

Philosophy 23: Exam 4

1. Siderits/Buddhism (C & H can be answered in a sentence or two. The rest can be answered in no more than a short to medium paragraph. Just look them up):

- A. What are the central features of Buddhism, Four Noble Truths, 8-fold path, three characters of reality, etc.?
- B. What is the Buddhist view of faith and supernatural revelation? How would faith be an obstacle to nirvana or liberation? How are nirvana, critical thinking, and objective fact related? What was the Buddha's stance on metaphysics and theory?
- C. What is the significance of Buddhism's "atheism" or "polytheism."?
- D. In what way does Buddhism see truth as ambiguous (theory of two truths)? What are conventional truth and convenient designators versus objective truth?
- E. The idea of karma is *historically* intrinsic to Buddhism from its birth in a Hindu context to present. But it makes no literal sense, at least not without special interpretation. Why? How can one make sense of karma given the doctrine of no self? Would it be possible to reject karma without giving up Buddhism? What value is there in keeping the notion of karma if it cannot be made sense of literally?
- F. What is existential suffering as opposed to physical pain and emotional suffering? Why is that the core issue in Buddhism? What is the relation of this to the doctrines of no self (anatman) and impermanence (anicca)? Why is the claim of the fiction of the self central to Buddhism and to liberation?
- G. What does "I" refer to? What are the five skandhas? What is it we mistake for a self?
- H. What is the paradox of liberation?
- I. What is the relation of philosophy and meditation in Buddhism?

2. Russon & Buddhism

In light of your answers above, what do Russon and Siderits (Buddhism) have in common and how do they differ?

EXTRA CREDIT:

Main Question for the Course (draw on all readings and see "Phil 23: Religious Experience, Experience of the Sacred" posted online):

Is a religious experience an experience of the sacred? What is an experience of the sacred? What does this mean? Discuss the relation between religion and religious experience. What is genuinely religious experience and how do we know what is not? What are its manifestations? What can properly be said about it? How can we tell false from genuine religion, i.e., religious experience? Why is it that "those who profess a religion may be falsely religious and those who do not profess any religion may be truthfully religious?" What **IS** religion that makes this so? For example: Why is religious fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam idolatry and NOT a return to a more genuine archaic fundament? How might Buddhism be a genuine religion even without God or is that impossible given what a genuine religious experience must be?