

## Wisdom from World Religions

Prof. Kenneth Rose

### Week 5 Study Guides

Day 13

#### Unit 1: Sir John Templeton's *Wisdom from World Religions*

Theme: The return on generosity

**A Spiritual Law from Sir John Templeton:** "Those who give freely frequently experience a return on their generosity" (WWR 263).

#### Suggested Readings in *Wisdom from World Religions*:

- W35, L4, 300-301
- W 25, L 3, 215-216
- W39, L 5, 333-334

#### Video 1 Learning Objectives (QM 2.1-5)

- To define generosity in light of global religious traditions and philosophy.
- To practice the generosity as described by SJT and others.
- To analyze the notion of generosity in light of current research on happiness.

#### Discussion Questions

##### *Seekers*

- Do you see yourself as a generous person?
- Do you agree with SJT and many others that we receive more than we give?

##### *Proficients*

- Is your generosity more calculative or noncalculative?
- Is generosity a sign of spiritual health?

##### *Adepts*

- Do you think that it's true that generosity produces abundance?
- Do you think the belief that generosity has a causal effect on one's own health and prosperity is true or that it is magical thinking?

#### Video 2: Introducing the Religions of the World

Topic: Judaism

#### Learning objectives (QM 2.1-5)

- Provide a brief introduction to Judaism
- Note its core teachings
- Note its contributions to spiritual understanding
- Note its contributions to virtuous living

### **Discussion Questions**

#### **Seeker**

- What contributions to religion and spirituality do you link to Judaism?
- Do you think that God acts in history?

#### *Proficient*

- Is God more concerned with ritual or ethics in Judaism?
- What is Torah?

#### *Adept*

- What is the New Covenant?
- What are some features of Jewish spirituality?

**Video 3: A spiritual practice from Sir John Templeton: Give yourself to others for the pure joy of giving” (WWR 320).**

- **Video 3 Learning Objective**
- To employ this spiritual practice from Sir John Templeton:

**Video 4: Guest Lecturer Dr. Alister McGrath** (see <http://alistermcgrath.weebly.com> )

### **Day 14**

**Unit 1: Sir John Templeton’s *Wisdom from World Religions***  
**Theme: The movement of forgiveness**

**A Spiritual Law from Sir John Templeton: “Forgiving uplifts the forgiver” (WWR 155).**

#### **Suggested Readings in *Wisdom from World Religions*:**

- W2, L 2, 14-15
- W4, L4, 33
- W 18, L3, 155-156
- W 29, L2, 245-246
- W 39, L1, 328-329.

### **Video 1 Learning Objectives (QM 2.1-5)**

- To analyze the concept of forgiveness in light global religious and philosophical thought.
- To interpret SJT's use of the expression "total forgiveness" as an expression of "unlimited love."
- To assess the connection between forgiveness and personal and communal flourishing.

### **Discussion Questions**

#### *Seekers*

- How do respond to Templeton's call for "total forgiveness" and "unlimited love"?
- Should forgiveness and love be conditional or unconditional?

#### *Proficients*

- Could the measured health benefits of forgiveness be obtained in other ways, say by quieting the mind in meditation or exercise?
- Does forgiveness only require forgiveness from the injured party or should there be reconciliation and change in the injuring party?

#### *Adepts*

- Do all religion teach "total" forgiveness?
- How do psychological and neuroscientific approaches tend to differ from theological, philosophical, and social-scientific understandings of forgiveness?

### **Unit 2: Introducing the Religions of the World: Christianity Learning objectives (QM 2.1-5)**

- Provide a brief introduction to Christianity
- Note its core teachings
- Note its contributions to spiritual understanding
- Note its contributions to virtuous living

### **Discussion Questions**

#### *Seekers*

- What makes a Christian a Christian?
- What binds all Christians together?

#### *Proficients*

- What are key teachings in the Sermon of the Mount?
- What practices are central to Christianity?

