

AI

SEMINAR 8

Religion

Getting Started – Quiz

Try answering the following questions about religion.

1. Who gave David a sword and armour to fight Goliath?

- a) Peter b) Saul c) Moses d) Herod

2. What is the Muslim Holy Month?

- a) January b) Armageddon c) Baal d) Ramadan

3. Who was the founder of Methodism in the 1720s?

- a) John Wesley b) Martin Luther c) John Calvin d) Samuel

4. Where was the birthplace of Muhammad?

- a) Medina b) Jerusalem c) Macedonia d) Mecca

5. Yoga is a way of reaching a certain level of salvation in:

- a) Shintoism b) Buddhism c) Taoism d) Hinduism

6. Who tested Job?

- a) God b) Adam c) Satan d) Abraham

7. The Koran was revealed to Muhammad by what angel?

- a) Gabriel b) Michael c) Peter d) James

8. What name means ‘the enlightened* one’?

- a) Jesus b) John c) Buddha d) Samaritan

9. What is the Jewish New Year?

- a) Yom Kippur b) Rosh Hashanah c) Leviticus d) Deuteronomy

10. Which story is a Biblical explanation for the differences among languages?

- a) The Tower of Babel b) Noah’s Ark c) Cain’s Murder of Abel d) The Holy Grail

11. Dianetics, a way of knowing what the soul is doing to the body through the mind, is practised in:

- a) Moonies-Unification Church b) Mormonism c) Scientology d) Jehovah’s Witnesses

12. The Age of Aquarius, as the time when there is world government, no wars, no disease, hunger, pollution, or poverty, is connected to:

- a) New Age Spiritualism b) Neopaganism c) Witchcraft d) the Orthodox Church

13. In Taoism, the development of virtue is one’s chief task and the Three Jewels to be sought are:

- a) love, peace, and happiness
b) compassion, moderation, and humility
c) pride, individualism, and charity
d) delight, perfection, and forgiveness

Note-Taking

Note-taking can help you to organise your thoughts, follow the argument of a speaker or writer, and record and remember the details as well as the gist* of presentations.

Good notes...

- 1) are accurate
- 2) contain essential information
- 3) show the overall organisation and ideas clearly
- 4) are concise, i.e., they use abbreviations and other shortening techniques
- 5) help you listen or read more successfully
- 6) can be used later (e.g. for exam revision)
- 7) include follow-up points, i.e. your own comments to the ideas.

Abbreviations and Symbols

What abbreviations and symbols would you use?

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. for example | 7. equal to | 13. page |
| 2. that is | 8. not equal to | 14. pages |
| 3. number | 9. ditto or same as above | 15. Anno Domini |
| 4. therefore | 10. approximately or similar to | 16. Before Christ |
| 5. greater than | 11. in reference to | 17. etcetera |
| 6. less than | 12. and | |

Listening – Note Taking: Major Religions of the World

Religion	Buddhism	Christianity	Confucianism	Hinduism	Islam
1 Time & place of foundation					
2 Founder of the religion					
3 Lived from _____ to _____					
4 Religious texts					
5 Number of followers today and where practised					
6 Other information					

Sources consulted: Mary Waters and Alan Waters, Study Tasks in English, CUP, 1995.

Discussion Questions

1. What similarities are there between different religions?
2. Do you think that different religions are/can be compatible*? How?
3. How important is religion in your country? What different religions do you have?
4. What are some of the advantages that religion can bring to people and the environment?

Reading

The following text about religion and ecology is adapted from an article by Mary Evelyn Tucker, the Co-ordinator of the Forum on Religion and Ecology at Bucknell University in Pennsylvania.

Sacred* Connections **The Emerging Alliance* of World Religions and Ecology**

1 The growing alliance of religion and ecology within the academic world and religious communities is bringing together diverse* perspectives from the world's religious traditions, about their attitudes towards nature. Religious scholars have begun to identify the symbolic, scriptural and ethical aspects of religions and their relations with the natural world. Religious practitioners and environmentalists are using these resources as a source of inspiration to motivate long-term* changes. The Worldwatch Institute's *State of the World 2000* report notes that in solving environmental problems "all of society's institutions – from organised religion to corporations – have a role to play."

