

Reading Treasure Hunt



Can we learn from different people's cultures and even religions?

The following three *Reading Treasure Hunts* are from three different parts of the world, based on the experiences of real people in history. The passage questions are the same for each reading in the series - only placed there beside each reading to remind you of what is being asked.

As you read, think of this quote,

“The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence.”

-Rabindranath Tagore

How one epiphany led to Peace

“Let your life be your teacher.”

~ Buddha

This story originates in Southeast Asia, in a kingdom of what is now known as India. A prince who was always sheltered from the outside world by his father came to know of the suffering of the people outside of his palace walls and fell into a depression. He took to the forest and joined the holy men to uncover the reason for human suffering.

1 A boy named Siddhartha was born into a life of royalty,
2 and yet found himself unable to **acclimate** nor **assimilate** to
3 princely ways. It was as if the training traditional for a prince
4 could not **satisfy** and even **alienated** Siddhartha’s gentle soul.
5 He did not **associate** with many of his royal peers. Unlike them,
6 he spent a great deal of time alone, wandering the palace
7 gardens. He did not participate in the common games of boys
8 either, but rather **outright** sought the company of animals and
9 nature. He felt **rejuvenated** by their presence.

10 One day in his early adulthood he finally wandered
11 outside of the palace walls to discover people sick, **meek** and
12 dying. He was **wrought** with pain at seeing the **blight** and
13 **plight** of others. His lack of **foresight** and understanding of
14 death and suffering caused him the most **unsettling** feelings.

15 Siddhartha became incurably depressed, until one day he
16 ventured out of the palace and saw a yogi meditating under a
17 tree. This yogi too had sought **insight** on pain - his own and
18 others. They said he was only able to **recuperate** his lost inner
19 peace by trading his material belongings for **solace** within
20 nature.

21 So Siddhartha set out to find the truth, like this yogi; he
22 went to all the wise sages and spent six years in the forest after
23 cutting off all of his hair and giving up all of his riches. One
24 group he met told him to starve himself to find the answer, but
25 that just left him too weak to even receive an answer.

26 After years of seeking and studying, he could not find
27 the end to suffering--until finally one day, he came upon a bodhi
28 tree and just began meditating. He vowed to not leave his place
29 until he found the answer. Over time, the answers slowly began
30 coming to him, **accumulated** in **hindsight** from his different
31 experiences in life, and soon enough he began **communicating**
32 his findings to the world.

33 He taught the world one of the greatest truths and
34 **oversights** of life: the answers are all within the silence of your
35 soul.

“Believe nothing,” he concluded. “Believe nothing anyone tells
you, not even me--unless it resonates with the truth within you.
Do not believe in anything simply because you have heard it.
Do not believe in anything simply because it is spoken and
rumored by many. Do not believe in anything simply because
it is found written in your religious books. Do not believe in
anything merely on the authority of your teachers and elders.
Do not believe in traditions because they have been handed
down for many generations. But after observation and
analysis, when you find that anything agrees with reason and is
conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then, and only
then, accept it and live up to it.” -Siddhartha

It was this way that Siddhartha found the answer
to his lifelong question: why do people suffer in
life? Siddhartha’s meditations led him to the
understanding that because life is always
changing, suffering is a natural part of life. Even
the healthiest bodies eventually give way to
time; wealth does not last forever; happiness
gives way to sadness and vice versa. He found
that the secret to life was to remain constant
within, through all of the ebbs and waves of life.
That inner peace will be our greatest strength
and tool throughout life.

Always Analyze What You’re Reading:)

(Cite the Line from which you retrieved your Answers!)

1.) **Vocabulary.** Write out the green, underlined vocabulary words. Use context clues to guess what they could mean. Then look up easy synonyms for them--see how many you were right about! Then reread the passage, substituting the synonyms.

2.) Which events led to each person having unsettling feelings in life? What did each person do about those unsettling feelings?

3.) Which sentence does NOT describe a common theme throughout all of these readings of Yeshua, Buddha & Mohammad?

