

Wisdom from World Religions

Prof. Kenneth Rose

Week 6

Day 16

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

Theme: Forward into the Divine Unknown

A Spiritual Law from Sir John Templeton: "*The unknown before us may be a million times greater than what we now know*" (WWR 231).

Suggested Readings in *Wisdom from World Religions*:

- W 17, L4 148-150
- W27, L3, 231-232
- W 28, L3 231-232
- W 18, L1, 152-153
- W 38, L4 323-324

Unit 1 Learning Objectives (QM 2.1-5)

- To distinguish between the concept of the unknown and of mystery.
- To describe SJT's use of the concept of the unknown to spur creative expression and progress in all areas of life.
- To show how the concept of the unknown can propel new discoveries in religion and spirituality.

Discussion Questions

Seekers

- How do you respond to the idea of the unknown? Does it make you uncomfortable and yearn for clear ideas and fixed principles? Or does it inspire you to move ahead with expectation?
- Is the unknown a challenge or an opportunity for religion?

Proficients

- How might the unknown or mystery challenge or deepen your own understanding of religion and spirituality?
- How can the unknown and mystery impel new discoveries in religion?

Adepts

- What is the difference between the unknown and mystery?
- How has the idea of mystery functioned in religious traditions?

Unit 2: Introducing the Religions of the World: The Bahá'í Faith

Learning objectives (QM 2.1-5)

- Provide a brief introduction to the Bahá'í Faith
- Note its core teachings

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

Discussion Questions

Seekers

- What do you know about the Bahá'í Faith?
- What are the central teachings of the Bahá'í Faith?

Proficients

- Who was the Bab?
- Who was Bahá'u'lláh?

Adepts

- What is the relationship between the Bahá'í Faith and other religions?
- What is your view of the idea that revelation is ongoing and progressive?

Unit 3: A spiritual practice from Sir John Templeton: *“Look for God in a multitude of ways”* (WWR 231)

Unit 3 Learning Objective

To employ this spiritual practice from Sir John Templeton:

Unit 4 Study Guide: Guest Video “The Baha’i World View”

- This video provides a brief overview of the activities of the Baha’i Faith from a US perspective.
- The Baha’i Faith is a worldwide movement, and you can find videos online in many languages depicting the Baha’i Faith from the perspective of other societies.

Day 17

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

Theme: The Mystic Power of Prayer

A Spiritual Law from Sir John Templeton

“There is a mystic power in prayer and it works!” (WWR 130).

Suggested Readings in *Wisdom from World Religions*:

- W5, L3, 40-41
- W7, L5, 61-62
- W 15, L3, 129-130
- W 21, L3, 181-183
- W25, L1, 212-213

Video 1 Learning Objectives (QM 2.1-5)

- To discover the basis or origin of prayer in human experience.
- To evaluate the reported health benefits of prayer, meditation, and contemplation.
- To judge whether the reality and benefits of prayer indicate the limits of a materialistic view of life.

Discussion Questions

Seekers

- Does prayer work?
- Does the reality of prayer as a virtually universal phenomenon—see Plutarch—provide evidence for a non-natural or immaterial dimension or foundation to life?

Proficients

- Do you think prayer is a natural or a learned behavior?
- Must one believe certain things or belong to a specific religion for prayer to be effective?

Adepts

- Can you suggest a theory or explanation for the apparent effectiveness of prayer.
- Can the measured health benefits of prayer be explained without reference to prayer?

Unit 2 Learning objectives (QM 2.1-5)

- To discuss the character and varieties of spirituality
- To identify the two basic practices of spirituality
- To formulate a pluralistic spiritual practice

Discussion Questions

Seekers

- How would you define spirituality?
- Is spirituality always connected with a religious tradition?

Proficients

- What alternatives are there to using the Latin-based word *spirituality*?
- What two practices are central to the disciplined practice of spirituality?

Adepts

- Can one engage the central practices of spirituality outside of an established religious tradition?
- What resources would you suggest to people who want to practice and study spirituality in depth?

Unit 3: A spiritual practice from Sir John Templeton: *Attune with the invisible part of ourselves*” (WWR 307).

Video 3 Learning Objective

To employ this spiritual practice from Sir John Templeton.

Unit 4: No Unit 4 at present for Day 17

Day 18

Unit 1: Sir John Templeton's *Wisdom from World Religions* Theme: The Standpoint of Nonduality

A Spiritual Law from Sir John Templeton: "Nothing can exist separate from divinity" (WWR107)

Suggested Readings in *Wisdom from World Religions*:

- W14, W2, 119-120
- 243
- W 40, L4 339-341

Unit 1 Learning Objectives (QM 2.1-5)

- Hypothesizing nonduality as the ground of life, love, spirituality, and religion
- Discussing the value of nonduality for interreligious understanding and action
- Explaining the practice of nonduality

Discussion Questions

Seekers

- Do you find the idea that an spiritual oneness or nondual reality more or less attractive?
- Can you say why you respond this way to the teaching of nonduality or oneness?

Proficients

- Have you sensed that the religious traditions may be different ways of orienting people to the divine source of life?
- Do you think that it is possible or desirable to find a common ground shared by all religions?

Adepts

- Many mystical traditions suggest that the divine is ultimately beyond description if human ideas and words? Do you agree?
- If you think one way of talking about the divine is, in the end, at least, the best of ultimate way of talking about the divine, can you give an argument that would be persuasive to all who disagree?

Topic: **Mystics, yogis, sages, and saints—the heart of spiritual religion**

Unit 2 Learning objectives (QM 2.1-5)

- To distinguish between the different types of holy persons
- To identify the factor/s that made holy persons holy
- To recommend holy persons as models for living more sublime lives

Discussion Questions

Seekers

- What are the different types of holy persons?
- What make a holy person holy?

Proficients

- How would you distinguish between a mystic, sage, and saint?

- Can you relate the various types of holy persons in traditions with which you may be familiar with these three types?

Adepts

- Do holy people actually represent a dimension of reality that is not available through other means, such as science, the arts, social interaction, and technology?
- Can we use the usual methods of academic study to truly understand holy people?

Unit 3: A spiritual practice from Sir John Templeton: “*Become still and know*” (WWR 4).

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

Unit 4: Closing Video