2 Although religions have sometimes preserved* the status quo, they have also provoked social change. They can be limiting but also liberating. In the twentieth century, for example, religious leaders helped start movements such as civil rights and social justice. More recently, they were important in starting a movement called *Jubilee 2000* for international debt* reduction.

3 Although the responses of religions to the environmental crisis were slow at first, they have been growing over the last twenty-five years. The two most recent Parliaments of World Religions issued major statements on global ethics, stressing environmental issues as well as human rights. Religious groups have also helped to create the Earth Charter, which represents long-standing concerns for a fairer distribution of wealth, respect for human rights, an end to war, and the extension of compassion* to all living beings.

4 Just as religions played an important role in creating socio-political changes in the twentieth century, now religions could contribute to the emergence* of a broader environmental ethics. Whether it is from the perspective of Western religions that the Earth is part of divine* Creation and therefore should be respected, or from the perspective of indigenous* traditions that nature is infused* with a sacred presence, or from the perspective of Eastern religions that the universe participates in ongoing creative transformations with which humans should harmonise themselves, the idea of nature as a complex reality to be revered* is widespread*. For many religions, the natural world is a source of teaching, guidance and visionary inspiration. At the same time, nature is also a provider of food, clothing and shelter. Thus, religions have developed complex systems of thanksgiving around human dependence on animals and plants, on forests and fields, on rivers and oceans.

5 Exploring the relationship between religions and ecology may lead toward agreement on several important principles. Even though there may be some variation in interpretation, the common values that most religions hold in relation to the natural world might be summarised as: reverence*, respect, restraint*, redistribution, and responsibility. Although these principles have been previously understood mainly with regard to relations toward other humans, the challenge now is to extend them to the natural world. As this shift occurs, religions can support reverence for the Earth and its profound* cosmological processes, respect for the Earth's many species, an extension of ethics to include all life forms, restraint in the use of natural resources combined with support for effective alternative technologies, a fair redistribution of wealth, and the acknowledgement of human responsibility in regard to the continuity of life and the ecosystems that support life. In this way, the emerging alliance of religion and ecology can contribute to the life of the Earth community for the well-being of future generations.

Comprehension Questions

1. What are religious people doing to encourage long-term changes in environmental practice?
2. Do religions have the effect of restricting* or encouraging social change?
3. How can religions contribute to environmental ethics?
4. What are the five common 'Rs' that religions share regarding the natural world?

Follow-up Questions: What do you think?

1. By using religion, can we achieve a more environmentally friendly world?
2. How are religious representatives and environmentalists able to achieve this?
3. By applying religion in this way, are we *distorting its true meaning and/or function?
4. Which may be the most useful religions in the attempt to create a "greener" world?

Zen Stories

Pre-reading Questions

1. What are some typical features of Eastern religions?
2. What do you know about Zen Buddhism?

Readings

1 A priest was in charge of the garden within a famous Zen temple. He had been given the job because he loved the flowers, shrubs, and trees. Next to the temple there was another, smaller temple where there lived a very old Zen master. One day, when the priest was expecting some special guests, he took extra care in tending to the garden. He pulled up the weeds, trimmed the shrubs, and spent a long time raking up and carefully arranging all the dry autumn leaves. As he worked, the old master watched him with interest from across the wall that separated the temples.

When he had finished, the priest stood back to admire his work. "Isn't it beautiful," he called out to the old master. "Yes," replied the old man, "but there is something missing. Help me over this wall and I'll put it right for you."

After hesitating, the priest lifted the old fellow over and set him down. Slowly, the master walked to the tree near the centre of the garden, took it by the trunk, and shook it. Leaves fell down all over the garden. "There," said the old man, "you can put me back now."