- Listen to your conscience and your life’s message before just going along with what others say or do. AKA: it is better to stand for something than fall for anything.
- Treat others as you want to be treated.
- Ignore condescending people.
- Nature has the power to bring us peace and reflection.
- People oftentimes go along with the popular culture around them, right or wrong. This is often called “group think.”

4.) What is the definition of a prophet? Do you feel that these people we read about are prophets in their own right? Do you feel that there are other prophets throughout history or even your own life? Could you be a prophet of your own life?

Humanity Challenge! Try finding out more about what we can learn from other people and cultures before finding reasons to separate from them. **Talk to others about what you learned from these readings.**

How one epiphany led to Unity

“There is only one God.”

~ Mohammad

This story originates in the Middle East, in that strip of land connecting Africa to Asia. There a young, reflective boy stood apart from the crowd. Read more of his observations and his choice.

1 Once long ago in a harsh, dry, and desolate desert, water
2 ruled life. In order to survive and acclimate to the
3 environment, people associated with groups, tribes. What
4 would oftentimes happen is that when two tribes came
5 upon the same watering hole at the same time, they would
6 feel no other choice but to have an outright fight to the
7 death for possession of that water. Water is after all,
8 survival. And when one tribe would win, they would
9 declare their tribal god as the ruling god of that land.

10 Such was life in the desert. Every man for his
11 tribe. However in this land lived an orphan who did not
12 belong to any one tribe, as his parents were lost to him at a
13 tender, young age. So he never did assimilate to the
14 culture of his environment. His experience was quite
15 different. Although he was an orphan, Mohammad never
16 felt alienated from the people. In fact, he was taken in by
17 kind people from many different tribes during his travels--
18 many even that did not get along with one another. His
19 experience led him to a very different insight about life
20 and the world. In fact, as he grew older, and well liked by
21 many different people, he found himself a successful
22 businessman--but unsettled with something. Deep down,
23 since his childhood, he was wrought with pain at the way
24 his people treated each other. He saw a huge blight upon
25 his land that no one else seemed to see.

26 So, Mohammad set on his path away from the city
27 to spend some time in nature. He alighted upon a cave on
28 a mountain, somewhere he could hear his thoughts and
29 recuperate from his depression.

30 It was there during his meditations and
31 contemplations, that an answer came to him in the form of
32 a helping spirit, a messenger. There is only one God, the
33 voice spoke. Instantly this truth resonated deep within
34 his soul. It was the greatest oversight of his life and his
35 people; caught up trying to survive in such a harsh
36 environment, the people had lost the way. But this, this
37 truth, was how they would all find their way back. It
38 wasn't about these different tribal gods declaring
39 dominion over one another; it was about the responsibility

each person had to one another. He finally felt 40
satiated by this wisdom; his soul finally felt 41
satisfied. 42

43 When he returned to his city, Mecca, he
44 came as even more of a determined, upright man
45 than he was before. Now, he had a mission. He
46 had to communicate to his people the truth: that
47 there was no reason to fight each other and
48 deceive one another. Instead, each person had a
49 responsibility to love and look after one another--
50 just as people had done for him when he was
51 young. The message was Love: One Love. In his
52 language, that translated to Allah Akbar. There is
53 only one God, one Love.

54 Well, while many tribespeople felt his
55 message and began walking with him, still many
56 others saw him as a downright threat and tried to
57 annihilate him. So he and his followers fled to
58 Medina where he and his followers were able to
59 spread the message of Love to the warring tribes
60 there and helped to unite them. Now having
61 accumulated to 10,000 strong, Mohammad and
62 his souldiers of Love went back to Mecca and
63 defeated the corrupt tribesmen. But, he did not
64 punish those that drove him out of the city.
65 Instead, he created new rules and laws which
66 made sure poor people and children were looked
67 after properly, women were honored and
68 community was rejuvenated.

Always Analyze What You're Reading:)
(Cite the Line from which you retrieved your Answers!)

1.) **Vocabulary.** Write out the green, underlined vocabulary words. Use context clues to guess what they could mean. Then look up easy synonyms for them--see how many you were right about! Then re-read the passage, substituting the synonyms.

2.) Which events led to each person having unsettling feelings in life? What did each person do about those unsettling feelings?

