

# What happens after we die?

A Muslim Perspective

# The Journey of Life and Death, scheme on Wiltshire Rightchoice Website

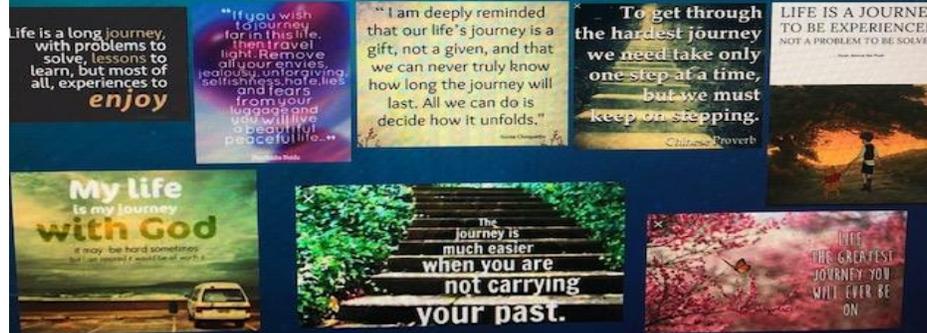
## THE JOURNEY OF LIFE AND DEATH

YEAR 6 UNIT OF WORK

BY HELEN COOKE

### LESSON 1 – WHY IS LIFE DESCRIBED AS A JOURNEY?

- introduce the topic and discuss why life can be seen as a journey, use some famous quotations/sayings (there are hundreds on the internet)
- What do these sayings mean? Class or group discussions (you could have them printed on large sheets on tables that children could write around)



### LESSON 6 – WHAT HAPPENS AFTER WE DIE?

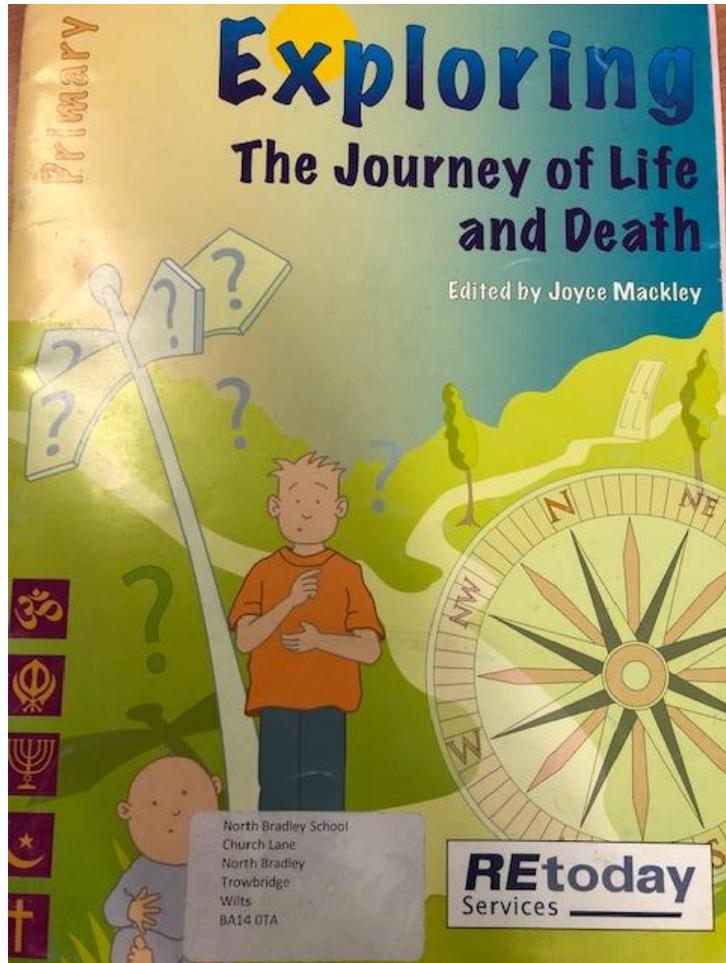
- Read the children the book Heaven by Nicholas Allan (warning this book is sad but also lovely!)
- Give the children some speech bubbles cut out of paper and ask them to write a question for Lily. Stick all the speech bubbles on the board with blue tack or in a floor book. Then invite children to try and answer each others questions.
- Then introduce the idea of soul. Invite the children to discuss their understanding of this with their buddies.
- Task – ask the pupils to divide an A4 sheet of paper in half. Choose a friend to write on one half of the paper lots of things about you (good and bad!). Draw a portrait of yourself on the other half (very quickly – not a masterpiece)
- Discuss as a class the idea that when we die our bodies wear out (mostly).
- Ask the children to fold back the side showing their portrait so only the half displaying their characteristics is showing. By just looking at these can they draw a picture of their soul? Ask them questions like: why have you chosen those colours? How have you represented your characteristics?
- Plenary – Discuss how Buddhists, Sikhs and Hindus believe in a cycle of birth, life and rebirth (reincarnation) and how the ultimate aim is to be freed from this cycle and away from the material world. Discuss the important role of how a person lives their life, plays in this cycle.
- Compare this to the Christian belief of life after death. Mention the part in the Heaven book where the little girl gets a new puppy and she tries to make its life like doggy heaven. Liken this to the Christian idea that

