



Hope For Hounslow

A Theological Mapping of Hounslow

Location

Hounslow is the principle town of the London borough of Hounslow. Located 12 miles to the west of Westminster and bordering the eastern side of Heathrow airport, Hounslow is the international gateway to London.

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Demographics

Hounslow town has a population of 53,000 according to the 2011 census and is ethnically and religiously diverse. Hounslow Central, the immediate area of the church plant, is almost 70% non-English in ethnicity and over 50% either Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh in religion.

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Socio-economics

Hounslow is currently seeing much development and anticipates a growth in population. Upon the completion of the Hounslow High Street Quarter, over 500 new flats and a new cinema will be added. This development could help to improve the desirability of the area, which was rated the second worst place to live in London by Rightmove.

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Religious Beliefs

The majority religions of Hounslow are those of South Asia: Islam (17%), Hinduism (26%), and Sikhism (9%).

Just 34% of the population was born in England, so while there is a sizable British Asian community, the majority were born abroad.

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Religious Beliefs

These four belief systems dominate in Hounslow:

- Traditional Islam
- Traditional Hinduism
- Traditional Sikhism
- Secularism

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Primary Motivations in Life

Maintaining and increasing one's Izzat (honour) is the primary motivating pursuit of those from traditional religions. Izzat functions as social currency in communal societies and can be gained or lost. It is accumulated for social groups, primarily the extended family but can extend to the broader religious community.

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Primary Motivation (Traditional Religions)

Izzat is gained through religious devotion and service, such as regular prayers (Islam), sewa/service (Sikhism), and pooja/worship (Hinduism). It is also gained through career and educational achievement, accumulation of wealth, and through respectable behaviour and hospitality.

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Primary Motivation (Traditional Religions)

Izzat is maintained through sexual purity and by hiding or atoning for shameful behaviour. Often, actions are only considered to be sinful if they become known to the community, resulting in shame. When shame happens, it is dealt with by covering/atoning for it by counting the shameful person as dead.

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Primary Motivation (Traditional Religions)

Izzat is lost through sexual immorality, loss of public status, inappropriate social behaviour, and lack of hospitality. The mechanism by which one loses izzat is gossip, which functions as a regulatory device to keep anyone's izzat from getting too high.

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Primary Motivation (British Asian)

For British born Asians, izzat still plays an important motivating role. However, many British Asians are now choosing lifestyles which clash with their more traditional parents, indicating that izzat is less important as one becomes more British.

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Primary Motivation (British Asian)

Replacing izzat as the place of primary motivation for British Asians is the secular motivation of self-expression. Secularism urges the individual (not religion or family) to determine one's life and express that regardless of what others may think.

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Primary Motivation (British Asian)

While the pursuit of wealth and professional advancement will be shared desires in both Traditional and British Asians, religious devotion, sexual purity, modest dress, and hospitality will be different and determined by the individual rather than the Asian community (although ironically individualism is really a different community)

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Cultural Loves (Traditional Asians)

Asians love:

- Bollywood
- IPL
- Mum's cooking
- Punjabi suits and Sarees

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Cultural Loves (British Asians)

British Asians love:

- Bollywood & Hollywood
- IPL & PL
- Mum's cooking & McDonalds
- Western fashion (except at weddings)

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Defeater Beliefs

There are many defeater beliefs amongst Asians but they can be reduced to how truth is determined. In this light, there are two categories:

- You are Wrong
- We are Right

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“You are Wrong” Defeater Beliefs

Muslims and Modernist British Asians take this approach. They believe in objective truth and that they know it (and we don't!). They like to discuss truth claims and for this reason are easy to engage with the gospel.

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“You are Wrong” Defeater Beliefs

Muslims have three common defeater beliefs:

- The Bible has been changed
- Jesus isn't God
- God is not a Trinity

These are interconnected but can be reduced to the one that the Bible has been changed.

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“You are Wrong” Defeater Beliefs

Modernist British Asians also doubt the authority of the Bible, depending on rationalism rather than revelation as the only way to determine truth.

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"We are Right" Defeater Beliefs

Hindus, Sikhs, and Post-modern British Asians take this approach. They believe truth is subjective and that each one's chosen path is correct for them and/or their tribe. They can be reluctant to discuss spiritual matters because conversion is viewed as a betrayal to your tribe/yourself and thus seen as divisive.

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"We are Right" Defeater Beliefs

Hindus and Sikhs hold to the defeater belief that all religions are fundamentally the same.

Post-modern British Asians hold to the defeater belief that your religion is true for you.