

Humi 9 – Reflection Questions

Write 3 pages per packet (about 1 paragraph per question). Do not rewrite the questions. Should be typed (12 font, double-spaced). Refer to the reading material, but do not plagiarize or use online sources. Short quotes are okay if you use quotation marks and page numbers (ex: Smith, p. 21)

Reflection Question packet #1:

Week 2 - Indigenous Religions

- 1) What does Smith have to say about the value of "orality" and put into your own words why this might be so, using your own experiences to you're your point.
- 2) Respond to one of the "indigenous voices" we listened to in class.
- 3) How is Maathai's book an example of the indigenous worldview? What are your own thoughts and feelings about this perspective on the world and our responsibility as humans?

Week 3 – Hinduism & Sikhism

- 1) Which of the Hindu paths to God (love, knowledge, work, psychophysical exercises) would most suit you, if you were to choose one of the yogas (disciplines)? Explain.
- 2) How is the Hindu *Brahman* similar to other religions' idea of *God*?
- 3) Compare the teachings of Sikhism's Guru Nanak to the teachings of the Hinduism and any other religions you are familiar with.

Week 4 - Buddhism

- 1) When asked what he was, the Buddha said, "I am awake." What did he mean, and what does this statement mean to you?
- 2) Compare the 8-Fold Path with the way of life taught by other religions. Also, add your personal response to the teaching.
- 3) Why do think Buddhism is considered a religion without a concept of *God*? Could someone practice Buddhism along with their religion? Why/why not?

Reflection Question packet #2:

Week 5 – Confucianism & Taoism

- 1) How would your life be different if you practiced Taoism's *wu wei*? Give examples.
 - 2) How is the *Tao* similar to other religions' image of *God*? What do you think of this?
 - 3) What are the arguments for and against considering Confucianism to be a religion? What is your own conclusion:
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Week 6 - Judaism

- 1) In what ways can Judaism be understood as an indigenous religion?
- 2) How have the Jews made meaning out of suffering? Have you ever done this, or seen someone else do it? How did it affect the situation, or your own inner experience?
- 3) How might people from the Abrahamic religions relate to Maathai's message? Use examples from the book.

week 7 – Christianity

- 1) How would you put Jesus' teachings into your own words? What did he say? What did he care about?
- 2) What do you think Jesus meant when he said: "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill"? How does your answer affect your understanding of Christianity?
- 3) How does learning about the historical Jesus of Nazareth, and the Jewish and Roman contexts in which he lived, affect your understanding of Christianity? What did you learn that was new, different, or in some way changed your perspective?

Reflection Question packet #3:

week 8 – Islam

- 1) Take some time to consider the Islamic conception of God, and compare it to the Christian and Jewish conceptions of God. How are they similar? How different? Include the human relationship with God, and your own thoughts about it all.
- 2) How did the Islamic teachings bring about a social revolution in terms of ethical standards? How similar or different are these standards in comparison to those of Judaism and Christianity?
- 3) The Qur'an (Smith says Koran) is considered to be a miracle by Muslims. How is the Qur'an similar to, yet different from, the Bible? How is the Qur'an similar to, yet different from, Jesus? Explore different possible answers to these questions, beyond your own personal viewpoint. Link to Qur'an reading: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TjVfrPsQwJU>

Week 9 – New Religious Movements

- 1) What did you learn about new religious movements that most interested you this week, and why?
- 2) At what point would you consider a “new religious movement” a religion? Explain.
- 3) In what ways is Maathai's Green Belt movement a spiritual movement?

Week 10 - Atheism & Materialism

- 1) How would you respond if you were in respectful, sincere conversation with Richard Dawkins? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDxPfoDKQUc> (5m)
- 2) How would you explain to a friend what the double-slit experiment is, and how it might affect conversations about science and spirituality (or religion)?
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfPeprQ7oGc> (5m)
- 3) How does Dr. Schaffer's presentation affect your understanding of the physical, material world?. **Dr. Schaffer: Quantum Reality and the Spiritual Mind**
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzafB6NKHIs> (46m)

