

## Key Revision Quotes for Religion and Life: Hindusim (Unit 1)

### Section 2: Matters of Life and Death

<b>What: Hinduism and life after death</b>	
<b>Hindus and life after death</b>	
<b>Why?</b>	<b>Hindu Teaching</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is taught in the <b>Vedas</b>. The Vedas are called shruiti texts, which mean that they have been revealed by <b>Brahman</b> and so contain eternal truths that most Hindus believe.</li> <li>• It is taught in the <b>Bhagavad Gita</b>, which is the most popular of Hindu scriptures. Many Hindus feel that the teachings of the Gita contain ultimate truths and so must be believed.</li> <li>• It gives their lives meaning and purpose. They feel that for life to end at death does not make sense. Reincarnation rewards the good and punishes the evil, but also gives everyone a second chance. Hindus feel that this makes sense of this life.</li> <li>• The evidence for reincarnation, eg. Children who are born knowing things they could not know unless they had been on earth before.</li> </ul>	<p><i>'What a man becomes in his next life depends upon his <b>karma</b>. By good deeds he attains merit, by bad actions he becomes evil. The karma of a man ruled by desire attaches to his atman, so that he is forced to suffer rebirth and return to the world of men. When all attachment arising from desire is destroyed, man's morality ends and only then does atman reach Brahman'.</i></p> <p><b>(Upanishads IV.4:3-5)</b></p>
<b>How Hindus beliefs about life after death affect the lives of Hindus</b>	<b>Hindu Teaching</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hinduism teaches that each person has an immortal <b>atman</b>, which travels, through many lives in different bodies. The body is reborn into is dependent on the state of the soul: the better the soul the better life the body will have. The aim of life is to escape from this process of <b>samsara</b> and gain <b>moksha</b>. Moksha is liberation from rebirth and when the soul gains moksha, it will not be reborn. Instead it will live in a state of bliss, free from sorrow and free from desire. This state of bliss is often called <b>nirvana</b>.</li> <li>• The way to gain moksha is by karma yoga-following your duty (<b>dharma</b>). This means that they follow all the rules of the four stages of life (<b>ashrama</b>) in order to reach moksha.</li> <li>• Whatever happens to them in this life is because of how they behaved</li> </ul>	<p><i>'Finite they say are these our bodies indwelt by an external embodied soul – a soul indestructible ... As a man casts off his worn out clothes and takes on other new ones in their place, so does the embodied soul cast off his worn out bodies and enters other anew ... For sure is the death of all that comes to birth, sure the birth of all that dies'.</i></p> <p><b>(Bhagavad Gita 2:18, 22, 27)</b></p>

<p>in previous lives (<b>the law of karma</b>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The way to gain moksha is by devotion to Krishna, or one of the other avatars of the divine (bhaki yoga). So will do <b>puja</b> and go <b>mandir</b> and worship.</li> <li>• Moksha is achieved through deep meditation to achieve oneness of Brahman (jnana yoga). Isolation from relationships.</li> </ul>	
<b>What: Abortion</b>	
<b>Hinduism and abortion</b>	
<b>Why?</b>	<b>Hindu Teaching</b>
<p><b>Some Hindus</b> believe that abortion can never be allowed whatever the circumstances. They believe this because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some Gurus have said that all abortion is wrong.</li> <li>• They believe in the sanctity of life and taking life gives bad karma.</li> </ul> <p><b>Some Hindus</b> abortion permissible if: Mother's life is at risk. They believe this because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hindu teachings on ahimsa state that violence should only be used as a last resort, which would be when the mother would die if an abortion was not carried out.</li> <li>• The sanctity of life means that abortion is wrong unless the foetus threatens the sanctity of the mother's life.</li> </ul> <p><b>Some British Hindus</b> believe that Hindus can have abortions in accordance with the UK law on abortion. They have this attitude because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teachings of the Gita on not being able to harm the soul are taken to mean that abortion will not affect karma.</li> <li>• Life does not begin until the foetus can survive outside the womb.</li> </ul>	<p><i>'Unborn, eternal, everlasting, he (the soul), primeval: he is not slain when the body is slain. If a man knows him as indestructible, eternal, unborn, never to pass away, how and whom can he cause to be slain or slay'.</i></p> <p><b>(Bhagavad Gita 2:20 - 21)</b></p> <p><i>'Do not have an abortion and do not keep the company of women who have. Do not keep the company of a woman who encourages or assists in abortion'.</i></p> <p><b>(The Shikshapatri of Lord Swaminarayan)</b></p>
<b>Hinduism and euthanasia</b>	
<b>Why?</b>	<b>Hindu Teaching</b>
<p><b>Most Hindus</b> are against because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teaching on ahimsa means that any harm done to humans is</li> </ul>	

wrong and creates bad karma preventing moksha.