### LESSON 7 – WHAT HAPPENS AFTER WE DIE?

- Introduction – invite the children to write big questions about death. Record on whiteboards or in a floor book. (be prepared for things like: What is hell? How do we know this is true? etc) Introduce the Muslim idea of barzakh (a barrier between the physical and spiritual world, where your soul waits for judgement day). After this Muslims believe the dead will be restored to their bodies.
- Introduce the idea of judgement - ask the question – what do you think you would need to do to get in to heaven? Write these ideas down. Give each action a point score depending on its importance e.g. always be kind has a score of 10. Look at the Ancient Egyptian idea of judgement scales, there is a great PowerPoint explaining this on the Primary Resources website.
- Contrast this with the Hindu idea of 'moksha', where believers are always trying to have a better next life, a bit like working your way up a ladder. What sort of things might move people further up the ladder?
- Also mention the humanist view of life ending and that nothing further exists.
- Task: if you were given the opportunity to come back to life as something else (reincarnation), what would that be? Draw a picture and explain why you have chosen that thing. Write a list of things you would do in your life to make sure this happened.
- Plenary – let the children share their ideas, they love this!

PERHAPS THEY ARE NOT STARS  
BUT RATHER OPENINGS IN  
HEAVEN  
WHERE THE LOVE OF OUR LOST  
ONES POURS THROUGH  
AND SHINES DOWN UPON US  
TO LET US KNOW THEY ARE  
HAPPY

