

Year 8 Philosophy and Ethics Knowledge Organiser: Life after death

Why do some atheists and agnostics believe in life after death?



Theist- Someone who believes in God.



Atheist- Someone who does not believe in God.



Agnostic- Someone who is unsure if God exists.



Life after death- The belief that something happens when you die.

What do atheists and agnostics believe happens when you die?

- Go to heaven or hell
- Get reincarnated
- Become a ghost

Why do atheists and agnostics believe in life after death?

- **Ghosts-** believed to be the souls of the dead on Earth.
- **Near-death experiences-** they have a vision of life after this one.
- Some people can remember **past lives** (reincarnation).
- Gives them hope.
- **Mediums-** some people claim to communicate with the dead.

Christian beliefs about life after death



Immortality of the soul- The idea that the soul lives on when the body dies.



Parable- A story from the Bible with a meaning attached to it.



Day of Judgement- At the end of this world, God will judge every person on how they have lived their life and decide if they go to heaven or hell.

What do Christians believe happens when you die?

- The soul lives on in the afterlife (it is immortal)- it is resurrected.
- You go to heaven (an eternity with God; a paradise).
- You go to hell (an eternity without God; often seen as a place of eternal fire with pain and suffering).

Why do Christians believe in life after death?

- **Jesus' Resurrection-** Jesus rose from the dead after his crucifixion, showing there is life after death. Jesus said: 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies' (John 11:25)
- It gives their lives meaning and purpose.
- Parables like The Parable of the Sheep and Goats (Matthew 25: 31-46) say there is life after death. It teaches that when you die, God will judge you. Like a farmer separating his sheep from his goats, God will divide people into two groups: those who go to Heaven, and those who go to Hell.

Buddhist beliefs about life after death



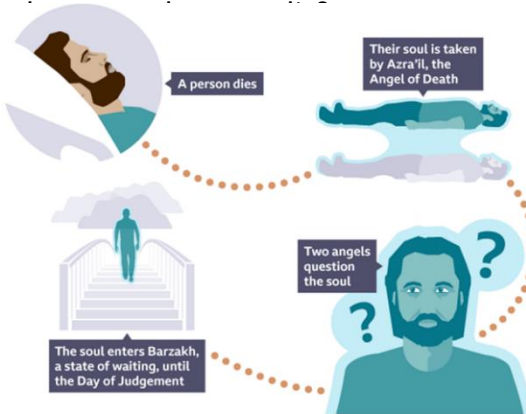
- Buddhists seek to overcome suffering and achieve enlightenment (stop being reincarnated and gain knowledge of the truth of life). They believe in **dependent arising** (everything depends on certain conditions).
- Believe that death is a process (Buddhists believe in **Anicca-** the idea that nothing ever stays the same). They don't believe in souls because of **Anatta** (no fixed self or soul). The Buddha taught that humans are born an infinite number of times until they are enlightened and achieve **Nirvana/ Enlightenment** (freedom from the Samsara Cycle). Like Hindus and Sikhs, Buddhists believe that you are reincarnated depending on your **kamma (karma)**. 'Long is the cycle of birth and death to the fool who does not know the true path' (The Dhammapada).
- You can be reborn into 6 realms. The best is the human realm, as you can reach enlightenment more easily. For Theravada Buddhists, enlightenment is becoming an Arhat (perfected person). For Mahayana Buddhists, it is becoming a Bodhisattva (but stay in the Samsara Cycle to help others).

Muslims beliefs about life after death



- 🔑 **Akhirah**- Everlasting life after death. Muslims believe that no soul may die except with God's permission at a predestined time (Qur'an 3:145).
- 🔑 **Resurrection**- Rising from the dead.
- 🔑 **Jannah**- heaven; being in eternal happiness with Allah; paradise: 'Gardens of pleasure' (Qur'an 31:8).
- 🔑 **Jahannam**- hell; total separation from Allah: "...scorching wind and scalding water in the shadow of black smoke" (Qur'an 56:42-44).

What do Muslims believe



Why do Muslims believe in life after death?

1. Day of Judgement (Yawm ad-Din)- the present world will be totally transformed into a new one and Allah will judge everyone on their actions: '[It will be] the Day when no soul shall have power [to do] aught [anything] for another' (Qur'an 82:19).
2. The Qur'an says so, and this is the word of Allah.
3. It gives their life meaning and purpose- avoid sin.

Jewish beliefs about life after death



- 🔑 **Gan Eden**- paradise.
- 🔑 **Gehenna**- hell.

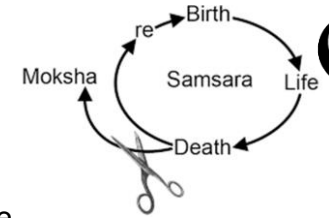
Many Jewish people believe humans have a soul which will one day return to Yahweh (God). They believe in resurrection: in the Book of Daniel 12:2, it says 'many of those who sleep in the dusty earth will awaken: these for everlasting life and these for shame'.

There is no clear teaching about life after death in Jewish scripture so Jewish people focus on living e.g. 'L'Chaim' ('to life') when they toast. Birthday cards say: 'May you live to be 120'.

Dharmic (Hindu and Sikh) beliefs about life after death



- 🔑 **Reincarnation**- The belief that the soul is reborn.
- 🔑 **Samsara Cycle**- The cycle of birth, death and rebirth.
- 🔑 **Atman/Atma**- Soul.
- 🔑 **Moksha/Mukti**- Freedom from the Samsara Cycle.
- 🔑 **Karma**- The belief that every action has a consequence.



What do Hindus and Sikhs believe happens when you die?

- Your soul is reincarnated into a new body depending on your karma from your previous life: 'As a person casts off worn-out clothes and puts on new ones, so does the atman cast off worn out bodies and enter new ones' (Bhagavad Gita 2:22).
- If you were good, you get good karma, and a better rebirth (e.g. human or a priest). If not, you get a bad rebirth (e.g. a plant or animal).
- Your soul can be reincarnated 1000's of times.
- The aim is to leave the Samsara Cycle and be at one with God (for Hindus, this is Brahman, for Sikhs, this is Waheguru): 'Even as water becomes one with water, fire with fire, and air with air, so the atman becomes one with the Infinite Atman (Brahman) and thus attains final freedom' (Maitri Upanishad 6.24).
- Hindus believe that you may enter swarg (a heavenly realm) or narak (a hellish realm) for a short time before your soul is reincarnated.

Why don't some people believe in life after death?



- 🔑 **A 'none'**- someone who does not follow any religion.
- 🔑 **Spiritual but not religious (SBNR)**- might believe in a higher power but choose not to follow a religion. Pick beliefs from different religions but don't follow the religion.
- 🔑 **Humanism**- an atheist who believes that science and reason should guide how we live.

Do not believe in life after death as: it's just a belief, no evidence, goes against common sense, just wishful thinking.

Humanists believe you live on through the works you do and in the memories of others.