

Spring 2 / Summer 1 What do I need to know about Philosophy?

Philosophy literally means 'love of wisdom'. It is the term used to describe what we do when we think about ultimate questions - questions which have deep meaning or importance, but which do not have obvious, straightforward answers that are easy to find. This means there are often many different answers given to these questions. People use logical thinking and evidence to help them to come to a conclusion about these questions. In this topic, we have thought about religious belief, the problem of evil and suffering and life after death.

The Holocaust

What was the Holocaust?

The Holocaust is the name given to the mass murder of Jews and other groups such as Roma, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses and the disabled by the Nazis during the 1930s and 1940s. Altogether, more than 11 million men, women and children were systematically persecuted, imprisoned, mistreated and killed. By the early 1940s, the main method used was to forcibly take people to concentration camps where they would either be killed straight away or would be used as slave labour until they either died of starvation and mistreatment or were later killed. One of the main ways of killing people in these camps was with poisoned gas.



- Persecution of the Jews**
- April 1933 – Hitler organises a one-day boycott of Jewish shops and businesses
 - Jews banned from civil service
 - Nuremberg Laws 1935
 - Marriages between Germans and Jews were forbidden
 - Relations between Jews and Germans outside marriage were forbidden
 - Jews were not to employ Germans under the age of 45
 - Jews were deprived of citizenship.
 - 1936 – Jews could not vote
 - Wear Star of David.
 - 1938 – Jews barred from Law, Medicine and Business



Paul's journey - the story of the experience of one Jewish boy, Paul Oppenheimer, during the Holocaust.

- Paul was a young boy when his family left Germany to escape the persecution of Jews there. They settled in Holland where they thought they would be safe, but when Germany invaded Holland in 1940 life became difficult and dangerous.
- Paul's family were sent to Westerbork camp and soon after, his grandparents were taken from there to Sobibor camp, where they were killed.
- Paul was sent with his parents, brother and sister to Bergen Belsen camp, where conditions were among the worst of all the camps. Sadly Paul's parents both died of starvation and disease at the camp. Paul and Rudi lost contact with their sister Eve as she was kept with the women and young children in a different part of the camp.
- After the war, the three children were reunited and were allowed to come to London to live with their aunt and uncle.
- As adults, both Paul and Rudi have worked to share their experiences in order to make as many people aware of the dreadful things that happened in the Holocaust and to ensure that we never forget what happened so we can make sure that nothing like this ever happens again.



The problem of evil and suffering - It does not make sense to believe in God because there is too much evil and suffering in the world

What are the two types of evil?	
Natural	Moral
Things done by nature which cause suffering	Things done by people which cause suffering
Earthquakes Tornadoes Floods Volcanoes Disease	Murder Bullying Discrimination War The Holocaust

What is God believed to be like?

Omnipotent - all-powerful. The Bible says 'Nothing is impossible with God'.

Omnibenevolent - all-loving and good. The Bible says 'God is love.'

Omniscient - all-knowing and all-seeing. The Bible says 'Nothing in all Creation is hidden from God's sight.'

Creator - made the world and everything in it. The Bible says 'So God made humankind in his image.'

Why is evil and suffering a problem for religious believers?

- If God has the power to do anything, he could stop it.
- If God loves us, he would want to stop it.
- If God knows everything, he would know what is going to happen and could prevent it.
- If God made the world and everything in it, he is responsible for putting suffering into the world.
- Therefore if he is real, we would not suffer.

How do religious people get round the problem?

- Moral evil is caused by human choices, not by God. He cannot control our choices because we have free will.
- Suffering is a test. It helps God to see if we can cope with it and still be good people and believe in him.
- The suffering of others gives us a chance to be good and help people.

Beliefs about life after death

Life after death is the belief that when our bodies die, our soul lives on in another form, either on the Earth or in another place. Where we end up depends on how good we have been.