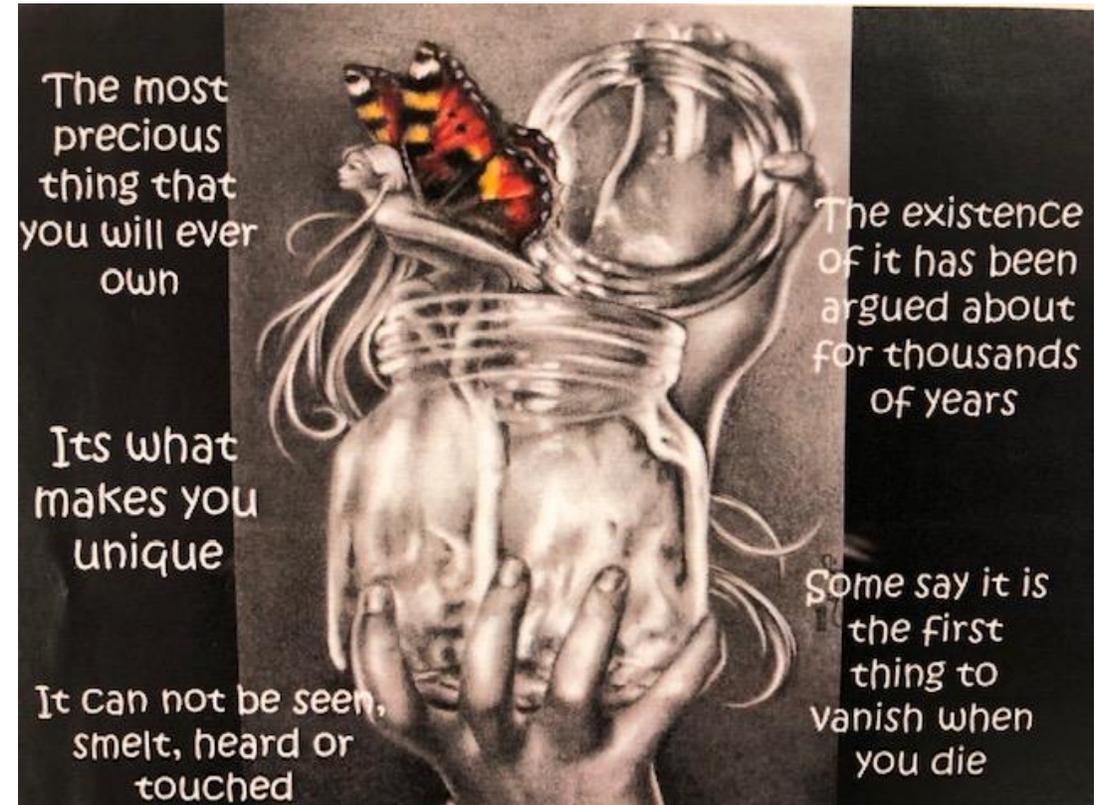
Eskimo Proverb



# The Journey of Life and Death

# What do we mean by our Soul or Spirit?

- ▶ In order to really understand what different religions think about life after death it is important to understand the terms soul and spirit
- ▶ With my class I completed this activity by RE Today:
  - ▶ 1. Divide an A4 sheet in half and draw a quick portrait of yourself on one half
  - ▶ 2. On the other half ask pupils in the class to write a list of your attributes and characteristics, both positive and negative (remind children to tread gently here!)
  - ▶ 3. Talk about when someone dies their body wears out or got damaged
  - ▶ 4. Tear the paper in half and only keep the side with the characteristics on.
  - ▶ 5. Throw picture away, as if your body has worn out, discuss how just your attributes are left - your spirit or soul
  - ▶ 6. Discuss big questions children have about the soul and then draw or paint a picture of your soul. Be creative!



# In Our Class Floor Book...



Since love grows within you, so beauty grows.  
For love is the beauty of the soul.

— St. Aurelius Augustine



IF ONLY  
OUR EYES SAW SOULS  
INSTEAD OF BODIES,  
HOW VERY DIFFERENT  
OUR IDEAS OF BEAUTY  
WOULD BE.



Soul is about sadness too. Freya.

My soul is my imagination. Hannah.

The truth lies within your soul. Paradise

Your soul is your key to happiness. Erin

My soul is like a maze for my heart.  
Billy.

The soul always  
knows what to do  
to heal itself.  
The challenge is to  
silence the mind.

Fill your soul with love not jealousy or hatred  
Jared.

Your soul comes from your heart - the things you  
really care about. Rose-Norie

My soul is made up of all my happiness.  
Summer

My soul is made up of my memories  
Ruby

My soul is a mixture of kindness and  
confusion  
Sasha.

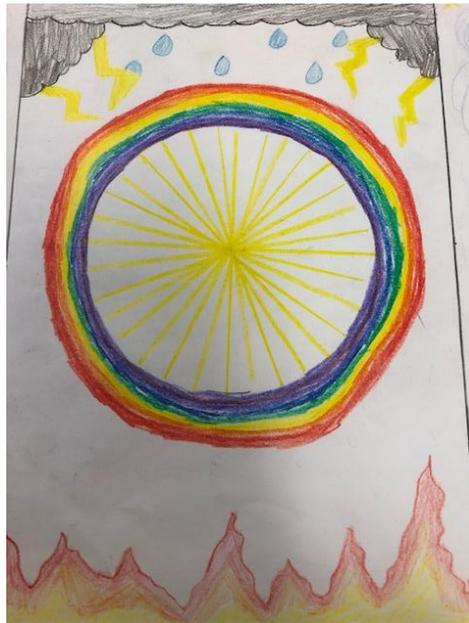
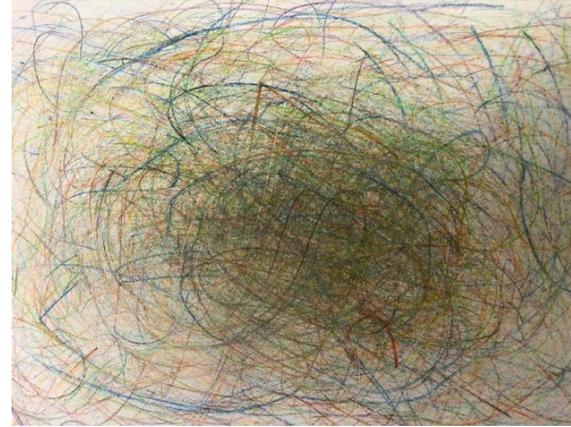
“The soul  
is the truth of  
who we are.”

— MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

## Soul

The Soul is the sacred essence  
within us; our deepest purpose,  
our unique meaning, the guiding  
force behind our individual lives.

My Class drew what they thought their soul might look like.

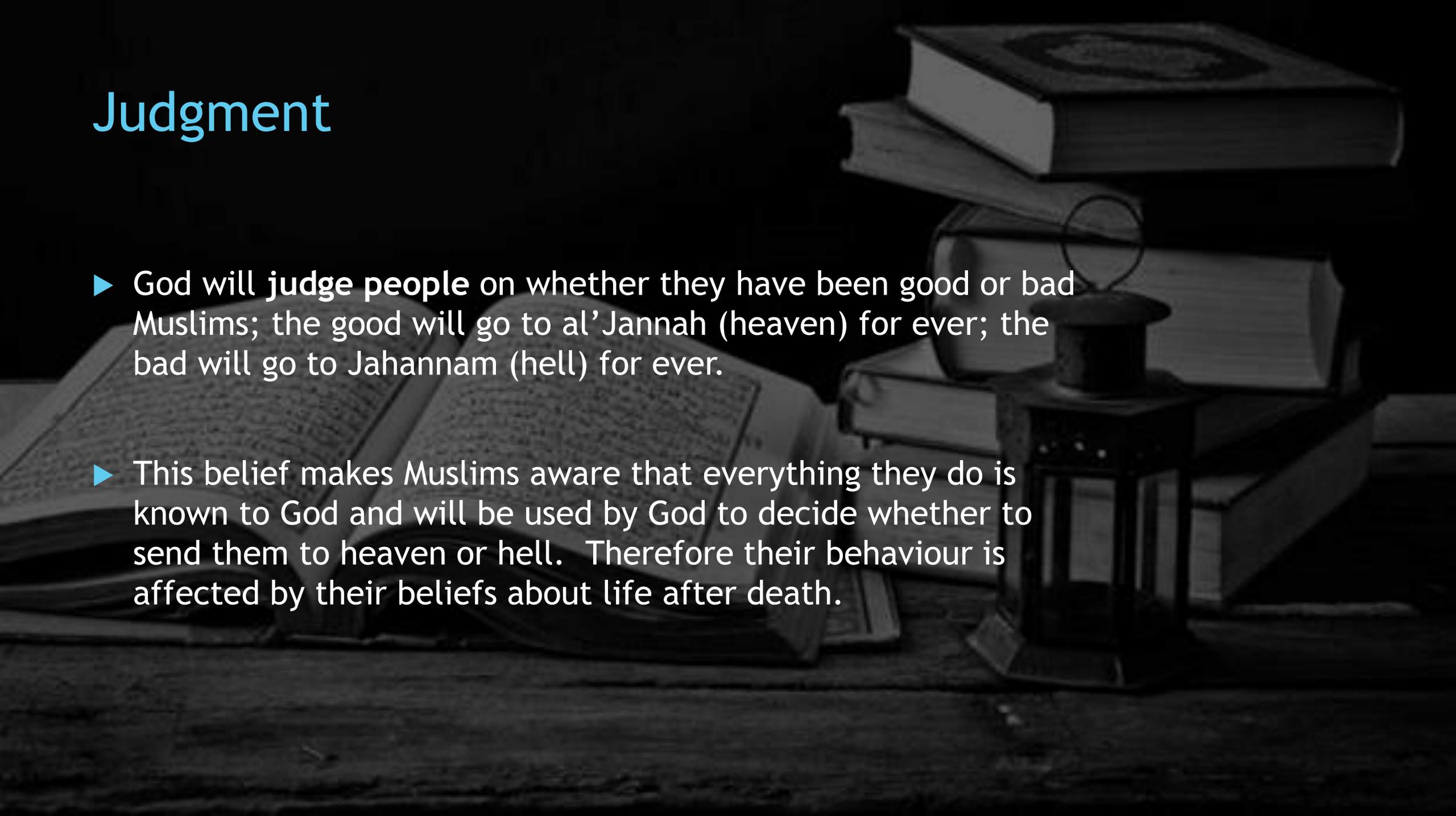


# Muslims believe that there is life after death.

- ▶ They believe that death is not the end
- ▶ Muslims believe in the **resurrection of the body**
- ▶ They believe that when people die, they stay in the grave until the **Last Day** when God will bring the world to an end. Then everyone will be raised with resurrected bodies for a **final judgement**.