3.) Which sentence does NOT describe a common theme throughout all of these readings of Yeshua, Buddha & Mohammad?

- Listen to your conscience and your life's message before just going along with what others say or do. AKA: it is better to stand for something than fall for anything.
- Treat others as you want to be treated.
- Ignore condescending people.
- Nature has the power to bring us peace and reflection.
- People oftentimes go along with the popular culture around them, right or wrong. This is often called "group think."

4.) What is the definition of a prophet? Do you feel that these people we read about are prophets in their own right? Do you feel that there are other prophets throughout history or even your own life? Could you be a prophet of your own life?

Humanity Challenge! Try finding out more about what we can learn from other people and cultures before finding reasons to separate from them.
Talk to others about what you learned from these readings.

How one epiphany led to Equality

“These things that I can do, you can do, but greater.”

~ Yeshua

This story originates in the Middle East, in that strip of land connecting Africa to Asia. There a young, reflective boy stood apart from the crowd. Read more of his observations and his choice.

1 A boy named Yeshua walked past villagers crowding
2 around a man. This man seemed to be claiming **foresight** into
3 their destiny.

4 “The path to the Kingdom of heaven is to live pure
5 lives!” he exclaimed. “These lepers, these women of the night,
6 these homeless: they are like the **blight** to our forest. What we
7 need is to be like the most **upright** of trees, of lives, here--to
8 reach for the heavens. That is how we may **outright** fulfill our
9 role to Creator.”

10 Yeshua looked into the surrendering eyes of the **meek**
11 beggar nearby **alighting** the pavement to his lonely path away
12 from the crowd. Something seemed to Yeshua just **downright**
13 **unsettling** and **alienating** about this man’s words. Since Yeshua
14 was young, he had seen the people around him **assimilate** to
15 these kinds of teachings, ones **associating** divinity with purity. It
16 seemed true purity could never truly be **satiated** according to
17 these beliefs, empathy being their greatest **oversight**. Yeshua
18 just could not **acclimate** to that culture of thinking.

19 After years of reflection and time away from society in
20 the wilderness, Yeshua gained **insight** on this feeling he had been
21 having. He was not a man of many words; Yeshua
22 **communicated** his feelings through his actions.

23 So it was that he returned to that same place where that
24 tired speaker had once stood years before. There now had
25 **accumulated** the dejected of society, the direct **byproduct** of
26 those same **divisive** teachings--and their now **proliferated**
27 amounts of followers. Yeshua observed those **condescending**
28 glances of passersby upon those dejected souls. He walked past
29 them, to the lepers, the homeless, the dejected--and offered his
30 hand. “The Kingdom of heaven is within you,” he said, the most
31 **forthright** he had been about his feelings. It was as if his time in
32 nature had **rejuvenated** and **recuperated** his being, that light
33 within him that was tested by the teachings of his culture.

34 In **hindsight**, it was with that one single act that this
35 young man had **annihilated** these teachings for many. And they
36 began following a different tune.

Always Analyze What You’re Reading:)

(Cite the Line from which you retrieved your Answers!)

1.) **Vocabulary.** Write out the green, underlined vocabulary words. Use context clues to guess what they could mean. Then look up easy synonyms for them--see how many you were right about! Then re-read the passage, substituting the synonyms.

2.) Which events led to each person having unsettling feelings in life? What did each person do about those unsettling feelings?

3.) Which sentence does NOT describe a common theme throughout all of these readings of Yeshua, Buddha & Mohammad?

- Listen to your conscience and your life’s message before just going along with what others say or do. AKA: it is better to stand for something than fall for anything.
- Treat others as you want to be treated.
- Ignore condescending people.
- Nature has the power to bring us peace and reflection.
- People oftentimes go along with the popular culture around them, right or wrong. This is often called “group think.”

4.) What is the definition of a prophet? Do you feel that these people we read about are prophets in their own right? Do you feel that there are other prophets throughout history or even your own life? Could you be a prophet of your own life?

Humanity Challenge! Try finding out more about what we can learn from other people and cultures before finding reasons to separate from them. **Talk to others about what you learned from these readings.**