- Hindu teaching on the sanctity of life means that euthanasia would be damaging a soul, which is part of Brahman.
- The law of karma means that only God can give and take life at the right time. Euthanasia would be interfering with the law of karma.
- The **Laws of Manu** say that murder is wrong and many Hindus regard euthanasia as a form of murder.
- Practicing euthanasia is to put par with God and would create a massive amount of bad karma.

**Some Hindus** believe that euthanasia can be allowed in certain circumstances. Not only switching off life-support machines and not striving to keep someone alive are permitted, but also when there is no quality of life, because:

- If someone is brain-dead, God has already taken their life and so switching off the machine would not be euthanasia.
- Striving to keep someone alive is preventing God from taking their soul and so is preventing the law of karma.
- Denying death when there is no quality of life could be a form of ahimsa.
- The teachings of the Gita are that the soul cannot be armed.

*'Unborn, eternal, everlasting he (the soul) primeval: he is not slain when the body is slain.*

**(Bhagavad Gita 2:20)**

*'Non-violence is the highest ethical code of behaviour. It includes non-killing, non-injury and non-harming. Do not kill any living creature...Do not kill a human being... Do not commit suicide.*

**(Shikshapatri of Lord Swaminarayan)**

### Section 3: Marriage and the Family

<b>What: Hinduism and sex outside marriage</b>	
<b>Hindu attitudes to Sex outside Marriage</b>	
<b>Why?</b>	<b>Hindu Teaching</b>
<p><b>All Hindus</b> say it is wrong because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before marriage, a Hindu is in the student stage of life (ashrama) where sex is not allowed. Therefore sex before marriage is breaking one's dharma and will prevent one from gaining moksha.</li> <li>• The Hindu scriptures say that sex should only take place in marriage, and Hindus should follow the guidance of the scriptures.</li> <li>• Hinduism teaches that the primary purpose of sex is for the procreation of children and children should only be born in a family where the mother and father are married. Therefore there should be no sex before marriage.</li> <li>• Adultery is banned in the householder stage of life (ashrama). Therefore committing adultery is betraying one's dharma, which prevents a soul from achieving moksha.</li> <li>• Adultery is a betrayal of the marriage partner and betrayal brings bad karma, which also prevents a soul from gaining moksha.</li> <li>• Hinduism teaches that the family is very important as it is where children learn to be good Hindus. Also the marriage will have united two families who will both be hurt by adultery.</li> </ul>	<p><i>'O married men and women; be loving and faithful to one another'.</i></p> <p><b>(Shikshapatri of Lord Swaminarayan)</b></p>
<b>Hinduism and divorce</b>	
<b>Why?</b>	<b>Hindu Teaching</b>
<p><b>All Sikhs</b> believe marriage should be for life and that divorced couples are free to re-marry.</p> <p><b>Traditional Hindus</b> are against unless the couple are childless after fifteen years of if there is cruelty, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is the teaching of the Laws of Manu which they still regard as the</li> </ul>	<p><i>The Brahman said, 'It is written in scripture, your majesty: "protect your wife". When the wife is protected, the offspring are protected. For one's self is born in one's offspring; and when the offspring are protected, the self</i></p>