# Judgment

A dark, monochromatic photograph of a stack of books and an open book. The books are stacked on the right side, with a small lantern resting on top of them. An open book lies flat on the left side of the frame. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures of the paper and the metal of the lantern.

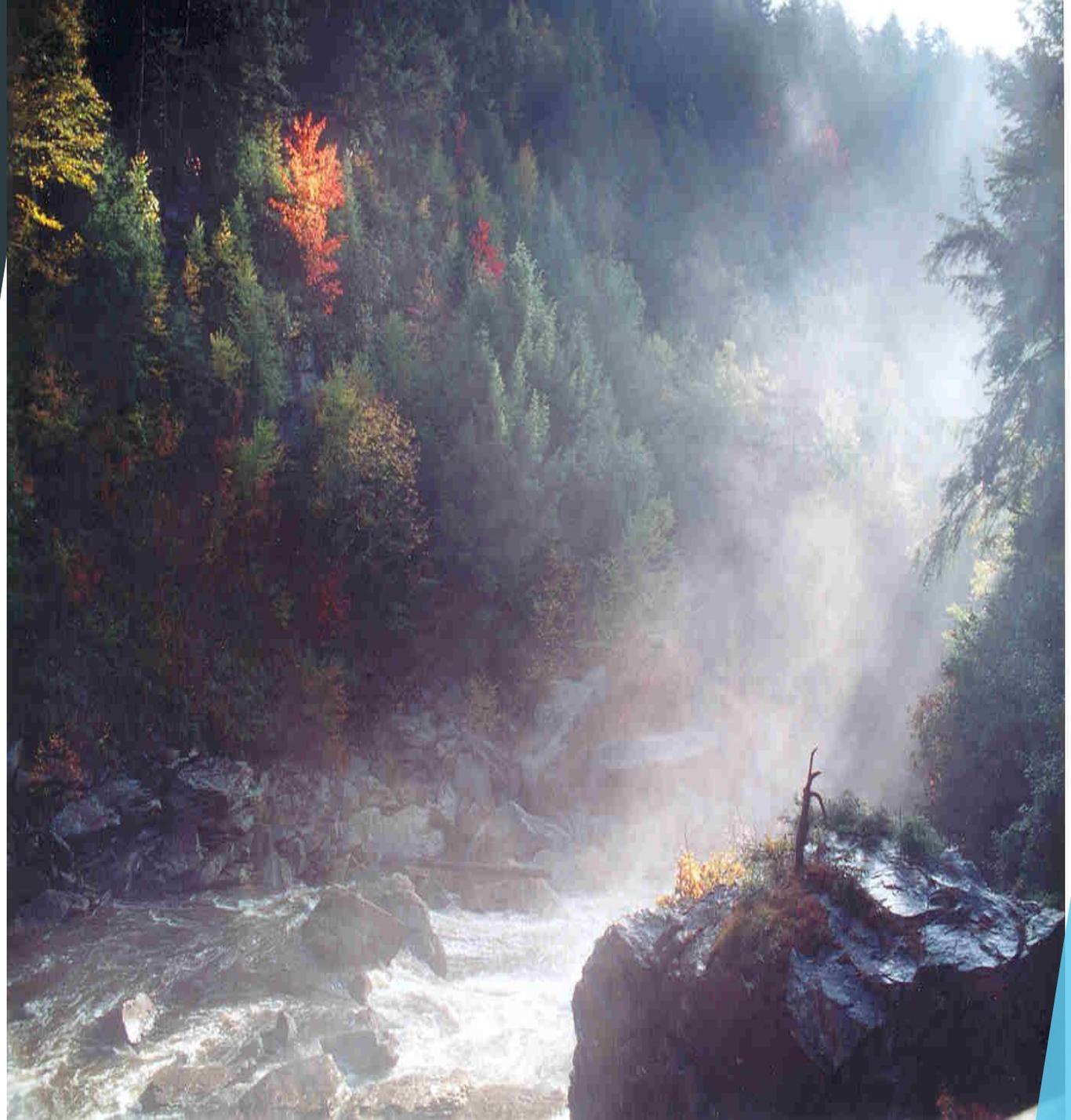
- ▶ God will **judge people** on whether they have been good or bad Muslims; the good will go to al'Jannah (heaven) for ever; the bad will go to Jahannam (hell) for ever.
- ▶ This belief makes Muslims aware that everything they do is known to God and will be used by God to decide whether to send them to heaven or hell. Therefore their behaviour is affected by their beliefs about life after death.

