

Reading Questions for September 23

These questions cover a chapter called “The Four Noble Truths” from a book by Damien Keown called *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*. The answers do not have to be turned in. You will probably have to read more than once to get the answers.

*Background:*

At this point, we’re going to look at a different sort of view on the meaning of life, namely one proposed by Buddhists. This view suggests that life involves suffering, that this suffering arises from certain desires, and that it is possible to get rid of these desires. It then recommends a strategy to get rid of the desires, which involves a moderate path between indulgence and austerity.

*Questions:*

1. What do Buddhists mean by the first two noble truths (pages 48-54)? Do you agree with these truths? Why or why not?
2. What strategies do Buddhists recommend for removing suffering and achieving nirvana (pages 54-58). Can you imagine yourself pursuing these strategies? Why or why not?
3. Over the last three days, we’ve seen three different views on how to live one’s life (Sartre’s, Wolf’s, and those of Buddhists). Which do you think is the most accurate? Why?