

# Section 2 Religion: environmental and medical issues

### Topic 8.2.5 Hinduism and stewardship

Revised

Although many Hindus would not talk about being stewards of the Earth, all Hindus believe they have certain duties towards the Earth. Hindu beliefs about stewardship include the following:

- Respect for animal life – the fact that many Hindu gods have appeared as animals, and that people may have been animals in previous lives, means animals must be respected, and many Hindus are vegetarian.
- Respect for nature – trees and nature are very special because the last stage of life is to live in the forest to find union with God.

#### How Hindu teachings about stewardship affect attitudes to the environment

- The need to respect the eternal law of nature means that Hindus should try to reduce pollution and preserve resources.
- The appearance of the gods as animals means many Hindus believe they should protect animals and be vegetarian.
- Hindus should show stewardship by working to share the Earth's resources more fairly and to improve the standard of living in LEDCs.
- The belief in respect for life means Hindus should help the work of groups which try to reduce pollution and conserve resources.
- Although Hindus should have a great respect for the environment, some Hindus feel that humans have the right to use the Earth's resources in any way they think is right. There is a lot of argument in India about industry and the environment.

#### Evaluation of the teachings of Hinduism on stewardship

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Hinduism.

### Now test yourself

Tested

- 1 Why do Hindus respect animal life?
- 2 Why are trees and nature very special for Hindus?
- 3 What does the need to respect the eternal law of nature mean for Hindus?
- 4 How should Hindus show their stewardship of the Earth?

Answers at end

## Topic 8.2.8 Attitudes to infertility treatments in Hinduism

Revised 

Many Hindus accept IVF, AIH, AID and egg donation because:

- all Hindus are expected to have a family and technology can be used to bring this about
- the egg and sperm are from the husband and wife
- the discarded embryos had no soul transferred to them
- the Laws of Manu encourage infertile couples to adopt and so would have approved of infertility treatments.

Some Hindus do not allow AID, egg donation or surrogacy because:

- they believe caste is passed down through the parents
- they believe that once an embryo has been created, it is alive and should not be killed
- they see AID and egg donation as a form of adultery, which is banned by Hinduism.

### Evaluation of Hinduism and infertility treatments

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Hinduism.

### Now test yourself

Tested 

- 1 What does the fact that Hindus are expected to have families mean for their attitude to infertility treatments?
- 2 How do the Laws of Manu relate to infertility treatments?
- 3 How do attitudes to caste affect attitudes to AID, egg donation or surrogacy?
- 4 Why does the ban on adultery affect some Hindus, attitudes to infertility treatments?

### Answers at end

## Topic 8.2.11 Attitudes to transplant surgery in Hinduism

Revised

Most Hindus agree with transplant surgery and would carry donor cards because:

- the soul leaves the body on death, so what happens to the organs does not matter
- the soul is the important part of any individual, so any organs added to the body do not matter
- donating your organs to save lives will result in good karma and may lead to moksha.

Some Hindus are against any form of transplant surgery because:

- transplants break the law of karma; if organs are diseased, that is part of that person's karma

- taking an organ from someone else is doing violence to that person, which is against the teaching of ahimsa
- poor people will be tempted to sell their organs to provide money for the family.

### Evaluation of Hinduism and transplant surgery

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Hinduism.

### Now test yourself

Tested

- 1 Why do most Hindus think that what happens to the body's organs doesn't matter?
- 2 What do most Hindus believe is the most important part of any individual?
- 3 Why may donating organs to save life lead to moksha?
- 4 Why do some Hindus believe transplants break the law of karma?

### Answers at end

## Summary of Hinduism and environmental and medical issues

- Hindus believe they have a duty to show stewardship towards the Earth. The appearance of the gods as animals means that Hindus should respect and look after animals. The law of nature and respect for life mean that Hindus should reduce pollution and try for a fair sharing of resources. However, some Hindus believe the interests of humans should come first.
- Many Hindus allow IVF, AIH, AID and egg donation because Hindus need to have a family. Some Hindus do not allow AID, egg donation or surrogacy because caste is passed on by the parents.
- Most Hindus allow transplant surgery because they believe that the soul leaves the body at death, so the organs are not needed. Some Hindus do not allow transplant surgery because they think it is breaking the law of karma.

# Section 3 Religion: peace and conflict

## Topic 8.3.6 Attitudes to war in Hinduism

Revised

Although Hinduism is dedicated to peace, there are two different attitudes to war among Hindus.

**Some Hindus believe that violence in any form is wrong because:**

- the Hindu belief of ahimsa means non-violence
- killing people puts a person's soul further from moksha
- Gandhi's struggle for Indian independence from the British showed pacifism can work as a way of removing injustice
- modern methods of warfare are so terrible that they are bound to take innocent lives, which is against all the teachings of Hinduism.