# Islamic beliefs about life after death (akhirah)



# Quran Quote

- ▶ "Those that fear God and do good are promised a Garden through which rivers flow. The fruits of this garden are everlasting, and so is the shade. This is for those who believe, for those that don't there is the fire.



- ▶ Muslims believe in life after death because:
- ▶ It is one of the six main Muslim beliefs.
- ▶ It is what the Qur'an teaches and the Qur'an is the word of God.
- ▶ They believe that **life is a test** from God, which only makes sense if there is life after death. Belief in life after death gives their lives meaning and purpose.
- ▶ It is taught in the **hadith (a collection of sayings made by the Prophet)**.

## Why Do Muslims Believe in Life After Death?

# Children's activity

- ▶ Write a list of things that anyone might do in their life:
- ▶ Help others
- ▶ Watch television
- ▶ Tell lies
- ▶ Steal from a shop
- ▶ Share food
- ▶ Eat a lot of chocolate
- ▶ Write something unkind on social media

# Activity

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The children write each thing on a strip of card (5 things each)

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The teacher collects all the cards in and then randomly redistributes them around the class

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Each table of children work together to decide on which side of the set of balancing scales each piece of card goes - good or bad?

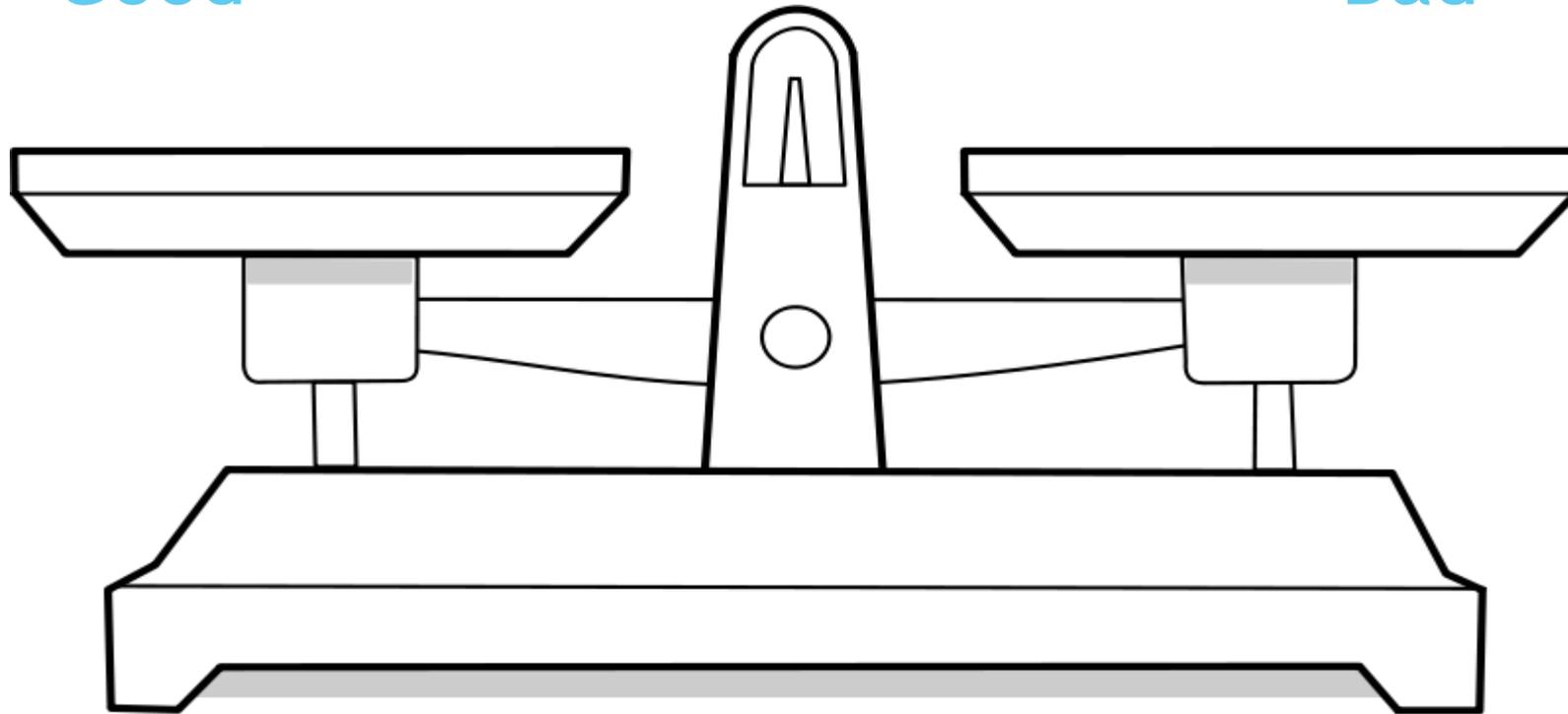
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At the end each group presents back to the class a brief profile of their character and whether they came out as good or bad when judged!

