Your Name

Instructor Name

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Date

Discussion Questions

Religions: Hinduism – the Gita and Puja

Part 1: I read The Bhagavad Gita a year ago and found this a very fascinating book as it covers different aspects of human life. It is the holy book of Hindu religion which the scholars interpret as the song of God. It talks about the real purpose of life and the actions that are done for the sake of betterment of human life and not for the sake of reward. The flourishing of human beings should be the goal of life. According to Gita, there’s no such thing as death, it is just the soul that leaves the body, nothing else changes. Identifying yourself as soul, not the body is what Gita says about “self” and the real identity or real ego is what “self” is about. Gita also claims that humans have the ability of rebirth and enjoy seven more lives after death. Death is never an important thing,its just a gateway to another life(*The Hidden Truths in the Bhagavad Gita*). The religious textsreveal the actual happening of a specific era and tell the stories of society. Some of these texts have a long history of existence and there are no specific limitations as a source base.

Part 11: Puja is a kind of prayer ritual in Hinduism and is performed while worshipping different gods. This is not the same for everyone because Hindus worship different gods and their ways of doing “Puja” is also different from one another. The most surprising thing about the Puja isthe time that some of the pujas take to be completed. It is interesting because these pujas are performed for a long period of time and can go for nine days. It is also considered as the longest-running puja of the Hindus. This video has made me think of some other aspects of Hindu religion because they perform puja to many Gods and it makes me wonder how all these Gods became part of Gita and how Puja was made an important part of the religion.

Religions: Hazelton and the Quran

Part 1:

I always wanted to read the Quran because it has the world's 2nd highest believers and is considered to be one of the oldest Holy books in the history of the World. It is a collection of stories from the past and God’s direct conversation with his chosen messenger. This is what fascinates me that how God uses his messenger as a medium to address his believers. In 18: 110 of the Quran, Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) says that "**It has been revealed to me that your God is One God. So whoever expects to meet his Lord, then let him do good deeds and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord"**(ʻAlī)**. In another part of Quran in Surah Al-Ahzab, God clears the status of Muhammad (P.B.U.H) by stating that “Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things”**.

Lesley Hazelton as a Non-Muslim found a self-identified "tourist" in the Holy Book of Quran which she had never expected. It is interesting to see that how Lesley discusses the flexibility and mystery of the Quran with grace. This "tourist" point of hers is new for me and makes me study more about Quran because I want to explore more about these past stories that are believed by millions of people(Hazleton). When I first read the Quran, I thought it would only be about Allah but after watching the video of Lesley, I have become more interested in reading the whole Quran because I want to know about the happenings and difficulties faced by different pious people 1400 years ago.

Those Famous Traveler’s: Marco Polo:

This source tells that Silk Road is a long-distance trade network that plays important role in making the world, a Globalized world and talks about Marco Polo as the most famous traveler who made a journey of 24 long years. While travelling, he came in contact with many societies and learned about their culture, geography, and their government. His assessing of communities was mainly fictional and many of the evidences he shared, were not witnessed by him. He considered other tales as truth. The most significant thing about his description of the World is the understanding of Central Asia and its inhabitants(*Marco Polo: The China Mystery Revealed, Marco Polo: The China Mystery Revealed, Episode 1 | Alexander Street, a ProQuest Company*). The documentary, Marco Polo- the China Mystery Revealed shows Marco Polo's experiences and his voyage in Asia and spent 17 years in China. He learned about the culture, wealth and social structure of China and was impressed by the empire's paper money, coal burning, communication system, and gunpowder.

References

Hazleton, Lesley. *On Reading the Koran*. *www.ted.com*, https://www.ted.com/talks/lesley\_hazelton\_on\_reading\_the\_koran. Accessed 2 Nov. 2019.

ʻAlī, Maulawī Sher. *The Holy Qur’ān : Arabic Text and English Translation*. Islam International Publications Ltd., 2005. /z-wcorg/.

*Marco Polo: The China Mystery Revealed, Marco Polo: The China Mystery Revealed, Episode 1 | Alexander Street, a ProQuest Company*. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/preview/work/bibliographic\_entity%7Cvideo\_work%7C2791395. Accessed 2 Nov. 2019.

*The Hidden Truths in the Bhagavad Gita*. https://yogananda.org/the-hidden-truths-in-the-bhagavad-gita. Accessed 2 Nov. 2019.