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DSST Introduction to World Religions Exam (Dantes Subject Standardized Tests)

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Question: 1

In the Bhagavad Gait (Song of the Blessed Lord), one of the greatest classics of religious literature, Lord Krishna emphasizes the importance of bhakti, which may be defined as:

A. The cycle of rebirth and death that afflicts every living being until moksha
B. The illusion-creating power of the cosmic mind
C. Ardent devotion to a deity in grateful recognition of aid received or promised
D. A system that sees the universe as a dualism of the forces of spirit and matter

Answer: C

Explanation:
Bhakti is ardent devotion to a deity in grateful recognition of aid received or promised. A—Samara is the cycle of rebirth and death that afflicts every living being until they reach moksha. B—Maya is the illusion-creating power of the cosmic mind. D—The system that sees the universe as a dualism of the forces of spirit and matter is known as Sankhya.

Question: 2

The Law of Manu provides the outline for:

A. India's caste system
B. Proper rites for sacrifice
C. Soft secularism
D. Hard secularism

Answer: A

Explanation:
The Law of Manu is a piece of traditional Indian literature that outlines India's caste system. B—Although Hindus do carry out sacrificial rites, the Law of Manu does not contain guidelines for doing so. C—Soft secularism, the acceptance of a common religious basis for personal and social identity, is not part of the text. D—Hard secularism, which is the rejection of religion, is not mentioned in the Law of Manu.

Question: 3

Hinduism has been the source of what three religions?

A. Judaism, Baha'i, and Christianity

B. Jainism, Sikhism, and Buddhism
C. Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism
D. Zoroastrianism, Baha'i, and Sikhism

Answer: B

Explanation:
Hinduism has been the source of three other religions: Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism.

Question: 4

Upanishads are:

A. Practices of self-denial for the attainment of spiritual enlightenment
B. The three major gods of modern Hinduism
C. Philosophical writings from the classical teachers of Hinduism
D. Evil spirits believed to cause sickness

Answer: C

Explanation:
Upanishads are philosophical writings from the classical teachers of Hinduism. A—
Upanishads are not practices of self-denial for the attainment of spiritual enlightenment. B—The three major gods of modern Hinduism are Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. D—Upanishads are not evil spirits believed to cause sickness.

Question: 5

Vishnu appears in Hinduism in many forms known as:

A. Gopis
B. Sati
C. Bhakti
D. Avatars

Answer: D

Explanation:
In Hindu sacred literature and stories, Vishnu is a major god who appeared in many forms known as avatars, or alternate forms or incarnations of a deity. A—Gopis are milkmaids or young wives who had love trysts with Krishna. B—A sati is a virtuous Hindu widow who is cremated in order to join her dead husband. C—Bhakti is devotion to the gods of Hinduism.

Question: 6

Dharma can best be described as

A. Spirit
B. Duty
C. Fertility
D. Soul

Answer: B

Explanation:
Dharma refers to duty and moral law incumbent on a person in traditional Hindu life, based on caste and situation in life.

Question: 7

Shiva is the Hindu god of:

A. Creation
B. Good fortune and prosperity
C. Death, disease, and destruction
D. Love, benevolence, and forgiveness

Answer: C

Explanation:
Shiva, the most popular god in postclassical Hinduism, is the god of death, disease, and destruction. A—The Hindu god of creation is Brahma. B—L.akshmi is the goddess of good fortune and prosperity. D—The god of love, benevolence, and forgiveness is Vishnu.

Question: 8

Linked with the Law of Karma, India's caste system acquired a kind of moral justification.
Which statement best illustrates this line of thinking?
I. If a man was born a Shudra, it was because he had sinned in a previous life
II. A Brahmin had every right to exalt his social position; his good deeds in a previous life earned him the privileges he enjoyed in his present life
III. The class with the best record of spiritual attainment should be the one at the top of the caste system
IV. Anyone who did not attempt to address the inequalities of society was considered impious and morally reprehensible

A. I and II only
B. II, III, and IV only
C. I and III only
D. I, II, and III only

Explanation:
India's caste system was inexorably linked with Hinduism. Statements I, II, and III best
illustrate the belief that castes were morally and religiously justified. Statement IV contradicts the
Hindu belief that any attempt to address the inequalities of society is impious and morally
reprehensible.

Question: 9

Which of the following is NOT true about Buddhism?

A. It was the world's first missionary religion
B. Its place as a major world religion was secured by Asoka, the emperor of India from 268 to 232 B.C.
C. It was founded by Siddhartha Gautama according to the principles of the caste system
D. Its most basic teachings are those of the Four Noble Truths

Answer: C

Explanation:
Although it is true that Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha Gautama, Buddhism rejected
the authority of the Hindu Vedas and the caste system. All of the other answer choices are true
concerning Buddhism.

Question: 10

Before his enlightenment, the Buddha lived as a_____.

A. Prince
B. Shiva
C. Mahavira
D. Monk

Answer: A

Explanation:
Before his enlightenment, Buddha lived as Siddhartha Gautama, a prince surrounded by beauty and
luxury.

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