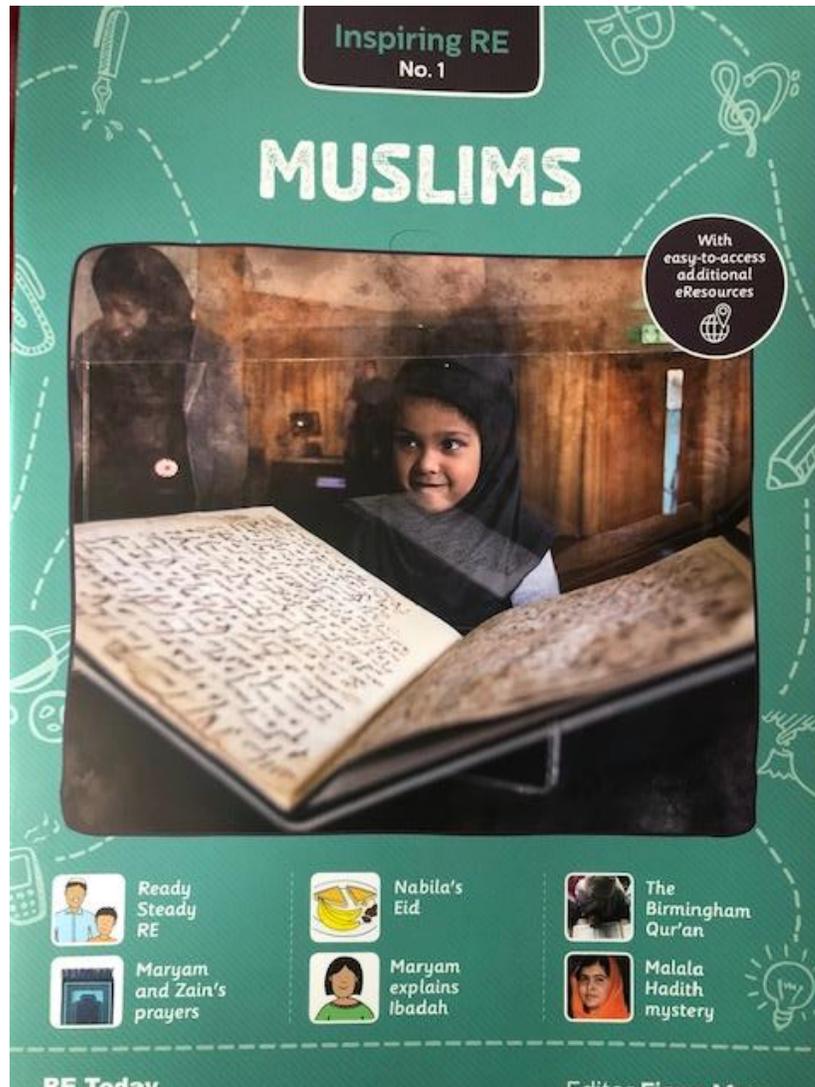
Each table has a large sheet of paper in the middle with a pair of balancing scales on.

