**“Hundred Questions” (461-466) from the *Mahabharata***

**Background info/terms**

* The *Mahabharata* is the longest poem ever composed in any language
* This poem is regarded in India as a rich source of religious, philosophical, and practical wisdom
* The poem is the story of two rival families descended from a legendary king named Bharata
* “Hundred Questions” comes from Book 2 of the *Mahabharata*, near the end of the Pandava Brothers 12 year exile in the forest
* The Hindu concept of **dharma,** or “sacred duty” is central to the poem; in Hindu, each person has prescribed responsibilities and duties that makeup his/her dharma; loyalty and devotion to one’s dharma is expected
* In this episode, Yudhistira, the eldest Pandava brother, must respond to a series of questions that test his character and challenge him to fulfill his dharma
* A **moral** is a lesson about right versus wrong behavior; a **theme** is the central idea of the literary work—themes can either be stated or implied

**Quickwrite:**

Who is really happy? What is happiness to you? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**During reading:**

1. Why do you think Nakula immediately obeys Yudhistira’s commands?
2. What do Arjuna’s and Bhima’s actions after they hear the voice and see their brothers’ bodies reveal about their characters?
3. What are all four brothers primarily concerned with?
4. How does Yudhistira differ from his brothers? Give 2 examples.
5. Why do you think Yudhistira chooses Nakula to be the brother who is revived?
6. Based on his personality traits, how do you predict Yudhistira will react to the voice?
7. What qualities in Yudhistira are being tested in the question-and-answer challenge?
8. What gift does the yaksha give Yudhistira to help him during his last year of exile?
9. What is meant by “the Path”?
10. Since Yudhistira is rewarded for his behavior, what would you say is the **theme** of this episode?