

Religion and Philosophy GCSE Revision Notes

Beliefs about the existence of God (PHAPMAD!)

Pantheism: God is everything – pan.

Henotheism: Many gods, but one rules above others.

Atheism: No Gods / disbelief.

Polytheism: Many gods.

Monotheism: A single god.

Agnosticism: One can never be certain

Deism: The belief in a disinterested deity with no personal relationship with the universe.

Classical Theism: The most common beliefs held about God which describes him with several Divine Attributes: (POOMOO)

- **Personal:** God is anthropomorphised; He is spoken of in human, personal terms.
- **Omnipotent:** God is all-powerful – able to do anything that doesn't contrast his nature.
- **Omniscient:** God is all-knowing.
- **Monotheism:** There are no other gods but God himself.
- **Omnipresent:** God is everywhere at all times.
- **Omnibenevolent:** God is all-loving– He represents moral perfection.

Allah

Much like classical theism, Islam teaches that Allah has **divine attributes**: (TITPOOOMOURNER)

- **Transcendent:** Allah is completely beyond and separate to the universe and is non-temporal and non-spatial. He created the universe ex nihilo – out of nothing.
- **Immanent:** He is always with us.
- **Tawhid:** Allah is one/indivisible.
- **Personal:** spoken of in human, personal terms
- **Omnipotent**
- **Omniscient**
- **Omnipresent**
- **Malaki Yawmuddin:** Master of the Day of Judgement
- **Omnibenevolent**
- **Unique:** Allah is unlike anything in the universe thus should not be idolised
- **Rabb:** He created everything in the universe.
- **Names:** The Qur'an describes Allah using 99 permitted names to avoid shirk.
- **Eternal:** God is immortal and everlasting
- **R's (the three):** First two sentences of the Al Fatihah, the first chapter of the Qur'an. It reads as *Bismillah ir-Rahmaan ir-Raheem*. It means "In the name of our lord, most gracious, most merciful".

Shirk and Tawhid

- **Tawhid:** 'God is one', indivisible and cannot be anthropomorphised
- **Shirk:** The *sin of association*. To insinuate that Allah is more than one or divisible.

Islamic Schools of Thought

- **Kalamism:** The *rationalist* school of thought.
 - Teaches an understanding of the difficulties concerning God's omnipotence
 - Attempted to justify the teachings of the Qur'an with the science of that time.
- Al-Kindi's Kalam Cosmological Argument:**
- P1:** Whatever begins to exist has a cause
P2: The universe began to exist
C1: Therefore, the universe has a cause
P3: Allah, as the greatest conceivable being, must exist eternally and externally
P4: An eternal being does not come into existence
P5: That which does not come into existence does not have a cause
C2: Allah is the uncaused first being and Rabb of all other things
- **Sufism:** The mystical branch of Islam, which sought to draw close to God through music and dance. *They follow asceticism and deny the body in order to purify the soul.*
- Accusations:**
- Their abandoning of the body and dualist beliefs for monistic attempts to realise the Divine Unity has led to accusations of pantheism and shirk.
- **Salafism:** The puritan movement within Islam – it interprets the Qur'an literally, which might have worked in the militaristic cultures of the 1400's, but nowadays promotes extremism and fanaticism. They attempt to stay on the 'straight path' outlined by the Qur'an, the Hadith, and Shariah Law. Most Salafis believe in an uncreated Qur'an.]
 - Salafis believe in Miracles as it is in the Qur'an (which they interpret literally). **All Muslims believe in miracles, but that God is the author of all miracles and not prophets ('I am aught but a man!' – Muhammad). God does this through divine intervention to show his power and presence.** They disagree with Kalamists because:
 - They introduced foreign Greek and Western elements into the religion
 - This means Kalamists have a tendency towards atheism, decadence, and nihilism
 - They disagree with Sufists because:
 - Sufists practise mysticism
 - They partake in idolatry and shirk
 - IE pantheism and prophet/saint worship

The six cardinal beliefs of Islam (**GARPAD**)

Belief in **G**od

Belief in the **A**ngels

- They worship God alone, obey Him
 - Gabriel/Jibril brought down the Qur'an to Muhammad.