Christian beliefs

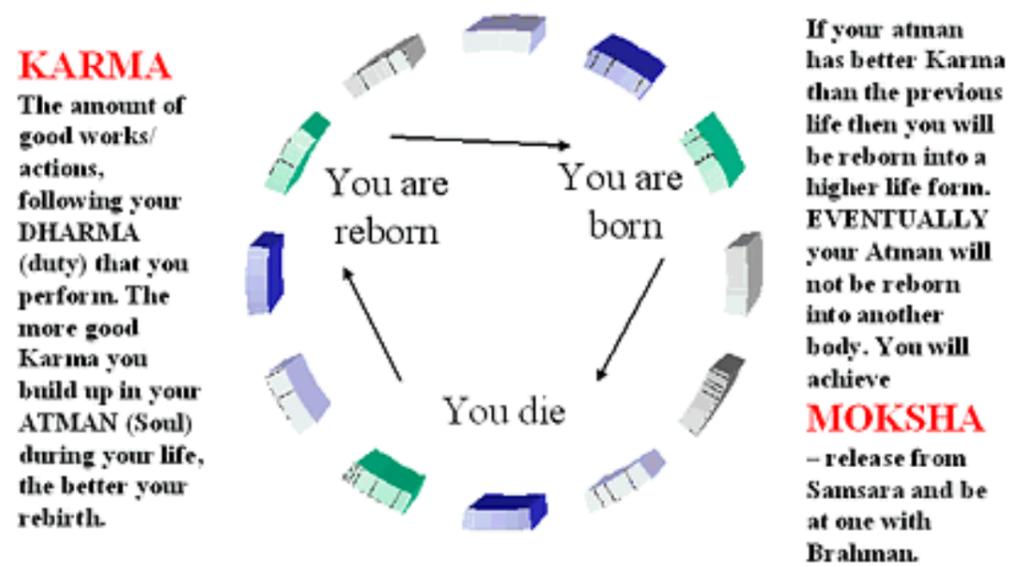
- After we die, we are judged by God according to how good we have been and how much we have believed in him.
- The souls of good people will go to Heaven, which is a place of peace and happiness where we are with God.
- The souls of bad people will go to Hell, where we will be punished by not being with God.
- We have just one life on Earth but Heaven and Hell are **eternal** (go on forever)

Why do they believe this?

- The Bible teaches about it. Heaven is described as a place where there will be 'no more tears' and Hell is described as a place of 'eternal fire'.
- Jesus told his followers they will be judged on whether they have helped people in need and he said 'The only way to the Father is through me', meaning we have to believe in Jesus to get to be with God in the next life.

Hindu beliefs Hindus believe in reincarnation, which means after we die, our soul (**atman**) is born into another body. This happens many times until we are good enough to leave the world of **samsara** on Earth and go to be with Brahman (God). This is called **moksha**. Our next life on Earth is influenced by our thoughts, words and actions in our present life. We are reborn higher if we follow our duty and lower if we do not. This is called the law of **karma**.

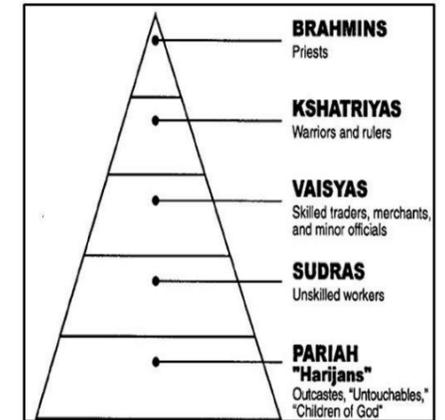
The Law Of Samsara - Reincarnation



A continual cycle of birth-death-rebirth

Hindu beliefs continued...

B) After death, our soul is **reincarnated** into a new earthly body, based on your **karma**.
 C) Good actions = good karma = you will move up the **caste system** in your next life
 Bad actions = bad karma = you will move down the **caste system** in your next life
 The **caste system** is a strict social hierarchy in India created by the invading Aryans.



The Hindu Caste System

Is there life after death?

Yes because

- The Bible tells us about it and we should trust the Bible because it comes from God.
- Christians believe Jesus was resurrected which shows that there is life after death.
- There is evidence for reincarnation as many people have remembered past lives, like Cameron in 'The Boy who lived before.'
- Sometimes when people die and are brought back to life they can remember things that were said and done while they were 'dead'. This suggests we have a soul that can live when our body has died.

No because

There is no proof that it happens.
 If there is a Heaven and Hell, no one has found where it is.
 Stories about remembering past lives or near death experiences could be made up.
 There is no real evidence that we have a soul, so when our bodies die, there is nothing that can live on.

Key terms

atman	Hindu name for the soul	Holocaust	The mass murder of Jews and other groups by the Nazis
Concentration camp	Places where the Nazis sent groups of people such as Jews, Roma, Jehovah's Witnesses and homosexuals to be imprisoned and killed	judgement	Christian belief that God will judge our beliefs and actions and decide if we go to Heaven or Hell after we die
dharma	Hindu name for the duty we must follow in our present life on Earth	karma	Hindu belief that our thoughts, words and actions have consequences that influence our next life on Earth
genocide	The attempt to wipe out an entire race of people	moksha	Hindu name for release from rebirth when we will be with Brahman (God)
Heaven	The place where Christians believe good people will go after they die	reincarnation	Hindu belief that our souls are reborn in a new body after we die
Hell	The place where Christians believe bad people will go after they die	samsara	Hindu name for life on Earth

