

-Jennifer Hart's pragmatic approach to Jacob's churchgoing is utilitarian - actions not intrinsically good or evil, but should be judged by their consequences. Right acts produce best results. 1960s loss of religious faith but while people were casting off the trammels of institutional Christianity, they were also turning to alternative forms of faith. 'Go with the flow' antithesis of ideals of convent but both seeking what gave life intrinsic value, rejecting money and worldly success. Transcendental meditation to change thought structures; spirituality and rituals bring measure of peace, help transform, release from bind of ego.

-frontal lobe epilepsy - induces religious experience. Accept handicap as my lot, as other disabled people did, then perhaps I would discover a source of peace and endurance within myself. Deliberately cultivate the kind of robust gladness that seemed to come quite naturally to Jane; not need to understand a la Blackfriars rituals for Jacob. Acceptance of your condition = faith. (even 'power of positive thinking' has underlying truth). Need 1/ inner freedom which 2/ is controlled. ie don't start with repression (convent) but chicken and egg problem - how to achieve inner freedom? thru discipline? thru rejection of outer world? experiment?

-law of human condition: he who loves his life shall lose it; he who loses his life shall save it. We are most creative when we leave ourselves behind. Biologically, need to protect and survive - lower brain, overcome with frontal lobe -> another state of consciousness (c).

-"Because I do not hope to turn again/ Because I do not hope/ Because I do not hope to turn/ Desiring this man's gift and that man's scope/ I no longer strive to strive towards such things... Why should I mourn/ The vanished power of the usual reign?/ Because I know I shall not know/ ... Because I know that time is always time/ And place is always and only place/ And what is actual is actual only for one time/ And only for one place/ I rejoice that things are as they are/ Teach us to care and not to care/ Teach us to sit still. (TS Eliot *Ash-Wednesday*, I)

-whatever happened in Jerusalem 2000 yrs before was not as important as the fact that the events had somehow been brought to life here and now (Easter). Without these rituals, the myth was dead. If you look at rites and stories from the outside, they seem absurd.

-certainty of Thatcher/ bin Laden unrealistic - dogmatic. No certainty in spirituality - God is suspension of self. Every activity a 'sacrament' an opportunity to encounter the divine. Every time you observe commandment, 'turn' towards God. The Law as luminous and liberating. Paul angered early followers by abrogating the Law. Study of Law "brought Jews into the presence of God" 244

-Dome of Rick - Abraham sacrifice Isaac/Ishmael and Mohammad ascended to heaven. By repeating *Quran*, take Word of God into your being, symbolically positioning yourself in place where God was, simulating union with Godhead.

-ability to experience pain and sorrow *sine qua non* of enlightenment. when follow someone else's path, you go astray. Must find what is missing in your life, be transfigured and bring something of value into the world. The wasteland of the 13th c Grail legend is where people live inauthentic lives, doing what others expect. Watershed in spiritual development of West, turning crusading ethos on its head. Must ride into forest alone at its densest point. Spiritual quest: 1/ own path 2/ feel your pain fully (vs nature - no suffering (except for domesticated animals - but mothers) - all religions teach spirituality of empathy, by means of which you relate your own suffering to others.

-metanoia (conversion).

-faith about practice, not belief (Rabbi Hyam Maccoby). Moral aesthetic, ethical alchemy. Doing will transform you. Must live as intensely as possible here and now. Not try to get to heaven but to discover how to be fully human -> deified human being. Mohammad, Buddha, Jesus icons of

fulfilled humanity. God not optional extra tacked on to our human nature. We have potential for the divine and are not complete unless we realize it within ourselves. (Q to Buddha: are you god, spirit or angel. A: I am awake). Release/ sublimate Eros, not repress/ sublimate.

-founders of orders rebels but followers turned their insights into hierarchy, deadening them.

-intellectual work - must penetrate another culture and dev different way to look at world.

Concentration of mind and heart - meditation. ekstasis (standing outside) - must leave behind inbuilt selfishness. Most fully ourselves when give ourselves away

-kafir (ungrateful to God). Islam/ Judaism not so bothered about belief/ creed. Practice - prayer, hajj, fasting sakat to transform, refine concrete acts of compassion - learn to live from the heart. Not a belief system but a process that makes people act in ways that should change them forever.

-not busy silence of convent, hyperc of your performance, creating perverse neg egotism.

Rather silence of listening, empathy with object of study. Amateur (one who loves).

-process of study as important as content and is itself transforming (for Yeshiva school).

-like all art, theology is an attempt to express the inexpressible. Poetry "raid on the inarticulate" (Eliot)

-similarity of 3 monotheisms suggest they capture something real about the human condn.

-God not 'exist' in our limited understanding of the word. Faith - conviction that life has ultimate meaning and value. *beleven* (to love) *credo* (*cor do* 'I give my heart'). *credo ut intellegam* (I believe/ commit myself in order that I may understand.) Must first live a certain way then can encounter sacred presence.

-test of valid religious idea - must lead directly to practical compassion.

-Crusaders - personalized God -> idolatry/ bigotry

--Western theology (thought) relies on reason since scientific revolution 16-17th cc - mythology and mysticism discredited. Struggle to achieve harmonious relations with fellows brings humans into God's presence (Abraham entertained 3 strangers -> divine encounter). Compassion surest means of attaining enlightenment - dethrones ego. Constant ecstasy - ceaselessly going beyond ourselves. Distressed by disdain in conversations (vs Golden Rule) "splinter of ice into the heart of the disdained" 298. Identification with suffering is joy, since ego is at heart of all pain. Solitary lifestyle can -> selfishness - no daily giving of self. Empathy not just for your own good - 'love your enemies' - extend compassion where there is no hope of a return. when angry/ egotistic distress, texts not speak to you.

-Armstrong rejects orthodox belief, but "the very absence I felt so acutely was paradoxically a presence in my life"301 - talk of God must be paradox (beyond understanding)

-Kabbalah - imagines God as originally a sacred emptiness, sees creation as a massive error, the world shattered and dense with evil.