<p>basic guide for Hindus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As marriages unite two families, divorce is likely to harm families and so should be discouraged.</li> <li>• Having children is the key feature of the householder ashrama and so not having children would be grounds for divorce.</li> <li>• Violence in marriage would be against their belief in ahimsa and so would be grounds for divorce.</li> </ul> <p><b>Many other Hindus</b> allow divorce if marriage is broken down because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They regard the Laws of Manu as out of date, and do not think they are binding on modern Hindus.</li> <li>• Some Gurus and swamis teach that divorce is acceptable for Hindus if the marriage has broken down.</li> <li>• If a couple live in hatred and discord they will gather bad karma, so divorce would be more likely to allow the soul to gain moksha.</li> <li>• In some situations, Hindus must choose the lesser of two evils. Divorce is a lesser evil than forcing a couple to live in hatred and bitterness.</li> </ul>	<p><i>is protected. So she must be protected, your majesty. If she is not protected, the various classes will become commingled, and that will cause one's previous ancestors to fall from heaven'.</i></p> <p><b>Shastra 5.3.6</b></p>
<p><b>What: Family life</b></p>	
<p><b>Hinduism and Family life</b></p>	
<p><b>Why?</b></p>	<p><b>Hindu Teaching</b></p>
<p>Family life is important because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the teachings on ashrama, every Hindu must go through the householder stage of life. Unless a Hindu performs his/her duties as a householder and raises a family, they will not achieve moksha. So Hinduism sees the family as a duty everyone must take part in to reach nirvana.</li> <li>• The family was created as the basic unit of society and as the only place in which children should be brought up. Therefore it is the most important part of society and without the family society would collapse.</li> <li>• The family is the place where children learn the difference between right and wrong, so without the family there would be much more evil</li> </ul>	<p><i>Where the women are respected, there lives God. If the wife is obedient to the husband and the husband loves his wife; if the children obey the parents, and guests are entertained; if the family duty is performed and gifts are given to the needy, then there is heaven and nowhere else. O married men and women; be loving and faithful to one another.</i></p> <p><b>The Laws of Manu</b></p>

<p>in the world.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The family is the place where children are introduced to the faith through daily puja, being taken to mandir, celebrating festivals, and so on.</li> <li>• Hindu scriptures outline the nature of Hindu importance. Hindus should follow the guidance of the scriptures and so should see the importance of family life.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Hindu attitudes to homosexuality</b></p>	
<p><b>Why?</b></p>	<p><b>Hindu Teaching</b></p>
<p><b>Most Hindus</b> say it's wrong because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Laws of Manu only mention and approve of heterosexual sex, therefore homosexuality must be wrong.</li> <li>• All Hindus should pass through the second ashrama, which is the householder stage. To be householder one must marry and raise a family, neither of which a homosexual can do.</li> <li>• Hinduism restricts sexual activity to the householder stage and as homosexuals cannot be a householder, they should not have sex.</li> <li>• As homosexuals cannot perform their dharma as householders, they will not be able to attain moksha.</li> </ul> <p><b>Some Hindus</b> accept because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are scriptures and carvings of homosexual sex (both male and female) in old Hindu temples showing that homosexuality was thought of as holy and as a way of communicating with God.</li> <li>• There are ways other than the fulfilment of dharma by which to achieve moksha, and homosexuals find it easier to spend time concentrating on God.</li> <li>• There is a special <b>caste</b> called Hijras. They are men who dress and behave as women (often castrating themselves) to serve the mother goddess Parvati. They show that sexuality is not easily defined.</li> <li>• As scientists now believe that sexual orientation is genetic it must be natural and so God-given.</li> </ul>	<p><i>'I am the power of those who are strong, when this power is free from passions and selfish desires. I am desire when this is pure, when this desire is not against righteousness'.</i></p> <p><b>(Bhagavad Gita 7:11)</b></p> <p><i>'When the tip of a hair is split into a hundred parts, and one of those parts further into a hundred parts-the individual soul, on the one hand, is the size of one such part, and, on the other, it partakes of infinity. It is neither a woman nor a man, nor even a hermaphrodite; it is ruled over by whatever body it obtains'.</i></p> <p><b>(Svetasavatara Upanishad 5:9-10)</b></p>

