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Reflection Paper

# **Whether or not the topic that mattered greatly to you in week 5 has changed, why or why not?**

I have always been a firm believer of the fact that there are certain things about an individual that they cannot control. They cannot control when they were born, who they were born to, what nation and religion they were born in. Yet, the most important aspect of a person, one they have no control over, is the color of the skin.

This is what racism is all about at its core. It makes people wish they could change things about themselves that they have no control over just because another group of human beings makes them feel this way. They are faultless in the matter, yet they have been a victimized for something that has no control over. More often than not, racism finds its roots in religion. People try to understand religion through the lens of social media, which often fails to provide them with the nuances of the matter. These individuals are not only ill-informed, but their reliance on the manipulation of different ideas using mass media makes them inconsiderate, loud and extreme in their behavior. In their opinion, joking about a stereotype associated with certain ethnic groups is justified since it is all in good fun and they mean no harm. Their choice to express negative sentiments about people from other nation does not bother them, just because they are entitled to their opinion. This is also the reason why it is rather easy for them to make someone feel small by posting a terse and negative comment about an individual online with no remorse. They have no qualm about intimidating people because of their race. They can go as far as to abuse people on the basis of their race and religious affiliations just because, in their opinion, these people do not belong. They heartless exclude people from their group because of their nationality and yet, they do not deign to accept the fact that they are racist.

Having been personally subjected to both stereotyping and racism, racism is a matter that I hold rather close to my heart. I was always passionate about finding ways to deal with the issue in a productive manner, where I could not only find why people do what they do and behave the way that they behave. However, no matter how hard I tried, I could never quite understand why people could choose to be so cold and unfeeling towards people with different ethnicity or nationality then themselves. We do not get to choose our appearance. While our looks and our ethnicity certainly sets us apart, it is not a valid enough reason for race discrimination in society. The notion is basically wrong at its core. There is no perfect solution to this epidemic of sorts really. However, there are certain ways that we can limit the spread of racism. All we have to do is simply think before we speak, especially if it concerns any nationality, race or ethnicity. Only through tolerance and kindness can the issue that is presented by racism be tackled in a justified manner.

# **Whether or not the study of these world religions has offered you a better way to respond to the issues you care about or not?**

From my recent review of three of the most followed religions in the world, at present, I have learned one thing. No religion in the world, no matter how it is presented on social media, propagates the worst aspects of society, such as racism. Contrary to popular belief, all of them, Christianity, Buddhism, and even Islam teaches its followers to be tolerant of the differences between themselves. It teaches them to accept people with open arms. To shun people when they are committing a grave sin, but to bring them back into the fold of believers if they are repentant and seek to change their ways. I have learned a number of new things on the subject. However, I still firmly believe that there is no religion in the world that is racist at its core or promotes racism in any way. Instead of changing the way that I think, my recent perusal of facts has only added to my earlier beliefs. We, men, as a whole are racist at our core. While we may want to blame religion, nationality or the world around us for our actions, it is definitely untrue at best.

Racism is a phenomenon that exists across the globe and it is a prevalent issue for all civilizations. This problem exists only because of men and it can only be solved through men, their conscious raising and continuous education on the subject. Racism, though a phenomenon in itself, only divides people between “them” and “us”. This issue with the color of one’s skin and their origin only holds water when we stop being tolerant of the differences between ourselves. Subtle racism in society, if left to fester, can cause to victims to become mentally, socially, and even physically vulnerable. While the overt form of racism is addressed, and solution to it is being discussed, the covert form of racism is left to fester within individuals and is often left untreated, causing racism to become a vicious and untreatable cycle.

If we tackle the subject from a religious point of view alone, then religion, all religions, condemn racism and the practice of making people believe that they are lesser than their peers. The scripture, in Christianity, condemns the practice of racism in more than ten places. It calls all believers one in the eye of the Christ and states that the Lord has created man in his own image, thus being unkind and prejudiced against anyone that has been created in his image is nothing short of a sin. In Islam, the Holy Quran says that no one among you is superior to another, except on the basis of piety. Just like Christianity, Islam calls all believers as one. It says that an Arab has no superiority over a foreigner and vice versa in the eyes of the Lord. Thus, no matter what the color of your skin, Islam treats you the same as everyone. Thus, after reviewing what various religions have to say on the subject, the view that I previously held is only strengthened. All people regardless of their nationality and skin specifications should be treated in the same way, equally.