




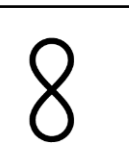



Term	Meaning	Picture
Sacred	Something holy and connected to God	
Sanctity of life	The belief human life is valuable in itself	
Imago Dei	The idea humans are made in God's image	
Parable	A simple story used to teach a moral lesson	
Soul	Someone's spiritual part that connects to God	
Infinite	To be never-ending or limitless	
Quality of life	The extent to which life is meaningful & pleasurable	

Y9 T5-6: Sanctity of Life

Starting Facts: The Sanctity of Life

- Jews & Christians believe that humans are in God's 'own image' (Genesis 1:27), so life is sacred.
- Jews believe the preservation of human life can over-rule any other religious rules (pikuach nefesh).
- Hindus believe God 'look(s) upon all creatures equally' (9.29), so have a principle of Ahimsa: non-violence to all.

'So God created mankind in His own image' - Genesis 1:27

The Sanctity of Life: Jesus

- Jesus taught the Parable of the Good Samaritan, in which a Samaritan helps a Jew (his society's enemy), suggesting all lives should be valued
- This shapes Christian attitudes to medical ethics.

The Sanctity of Life: Islam

- Muslims believe all life is given by Allah, so is only Allah's to take away in line with his predestined plans.

'Life is infinitely valuable, which shapes views on abortion, euthanasia & medics.'

'And do not kill the soul which God has forbidden except by [legal] right.' - Qur'an 6:151

"Whoever kills a soul... it is as if he had slain mankind entirely." - Qur'an 5:32

The Sanctity of Life vs Quality of Life

- Many philosophers believe the quality of life is more important than the sanctity of life, so the value of life can depend on one's situation, such as health or wealth.

'We should care more about those we can save all over the world than we do' - Nigel Warburton on Peter Singer

In Summary

The sanctity of life is belief human life is valuable in itself.








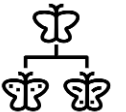
Many religions teach this, including:

- Christianity, as all humans are made 'in [God's] own image' and Jesus taught that everyone is your neighbour.
- Islam, as it teaches Allah gave everyone life, so only he can take it away

Many agnostic & atheist philosophers believe in the quality of life instead, which says the value of life depends on the quality of life.

Some ethical situations where the sanctity of life versus the quality of life argument can be seen includes:

- Euthanasia, which ends the life of someone suffering from a terminal illness.
- Abortion, which terminates a pregnancy
- Stem cell research, which uses early human embryos for scientific tests
- Animal testing, which uses animals for scientific tests

Term	Meaning	Picture
Euthanasia	Allowing or causing a seriously ill person to die	
Terminal illness	An illness or condition that will cause someone to die	
Abortion	The ending of a pregnancy, so it does not cause child to be born	
Viability	When a foetus can survive outside the mother's uterus	
Embryo research	The study of early human embryos to combat disease	
Stem cells	Basic human cells that develop into advanced cells	
Utilitarianism	Ethical theory: the most good for the most people	
Speciesism	The idea that some species are preferred over others	

The Right to Die?

- Euthanasia is illegal in the UK, in spite of campaigns for the law to be changed
- Some philosopher support the 'right to die' if someone has a poor quality of life, such as Peter Singer, or is suffering
- Others fear a 'slippery slope', where the vulnerable could be persuaded, while it ignores the sanctity of life

'We believe that the current law against assisted dying disregards the needs and autonomy of patients' - Humanists UK

'it is not [possible] for one to die except by permission of Allah at a decree determined' - Qur'an 3:145

'You shall not murder' - Exodus 20:13

The Right to Choose?

- Abortion has been legal in the UK since 1967, up to 24 weeks (longer if the child is disabled), but is strongly debated..
- Pro-choice groups, such as many humanists, argue that the birth could lower the quality of the child or mother's life
- Pro-life groups, such as Catholics, based their arguments on the sanctity of life and that the life of a child starts at conception. Protestants and Muslims both believe life is sacred, but believe that it is sometimes permissible.

Abortion is 'women's sexual and reproductive right' - Humanists UK

'And do not kill your children for fear of poverty.... their killing is ever a great sin.' - Qur'an 17:31

The Right to Experiment?

- Researchers take stem cells from 3-5 day old embryos, which some criticise as preventing human life from developing.
- Catholics believe life starts at conception, whereas Muslims believe it is around 16 weeks, when the foetus moves

'According to Muslim beliefs, the research should be considered ethical and permissible by most followers, as the embryo is destroyed long before it has developed into what is considered an individual with rights - Yara Contijoch

The Rights of Animals?

- Peter Singer coined the term 'speciesism' to criticise the idea humans are superior to animals
- Some utilitarians argue that animal testing is moral, but it assumes animal lives are not as valuable as human lives.

"The question is not, 'can they reason?' nor, 'can they talk?' but 'can they suffer?'" - Jeremy Bentham