<b>What: Contraception</b>	
<b>Hindu attitudes to contraception</b>	
<b>Why</b>	<b>Hindu Teaching</b>
<p><b>Most Hindus</b> allow contraception to limit family size. Many in India are sterilised after 2 children to reduce the population explosion, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children should be a joy and not a burden. The householder ahsrama should be about fulfilling one's dharma, not struggling to cope with a large family.</li> <li>• The soul does not enter the body until after conception and so the soul cannot be affected by contraception.</li> <li>• Humans should use their intelligence and technology to improve life and to make sure that the population does not exceed the food supply.</li> <li>• Contraception is different from abortion, it does not involve violence to a living thing and so it is not against ahimsa.</li> </ul> <p><b>Some Hindus</b> only accept certain types of contraception such as the pill and sterilisation, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They believe strongly in ahimsa and think that any form of contraception that involves killing either sperm or eggs is an unacceptable form of violence.</li> <li>• They are against abortion and so cannot accept abortifacient forms of contraception.</li> </ul> <p><b>Few Hindus</b> are against any form of contraception, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large families should be part of the householder ashrama.</li> <li>• Sex must involve the possibility of procreation to fulfil one's dharma. They believe strongly in ahimsa and think that any form of contraception that involves killing either sperm or eggs is an unacceptable form of violence.</li> <li>• Do not accept abortifacient forms of contraception.</li> </ul>	<p><i>'When a man deposits the semen in a woman ... it becomes one with the woman's body as if it were part of her own body'.</i></p> <p><b>(Aitareya Upanishad 2:2)</b></p>

## Section 4: Religion and community cohesion

What: Equal rights	
Hinduism and equal rights for women in religion	
Why?	Hindu Teaching
<p><b>The traditional attitude</b></p> <p>Some Hindus believe that men and women have different roles and so cannot have equal rights. Men are the protectors of women and have the role of breadwinner and leader of the household. Women should look after the home and children, and care for the shrine in the home. Do not allow women to be priests or religious leaders.</p> <p>They have this attitude because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is the teachings of the shruti scriptures, which traditional Hindus regard as divinely inspired.</li> <li>• It is the teaching of the Law of Manu, which traditional Hindus believe are the laws that must be followed to fulfil your dharma and achieve moksha.</li> <li>• It is the tradition for the householder ashrama, which all Hindus must complete if they are to gain moksha.</li> <li>• It is part of Indian culture, which traditional Hindus regard as part of Hinduism.</li> </ul> <p><b>The modern attitude</b></p> <p><b>Some Hindus</b> (such as <b>Iskcon</b> and the <b>Virashaivas</b>) believe that women and men should have equal rights in both life and religion. They have women religious leaders.</p>	<p><i>'The father protects the woman in childhood, the husband protects her in youth, the children protect her in old age, a woman should never be independent'.</i></p> <p><b>(Laws of Manu)</b></p>

<p>They have this attitude because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They believe all souls are actually or potentially part of the divine and so are equal.</li> <li>• They believe that shruti scriptures cannot be taken literally and need interpreting in the light of modern life.</li> <li>• They believe the Laws of Manu were intended for a different time and society and do not apply to modern life.</li> <li>• They believe that there are other ways to gain moksha than following the traditional ashramas.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>What: Racial harmony</b></p>	
<p><b>Hinduism and racial harmony</b></p>	
<p><b>Why?</b></p>	<p><b>Hindu Teaching</b></p>
<p>All Hindus should try to promote racial harmony because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They believe Hindus believe that every soul is an actual or potential part of the divine (Brahman). If every soul has the potential to be part of the divine, then every soul must be of equal value, and if every soul is of equal value, then every person is of equal value.</li> <li>• The Indian Hindus have suffered from racist treatment when they were ruled by the Moghul, and then the British, Empires. This treatment has led Hindu leaders to work for racial harmony and justice. This was seen particularly in the work of Mohandas Gandhi who led the struggle for Indian independence based on the racial and ethnic groups in India working and living together as equals.</li> <li>• Although the majority of Hindus are from India, there are many different ethnic groups in India. All these groups are treated as equal by Hindus to follow the teachings of Gandhi.</li> </ul>	<p><i>'When the central reality of God is all-pervasive and religion creates no barriers between man and man, then the denial of freedom and equality to all human beings is not only politically unjust, but spiritually sinful'.</i></p> <p><b>(The Harijan Journal)</b></p>

- There are also many people from ethnic groups outside India who are converting to Hinduism who are all treated as equals by Indian Hindus.
- Hinduism is opposed to racism and racial discrimination in any form. Hindus work with many other groups in the United Kingdom to promote racial harmony.