## Adepts

- Is salvation available in more than one religion?
- Does the worldview of the New Testament—and of traditional religions—describe realities invisible to science or is it to be reinterpreted in light of modern thought?

### **Video 3: A spiritual practice from Sir John Templeton:**

*“The technique for achieving forgiveness is simple: release; let go!”* (WWR 328).

**Video 3 Learning Objective:** To employ this spiritual practice from Sir John Templeton

### **Unit 4 Study Guide: An Interview with Prof. Hussam Timani,**

- Associate professor of philosophy and religious studies at Christopher Newport University
- Co-director of the Middle East and North Africa Studies Program at Christopher Newport University
- Teaches courses on world religions and Islam and a frequent speaker on Islam and interfaith dialogue and scriptural reasoning
- **Awards**
  - Recipient of the 2017 National Association for the Advancement of the Colored People (NAACP) Award for leadership and service as interfaith guidepost in the Commonwealth of Virginia
  - Recipient of the 2009 Rumi Forum Education Award for service, leadership, and dedication to the cause of dialogue, peace, tolerance, community service, and understanding.

#### **Research interests:**

- Classical and modern Islamic religious thought
- Comparative theology
- Interfaith studies
- **Author of:**
  - *Modern Intellectual Readings of the Kharijites* (2008)
  - *Takfir in Islamic Thought* (2017)
  - co-editor of *Strangers in this World: Multireligious Reflections on Immigration* (2015).
  - Author of more than 15 book chapters and journal/encyclopedic articles on classical and modern Islamic religious thought, comparative theology, and interfaith studies

## Day 15

**Unit 1: Sir John Templeton’s *Wisdom from World Religions***  
**Theme: Practicing unlimited love.**

**A Spiritual Law from Sir John Templeton**

- “The oldest thing in the world . . . is love” (WWR 199).

**Suggested Readings in *Wisdom from World Religions*:**

- W2, L2, 13-14
- W4, L3, 31-32
- W7, L2, 56-58
- W11, L3, 91-92
- W23, L4, 199-200
- W37, L4, 316-317
- W40, L4, 339-341

**Video 1 Learning Objectives (QM 2.1-5)**

- **To analyze the overused English word *love*.**
- **To interpret SJT’s use of the word *love*.**
- **To assess the connection between love and human flourishing.**

**Discussion Questions**

*Seekers*

- What does love mean for you? Please give at least one everyday definition and one broader, more cosmic, or philosophical definition.
- Does divine love, as SJT holds, never fail, in your view?

*Proficients*

- In your view, is it better to perfect love in one’s life or is it better to be powerful, rich, and famous? If there is a middle way between these two choices, can you say what it would be in a few words?
- Are there forces more powerful than love at work in life?

*Adepts*

- Can you name four or five varieties of love in the world’s religious traditions?
- When it comes to love, which branch of knowledge has more to say: science or religion? How can these different and sometimes competing sources of knowledge work together to create more loving human communities and societies?

**Video 2: Introducing the Religions of the World  
Topic: Islam**

**Learning objectives (QM 2.1-5)**

- Provide a brief introduction to Islam

- Note its core teachings
- Note its contributions to spiritual understanding
- Note its contributions to virtuous living

### **Discussion Questions**

#### *Seekers*

- What is the connection between Islam, Christianity, and Judaism?
- What are the Abrahamic religion and how do they differ the *dharmic* religions?

#### *Proficients*

- What is the difference between the Five Pillars of Faith and the Five Pillars of Practice?
- What is the essential message of Islam?

#### *Adepts*

- How should Sufism as an aspect of Islam be understood?
- What are some of the spiritual practices of Islam?

**Video 3: A spiritual practice from Sir John Templeton: “Look with the eyes of love” (WWR 13).**

- **Video 3 Learning Objective**
- To employ this spiritual practice from Sir John Templeton

**Unit 4: Office Hours with Prof. Rose**