**Many Hindus believe that it is right to fight in just wars** (wars fought in self-defence or to remove great injustice) because:

- the second Hindu caste is the warrior caste whose duty is to defend Hinduism
- the Gita says that Hindus must fight in just wars as killing people does not kill their souls
- there are many stories in the Hindu Scriptures of Hindu gods being involved in wars when they came to Earth
- the Laws of Manu set out strict rules about just wars, so they must be allowed for Hindus.

So Hindus have a similar problem to Christians. Most probably accept the need to fight just wars, but many Hindus are opposed to war in any form.

**Evaluation of Hinduism and attitudes to war**

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Hinduism.

### Now test yourself

Tested

- 1 What does ahimsa mean?
- 2 Why are modern methods of war against the teachings of Hinduism?
- 3 What is the duty of the second Hindu caste?
- 4 What would Hinduism consider to be a just war?

**Answers at end**

## Topic 8.3.8 Attitudes to bullying in Hinduism

Revised

Hindus are against all forms of bullying because:

- Hindu society is based on respect between the members of society; bullies have no respect for the people they bully and so do not understand Hindu society
- bullying is against the doctrine of ahimsa (non-violence) and so is sinful
- bullying is mistreating the divine essence, which is inside everyone; it will bring bad karma, which will prevent the bully from gaining moksha
- it is the duty of Hindus to protect the weak as this brings good karma, making it easier to gain moksha;

bullying is the exact opposite of this and so must be wrong

- all Hindus believe they should defend human rights but bullying denies the victim's human rights.

### Evaluation of Hinduism and attitudes to bullying

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Hinduism.

### Now test yourself

Tested

- 1 What is Hindu society based on?
- 2 Why will bullying bring bad karma?
- 3 What is the duty of Hindus?
- 4 What does bullying do to people's human rights?

Answers at end

## Topic 8.3.11 Forgiveness and reconciliation in Hinduism

Revised

Some Hindus do not believe in forgiveness and reconciliation because everything is a result of karma and people's karma cannot be changed.

Most Hindus believe in forgiveness and reconciliation because:

- in the Gunas, forgiveness is a quality of light which leads the soul to moksha
- the Upanishads teach that it is dangerous for the soul not to forgive
- many swamis believe that forgiveness is a part of moksha

- it is better for one's soul to forgive as unforgiving souls go backwards in samsara.

### Evaluation of Hindu teachings on forgiveness and reconciliation

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Hinduism.

### Now test yourself

Tested

- 1 Why do some Hindus not believe in forgiveness and reconciliation?
- 2 What do the Gunas say about forgiveness?
- 3 What do the Upanishads teach about forgiveness?
- 4 What do many swamis believe about forgiveness?

Answers at end

# Summary of Hinduism and peace and conflict

- All Hindus believe in peace, but some Hindus will not take part in any wars because they believe they should follow ahimsa (non-violence), while other Hindus think it is right to fight if attacked because this is taught in scriptures.
- Hindus are against bullying because it involves violence, which is against belief in ahimsa. It also brings bad karma, which will delay moksha. It is also denying the victim's human rights, which Hindus should protect.
- All Hindus believe they should try to bring reconciliation to conflicts to gain good karma. However, some Hindus think the law of cause and effect (karma) means no forgiveness; others believe that forgiving others is the way to moksha.

# Section 4 Religion: crime and punishment

## Topic 8.4.4 Why justice is important in Hinduism

Revised

Justice is important for Hindus because:

- in order to gain moksha, Hindus must perform dharma (religious, social and moral duties based on the idea of justice)
- most Hindus believe that to gain moksha they must try to promote justice
- the Hindu scriptures encourage Hindus to be concerned for others and to work for justice
- the Hindu belief in ahimsa (non-violence) also encourages justice because the rich treating the poor badly is a form of violence
- the great Hindu leader Mahatma Gandhi based his campaign for the independence of India from British rule on the Hindu idea of justice; he also developed the idea of sarvodaya (welfare for all) from the Hindu concept of justice
- Hindu gurus and swamis teach that people's souls are improved if they treat other people justly.

### Evaluation of why justice is important for Hindus

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Hinduism.

### Now test yourself

Tested

- 1 What are the dharma Hindus must perform to reach moksha?
- 2 How does belief in ahimsa encourage justice?
- 3 On what did Gandhi base his campaign for Indian independence?
- 4 Who teach that people's souls are improved if they treat other people justly?

### Answers at end

## Topic 8.4.7 Attitudes to capital punishment in Hinduism

Revised 

Most Hindus agree with capital punishment for murderers. They believe this because:

- the Vedas say that ahimsa does not apply to criminals
- the Laws of Manu say that a Hindu can kill someone to maintain social order
- the Vahara Purana says that a king can execute criminals to restore the correct dharma
- they believe capital punishment deters murderers and protects society.