2 One of master Gasan's monks visited the university in Tokyo. When he returned, he asked the master if he had ever read the Christian Bible. "No," Gasan replied. "Please read some of it to me." The monk opened the Bible to the Sermon on the Mount of St. Matthew and began reading. After reading Christ's words about the lilies in the field, he paused. Master Gasan was silent for a long time. "Yes," he finally said, "Whoever said these words is an enlightened being. What you have read to me is the essence of everything I have been trying to teach you here!"

(In another version of this story, it is a Christian who reads the Bible passage to Gasan.)

Discussion Questions

1. What is your interpretation of these short stories and their meaning?
2. What title would you give each story?
3. What generalisations can be made about Zen stories?
4. Do you think that stories such as these are still relevant in the modern world?

Grammar – Verbs + Infinitive or Gerund

Some common verbs can be followed either by the infinitive form (to + verb) or the gerund (verb + -ing), but the choice of infinitive or gerund affects the meaning. Choose the most appropriate form in each sentence, answer the questions in pairs, and then discuss the differences in meaning.

- 1 If you were a Muslim, how often would you stop **working / to work**, in order to make time to pray?
- 2 The nun stopped praying **going / to go** back to work.
- 3 What do you remember **doing / to do** on your first visit to a church?
- 4 If you are a man, what should you always remember **doing / to do** when you enter a synagogue?
- 5 Is there anything in the past that you regret **saying / to say** to your priest?
- 6 I regret **saying / to say** that I don't believe in God.
- 7 If you were holding a religious fast, how long would you stop **eating / to eat**?
- 8 He stopped **working/to work** to say a prayer.
- 9 The monks take many hours a day **meditating / to meditate**.
- 10 The monks spend many hours a day **meditating / to meditate**.
- 11 He welcomed the new members of the group and then went on **explaining / to explain** the rules.
- 12 How long do you intend to go on **working / to work** for the mission?
13. I meant **going/to go** to the mass but I couldn't.
14. If you want to go to Holy Communion, it will mean **going/to go** to confession first.
15. Don't forget **saying/to say** a prayer before every meal.
16. I forgot **being told/to be told** about his son's christening.

Vocabulary

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|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. enlightened | osvícený |
| 2. *gist, main idea | jádro, podstata, hlavní myšlenka |
| 3. compatible | slučitelný |
| 4. sacred | svatý, posvátný |
| 5. emerging alliance, emergence | vznikající spojení, spojení které vzniká, vývoj, vznik |
| 6. *diverse | různorodý |
| 7. *long-term | dlouhodobý |
| 8. *to preserve | uchovat si, zachovat |
| 9. *debt reduction | snížení dluhů |
| 10. *compassion | soucit |
| 11. divine | boží |
| 12. *indigenous | původní, domorodý |
| 13. to be infused with | být naplněn |
| 14. to revere, to have reverence | vážít si, chovat v úctě |
| 15. widespread | rozšířený |
| 16. *restraint | sebeovládání |
| 17. *profound, deep | hluboký, vážný |
| 18. *to restrict | omezit |
| 19. to distort | překroutit |

Word bank

1. to believe in God	věřit v boha
2. to go to church	chodit do kostela
3. to go for a mass	chodit na mši
4. to pray	modlit se
5. to be (deeply) religious	být (silně) nábožensky založený
6. to be christened	být pokřtěn
7. to be baptized	být pokřtěn
8. christening	křest
9. Christianity	křesťanství
10. to be a (believing) Christian	být (věřící) křesťan
11. to belong to an organized religion	patřit k organizovanému náboženství
12. to practice one's religion	praktikovat své náboženství
13. to spread religion	šířit náboženství
14. church ceremony	církevní obřad
15. to be an atheist	být ateista
16. to confess	zpovídat se
17. to go to confession	jít ke zpovědi
18. to go to Holy Communion	jít ke svatému přijímání
19. to crucify	ukřižovat
20. to resurrect	vzkřísit
21. resurrection	vzkříšení
22. sin	hřích
23. pilgrim	poutník
24. place of pilgrimage	poutní místo
25. altar	oltář
26. aisle	ulička (v kostele)