Your notes

KS3 Religious Education: revision notes

Does God exist? Evil, suffering and life after death

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Arguments that God exists

- The First Cause (cosmological) argument: everything has a cause, so something must have started the universe without being caused itself. Thomas Aquinas said this is God.
- The Design (teleological) argument: the world is so complex and ordered that it must have a designer. William Paley compared the world to a watch found on a heath, which clearly had a maker.
- Religious experiences and miracles: some people say they have experienced God directly, or seen events that science can't explain.

Arguments against

- Science offers other explanations: the Big Bang for the start of the universe, and evolution by natural selection for the variety of life. Some religious people accept both science and God.
- Critics ask what caused God, and point out that the world also contains disease and disasters, which seem badly designed.

The problem of evil and suffering

- If God is all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving, why is there evil and suffering?
- **Moral evil** is caused by humans, such as war and cruelty. **Natural evil** is caused by nature, such as earthquakes and disease.
- Religious responses: God gave humans **free will**, and **moral evil** comes from misusing it; suffering can help people grow and become better (the soul-making idea); humans can't understand God's plan (as in the Book of Job); religions teach believers to help those who suffer.

Life after death

- Christians and Muslims believe in judgement, followed by heaven or hell (Jannah or Jahannam in Islam).
- Hindus and Sikhs believe in **reincarnation** (the soul is reborn), and Buddhists in rebirth, until liberation.
- Humanists believe there is no life after death, so this life matters.

Key terms

First Cause argument	The argument that God must have started the universe.
Design argument	The argument that the world's order shows a designer.
Moral evil	Suffering caused by humans.
Natural evil	Suffering caused by nature.
Free will	The ability to make our own choices.
Omnibenevolent	All-loving.
Reincarnation	The belief that the soul is reborn in a new body.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. Which argument says the universe must have been started by an uncaused cause?
2. Who compared the world to a watch?
3. What is moral evil?
4. What is natural evil?
5. What is free will?
6. What scientific theory explains the start of the universe?
7. What do Hindus and Sikhs believe happens after death?
8. What does omnibenevolent mean?

Answers

1. The First Cause argument
2. William Paley
3. Suffering caused by humans
4. Suffering caused by nature
5. The ability to make our own choices
6. The Big Bang
7. The soul is reborn (reincarnation)
8. All-loving

What to do next

Practise 10 questions on this topic

Your notes

Try 3 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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