Some Hindus do not believe in capital punishment because:

- they believe execution is killing, which gives bad karma and delays moksha

- they believe ahimsa means no violence to anyone, even murderers
- they accept the non-religious arguments against capital punishment.

### Evaluation of different attitudes to capital punishment in Hinduism

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Hinduism.

### Now test yourself

Tested 

- 1 What do the Vedas say does not apply to criminals?
- 2 What do the Laws of Manu say about capital punishment?
- 3 What says that a king can execute criminals to restore the correct dharma?
- 4 Why does the belief that execution is killing stop some Hindus from agreeing with capital punishment?

**Answers at end**

## Topic 8.4.11 Attitudes to drugs and alcohol in Hinduism

Revised 

Some Hindus do not allow drugs, tobacco or alcohol because:

- the smriti scriptures say drinking wine is one of the Five Great Sins
- it is said that Brahma and Krishna cursed wine because of its harmful effects
- the use of drugs, tobacco or alcohol may lead people away from God, making moksha impossible
- many Hindu gurus and swamis take a vow to refrain from drugs, tobacco and alcohol as they cloud the soul.

In the Hindu tantric tradition, drugs, tobacco and alcohol are allowed in moderation because:

- there are tantric rituals which use wine

- the joy that one can experience from alcohol is used as an aid to the remembrance of the joy of communing with God
- feminine aspects of God are sometimes shown enjoying the intoxication of wine.

However, the tantric tradition condemns drunkenness as it may lead to the absence of the remembrance of God.

### Evaluation of attitudes to drugs and alcohol in Hinduism

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Hinduism.

### Now test yourself

Tested 

- 1 What do the smriti scriptures say about drinking wine?
- 2 Why do many Hindu gurus and swamis take a vow to refrain from drugs, tobacco and alcohol?
- 3 In which Hindu tradition are drugs, tobacco and alcohol allowed in moderation?
- 4 What is the joy that one can experience from alcohol used as an aid for?

**Answers at end**

# Summary of Hinduism and crime and punishment

- Justice is important for Hindus because it is the basis of beliefs in dharma and samsara. Many Hindus believe they should work for justice because this cleans their soul so they can gain moksha.
- Most Hindus believe capital punishment should be used for murderers because that is the teaching of the Laws of Manu. Some Hindus disagree with capital punishment because of the teachings of ahimsa and karma and non-religious arguments.
- Some Hindus do not allow the use of drugs, tobacco or alcohol because of the teachings of the scriptures and the danger that they may make it impossible to gain moksha. Other Hindus allow them in moderation because they help in remembering God, and some goddesses are shown drinking wine.

# Answers to Now test yourself

## Unit 8

### Topic 8.2.5 Stewardship

- 1 Because many Hindu gods have appeared as animals
- 2 Because the last stage of life is to live in the forest to find union with God
- 3 They should try to reduce pollution and preserve resources
- 4 By working to share the Earth's resources more fairly and to improve the standard of living in LEDCs

### Topic 8.2.8 Infertility treatments

- 1 They believe it is right to use technology to have children
- 2 They encourage infertile couples to adopt and so would have approved of infertility treatments
- 3 They lead to forbidding them because caste is passed down through parents
- 4 It leads to them banning AID, egg donation and surrogacy because they are considered a form of adultery

### Topic 8.2.11 Transplant surgery

- 1 Because the soul leaves the body at death
- 2 The soul
- 3 Because it will be good karma
- 4 Because if organs are diseased, that is part of that person's karma

### Topic 8.3.6 Attitudes to war

- 1 Non-violence
- 2 Because they are so terrible that they are bound to take innocent lives
- 3 To defend Hinduism
- 4 A war fought in self-defence or to remove great injustice

### Topic 8.3.8 Attitudes to bullying

- 1 Respect between the members of society
- 2 Because it mistreats the divine essence which is inside everyone
- 3 To protect the weak as this brings good karma
- 4 Denies the victim's human rights

### Topic 8.3.11 Teachings on forgiveness and reconciliation

- 1 Because everything is a result of karma and people's karma cannot be changed
- 2 Forgiveness is a quality of light which leads the soul to moksha
- 3 That it is dangerous for the soul not to forgive
- 4 That forgiveness is a part of moksha

### Topic 8.4.4 Why justice is important

- 1 Religious, social and moral duties based on the idea of justice
- 2 Because the rich treating the poor badly is a form of violence
- 3 The Hindu idea of justice
- 4 Hindu gurus and swamis

### Topic 8.4.7 Different attitudes to capital punishment

- 1 Ahimsa
2. That a Hindu can kill someone to maintain social order
- 3 The Vahara Purana
- 4 Because killing gives bad karma and delays moksha

### Topic 8.4.11 Attitudes to drugs and alcohol

- 1 It is one of the Five Great Sins
- 2 Because drugs, tobacco and alcohol cloud the soul
- 3 The tantric tradition
- 4 The remembrance of the joy of communing with God