lanka. Before starting for his battle with Ravana, Rama wanted the blessings of Devi Durga. He came to know that the Goddess would be pleased only if she is worshipped with one hundred 'NeelKamal' or blue lotuses. Rama, after travelling the whole world, could gather only ninety nine of them. How did he manage to complete the century? (No he did not get out on 99!)

10. Legend has it that Dhritarastra was blind all his lifetime except for a few minutes. He could have retained his eyesight, but said that he had seen it "all" and that he no longer needed to see anything else. What happened that made him choose for darkness over light?