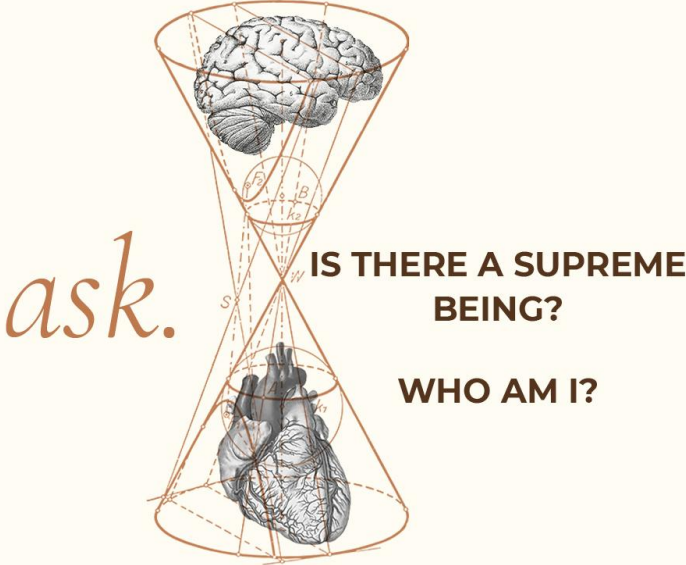


The Great Questions Community Seminar

Fall 2023



ask.

IS THERE A SUPREME BEING?

WHO AM I?

Fall 2023:
The Hebrew Bible and The Quran
The Rig Veda and The Popol Vuh

SEPTEMBER 14
7:30-9:30 PM

OCTOBER 25
7:30-9:30 PM

Join us in asking the **Great Questions** of humankind through discussions of transformative texts.



Texts on Creation

Part Two

Wednesday, October 25

 Popol Vuh and Rig Veda Selections for Community Seminar.pdf

Click above for the reading assignment

The Popol Vuh (*selections on creation*)

The Popol Vuh is sometimes referred to as the "Mayan Bible." It is an ancient Mesoamerican text that provides a window into the mythological and cultural beliefs of the Maya civilization. The Popol Vuh is not regarded by the Maya as 'the word of God' nor as sacred scripture but rather as an account of "the ancient word" and the understanding the Quiche people had of cosmology and creation before the coming of Christianity. Find out more here:

<https://www.gqstimeline.com/popol-vuh/>

Rig Veda (*selections on creation*)

The Rig Veda, one of the oldest sacred texts in the world, stands as a cornerstone of ancient Indian literature and spirituality. The Vedas are the religious texts which inform the religion of

Hinduism (also known as Sanatan Dharma meaning “Eternal Order” or “Eternal Path”). The term veda means “knowledge” in that they are thought to contain the fundamental knowledge relating to the underlying cause of, function of, and personal response to existence. They are considered among the oldest, if not the oldest, religious works in the world. They are commonly referred to as “scripture”, which is accurate in that they can be defined as holy writ concerning the nature of the Divine. Unlike the scriptures of other religions, however, the Vedas are not thought to have been revealed to a certain person or persons at a specific historical moment; they are believed to have always existed and were apprehended by sages in deep meditative states at some point prior to c. 1500 BCE but precisely when is unknown.

The Vedas existed in oral form and were passed down from master to student for generations until they were committed to writing between c. 1500 – c. 500 BCE (the so-called Vedic Period) in India. They were carefully preserved orally as masters would have students memorize them forwards and backwards with emphasis on exact pronunciation in order to keep what was originally heard intact. Find out some more here: <https://www.ggstimeline.com/rig-veda/>

Please consider these study questions while you read. They will help guide our conversation as well.

The Popol Vuh

1. What was it like before the Maker Molder spoke the world into being? What was it like before you were born?
2. Why does the Maker Molder and Bearer Begetter want to create the “human work?”
3. What is a human being according to this text? How are human beings different from animals or other created things?
4. How do the events embedded in the selections from the Popol Vuh compare to other creation stories you’re familiar with, and how might you explain some of the similarities and differences?
5. In many creation accounts, the creator or creators determine that their original human design is flawed in some way, and they act — often quite drastically — to hit “reset” and start over. What lessons might the tellers of the tales be aiming to impart by recounting instances of the punishment and/or outright destruction of failed humans? What meaning might you take from the idea that even the gods make mistakes? Could this help you be forgiving of yourself and/or your fellow humans? In what ways and to what ends?

Rig Veda Study Questions:

1. In Rig Veda 10.129, we find a hymn describing the creation of the world out of nothing. In what ways does this parallel the creation account we get in Genesis and other accounts? What are the differences? What do you think humans are trying to understand and communicate about their own experience of creation? What is the importance of the ambiguity of the statement about what we know, or even what the “one who looks down on it,” knows about this process.
2. Rig Veda 10.90 presents a very different account of creation from Rig Veda from 10.129, focusing on the “Man” who is offered as a kind of primary sacrifice? Who is this “Man,” and what do you see him representing? What is the importance of the specific elements described as part of this sacrifice and what emerges from the sacrifice?

PDF to the reading assignment:

 Popol Vuh and Rig Veda Selections for Community Seminar.pdf