Good

Bad



# A Good Book.....



### Learning about Muslims: a progression grid

Here we provide a progression grid that suggests outcomes for pupils aged 4–11 from Reception classes to the end of primary education. Progress in learning is essential in well-planned RE.

Outcomes related to Early Learning Goals and end-of-key-stage outcomes in many agreed syllabuses and curriculum guidelines. These are in teacher-language, but can be translated to pupil-language of 'I can ...':

Age Group	Outcomes
Early Learning Goals Most 4–5-year-olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Understanding the world – cultures and beliefs.</b> Children begin to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of Muslim people.</li> <li><b>Communication and language.</b> Children listen with enjoyment to Muslim stories and respond with relevant comments, questions or actions.</li> <li><b>Personal, social and emotional development, self-confidence and self-esteem.</b> Children have a developing awareness of their own needs, views and feelings and become more sensitive to those of others as they learn simply about Islam.</li> <li><b>Expressive arts and design.</b> Children use their imaginations in art, role-play and stories, responding in varied ways to what they see, hear and touch about Islam.</li> </ul>
Most 6-year-olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils talk about the fact that Muslims believe in God (Allah) and follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad. They can recall simple stories of the Prophet.</li> <li>Pupils recognise some objects used by Muslims, such as a prayer mat, a string of 99 <i>Sabhat</i> beads or a photograph of the Qur'an.</li> <li>Pupils can add labels and captions to a picture of a mosque, identifying key features of a holy building. They can select objects connected to Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr from a table of artefacts, and say simply how they are used by Muslim people.</li> </ul>
Most 7-year-olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils can talk about three examples of the 99 Names of Allah which Muslims use, suggesting what they mean. They can discuss different ideas about God.</li> <li>Pupils can consider meanings for some of the symbols and objects in a mosque, and talk about what matters in the building to Muslims. They can suggest the meaning of a festival such as Eid-ul-Fitr or Eid-ul-Adha.</li> <li>Pupils can recount how Muslims pray five times each day, and pick out key words such as 'bowing', 'peace', 'Allah' and 'mercy'. They suggest how it feels and what it means to pray to Allah in this way.</li> </ul>
Most 9-year-olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils can consider questions about the story of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an: why does this story matter so much in Islam? What makes the story exciting?</li> <li>They describe the Five Pillars of Islam, and discuss which of the pillars matters most and why. They explain how this links to <i>Ibadah</i> (worship and actions to follow the will of Allah).</li> <li>Pupils can describe the Muslim communities in two different parts of Britain (e.g. Glasgow or Luton compared to Cumbria or Cornwall), talking about how different communities can live well together.</li> <li>Pupils can discuss and respond with their own reasoned thoughts to ideas about what is right and good in Islam, and in their own viewpoints, connecting and commenting on similarities and differences.</li> </ul>
Most 11-year-olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils apply concepts like 'revelation' and 'miracle' to stories of the Prophet. They can use the right words and concepts to apply their learning, for example, about the <i>Ummah</i>, the worldwide community of Muslims.</li> <li>Pupils can see and express two points of view about religious and social questions, e.g. should Muslims have a day off for Eid? Are prayer calls from minarets like church bells? Is Islam best expressed in architecture or in a charity like Islamic Relief?</li> <li>Pupils can apply their own understanding of religion to the question: what does it mean to be a Muslim in Britain today?</li> </ul>
More able 11-year-olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils can research and use examples of verses from the Qur'an and <i>Hadith</i> of the Prophet to explain community life or beliefs about Paradise and life after death.</li> <li>Pupils express clear and well-informed views on how Muslim communities can both maintain their identity and contribute to the common good.</li> <li>Pupils can research and explain some sensitive issues for the Muslim community, about, for example, peace and conflict, the roles of men and women and responding to prejudice against Muslim people in Britain today.</li> </ul>