

## Further Reading

## OVERVIEW OF HRE

Overview of Hindu Religious Education (HRE) focuses on understanding the nature of the divine, the self, and the universe. Central themes in Hindu religious education include moral duties (dharma), devotion (bhakti), meditation (yoga), and liberation (moksha). Relevance of Comparative Religious Studies: Exploring similarities and differences in core values across religions can promote understanding and peace. Themes like the Golden Rule, non-violence, forgiveness, and charity are central to ethical teachings across many faiths.

**1. The Golden Rule: “Treat others as you wish to be treated”**

The Golden Rule is a common ethical principle in many religions, emphasizing reciprocity and empathy.

**a. Sanatan/Vedic:**

- The principle is embodied in the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita.
- Key verse: “Do not do unto others what would cause pain if done to you.” (Mahabharata, Anusasana Parva)
- This teaching encourages empathy, understanding, and compassionate actions toward all beings.

**b. Christianity:**

- In the Bible, particularly in the Gospel of Matthew 7:12: “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.”
- It’s central to Jesus’ teachings about loving one’s neighbor and promoting peaceful coexistence.

**c. Islam:**

- The Quran (4:36) instructs: “Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the neighbor who is near, the neighbor who is a stranger, the companion by your side...”
- The Hadith also expresses a similar sentiment: “None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself.” (Sahih Muslim)

**2. Non-Violence (Ahimsa)**

The concept of non-violence is pivotal in all faiths (Sanatan/Vedic, Jain, Buddhist and Sikh) in HRE, as well as in many other religious traditions. It calls for refraining from harming any living being, whether physically, mentally, or emotionally.

**d. HRE Faiths:**

- Ahimsa (non-violence) is a fundamental principle in all the four faiths in HRE. It is advocated by the Yogic traditions and is emphasized in texts like the Bhagavad Gita, where the idea of karma is closely related to actions that are non-violent and righteous, Kalpasutra, Dhammapada and Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji.
- Famous practitioners of ahimsa: Mahatma Gandhi popularized the concept as a social and political tool for non-violent resistance.

**e. Christianity:**

- Non-violence is also advocated in Christianity, although it’s understood within the broader context of peace and forgiveness. Jesus taught turning the other cheek (Matthew 5:39) and the importance of loving one’s enemies.

### 3. Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a vital aspect of healing and peace in many religious traditions. It's often seen as an antidote to anger and resentment.

#### f. ● Faiths in HRE:

- Forgiveness is a virtue in the Bhagavad Gita and Ramayana, Kalpasutra, Dhammapada and Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji where the concept of Kshama (forgiveness) is emphasized.
- In the Gita, Krishna teaches that forgiveness is a form of spiritual strength.
- Forgiving others is also seen as essential for personal liberation (moksha).

#### g. ● Christianity:

- Forgiveness is central to Christian teachings, as seen in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:14-15), where he says, "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."
- The Lord's Prayer also highlights forgiveness: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."

#### h. ● Islam:

- Forgiveness is highly valued in Islam. The Quran mentions forgiveness multiple times, particularly in 2:263: "A kind word and forgiveness is better than charity followed by injury."
- The Hadith encourages forgiving others as a means of pleasing God: "Whoever forgives, Allah will forgive him."

### 4. Charity

Charity is considered one of the highest virtues in many faiths, often associated with selfless giving, helping the less fortunate, and serving humanity.

#### i. ● Faiths in HRE:

- Dana (charity) is a significant aspect of Indian culture and is emphasized in various religious texts, such as the Bhagavad Gita, Kalpasutra, Dhammapada and Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji.
- The Gita (17:20) teaches: "Charity should be given in the proper place, to the right person, and at the right time."
- Faiths in HRE teach the importance of giving selflessly, without expecting anything in return, to help elevate one's spiritual state.

#### j. ● Christianity:

- Charity is a core Christian principle. Jesus often spoke about helping the poor and needy, as in the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37).
- The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:1-4) teaches: "When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."
- Christians are urged to practice charity as an expression of God's love.

#### k. ● Islam:

- Zakat is one of the Five Pillars of Islam and requires Muslims to give a portion of their wealth to the needy.
- The Quran emphasizes charity in many verses, such as 2:177: "Righteousness is in giving charity to those in need, supporting the orphans, and aiding the widows."
- Muslims are encouraged to give charity out of compassion and for the sake of Allah.