

# SUBJECT: Religious Education

## UNIT: Year 9 – Life after death



### Reasons for beliefs in life after death

- ✓ Believing that death is not the end can be comforting for people.
- ✓ A promise of reward for good people.
- ✓ A punishment for those who have committed evil deeds.
- ✓ The idea of reuniting with loved ones who have passed away.

### Christian differences

#### Catholic beliefs –

- When someone dies it's only their physical body that stops living, the soul may go to Heaven or Purgatory.
- Purgatory is where the souls with unforgiven sins will go, so that they can be purified and reach Heaven.
- Catholics believe in death they will be judged based on how well they followed God's teachings.
- Their soul then goes to Heaven, Purgatory or Hell.

#### Protestant beliefs –

- Do not believe in Purgatory. Some believe there is no such place as Hell, only levels of Heaven.
- Some Evangelical Protestants believe in the resurrection of the body and the idea that everyone will be raised on the **Day of Judgement** to be judged by God.
- Liberal Protestants believe that the soul lives on eternally after death in a spirit world. They believe that the soul's afterlife will depend on how the person lived their physical life.

### Religious Vs Non-religious beliefs

Buddhists beliefs in life after death - Buddhists believe in life after death because the Buddha taught that human beings are each born an infinite number of times, unless they achieve Nirvana. The Buddha taught his disciples not to fear death. This has been interpreted by Buddhists as suggesting that if they live well, their rebirth will be good.

Sikhs believe that life is a cycle of **birth, death and rebirth**. This is known as the cycle of samsara. Sikhism teaches that all beings, including animals and humans, have a soul, known as the atma and are part of the cycle of reincarnation.

Sikhs believe that:

- The atma is given to a being by Waheguru. It is also recognised as the divine spark, which is a part of Waheguru within them.
- At death, the atmas of both humans and animals are reborn into a new body as part of the cycle of rebirth. The body that the atma is born into is determined by the karma gained in its previous life.
- The highest possible being on Earth is a human.
- The cycle of samsara repeats itself until the atma has been liberated from the pattern and is reunited with Waheguru in mukti.

Humanists have no belief in an afterlife, and so they focus on seeking happiness in this life. They rely on science for the answers to questions such as creation, and base their moral and ethical decision-making on reason, empathy and compassion for others.