Belief in God's **R**evealed books i.e. the Quran to Muhammad

Belief in the **P**rophets and **m**essengers of God

- Belief in the prophets
- Muslims believe that Muhammad is the last prophet sent by God, and was God's final message to man

Belief in **A**l-Qadr

- Muslims believe in Al-Qadr, which is Divine Predestination (but we still have freewill as God lets us choose between right and wrong)
- Belief in Divine Predestination includes the belief in four things
 1. God knows everything.
 2. God has recorded all that has happened and will happen
 3. Whatever God wills to happen happens, and whatever He wills not to happen does not happen
 4. God is the Creator of everything

Belief in the **D**ay of Judgement

The Bismillah

- *Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim*
 - Said to contain the true essence of the entire Qur'an and perhaps all religions as well.
- Considered by some to be a major Islamic pillar.

Other metaphysical worldviews

Secular Humanism

- ▶ Most famous example is **Epicurus**
 - Purpose of philosophy was to attain a happy, tranquil, self-sufficient life that is free from suffering
- ▶ Probably no immaterial deities, although science cannot disprove it
 - **Pleasure and pain, instead of specific actions, are the measurements of good and evil**
 - **Gods, if they exist, are impersonal** and do not reward or punish humans
 - No gods, no destiny, **implied free-will**
- ▶ Universe is infinite and eternal
 - No need for a creator god
- ▶ Death results in the end of the body and soul
 - No heaven or hell
 - Death, therefore, should not be feared
 - No miracles because there are no supernatural forces acting for humans.
 - Any so-called 'miracle' is but a coincidence.
- ▶ Karl Heinrich Marx also followed similar viewpoints
 - He believed religion was used by the ruling classes to prevent the working classes realising that they were being exploited by the former.
 - Religion 'is the opium of the people'

Anthropology and Eschatology

Akhira	Life after Death
Allahu Akbar	Allah is great
Amal	Faith in action
Barzakh	Partition, stage of waiting after death and before judgement day
Fitrah	Humans are born pure and without sin
Epistemology	Theory of knowledge. Philosophical branch-why do we believe what we believe?
Ghusl and Wudu	Full bath for purification; partial wash for purification
Hadith	Sayings and traditions of Muhammad
Halal & Haram	Permitted and non-permitted
Ibadah	Worship, all actions done for God
Ihram	State of religious purity
Iman	Faith in Allah

Jannah	Heaven
Jahannam	Hell
Jibril	Angel Gabriel
Makkah	Holy city in Saudi Arabia
Miracle	Violation of normal operations of nature through divine intervention of a deity or intermediary
Muhammad	Final prophet of Islam
Munkar & Nakir	Angels who test the Iman of the believer
Nafs	The individual self that is removed by Allah at death. Judged at Judgement Day, has appetites which incite evil, which implies a notion of free-will
Qadr	Predestination or destiny decided by Allah
Qur'an	The Holy Book / Revealed book given to Muhammad by Allah
Ruh	Breath of God breathed into every human; contains Taqwa and innate goodness
Salah	Compulsory prayer five times a day
Sawm	Fasting during Ramadan
Shahadah	The declaration of faith —There is no other God than Allah and Muhammad is his prophet
Shari'ah	Islamic law
Surah	Verse in the Qur'an
Taharah	Cleanliness/purity
Taqwa	God consciousness/awareness (conscience)
Tawhid	The oneness and perfection of God
Ummah	The worldwide community of Muslims
Wudu	Ritual washing before prayer
Yawmuddin	The Day of Judgement
Zakah	Giving of alms for purification

Islamic views about the afterlife

Most Muslims hold substance dualist beliefs about the soul and believe that it contains two main aspects: *nafs* and *ruh*.

Nafs:

It is the individual self or soul in Islam, which exists in conjunction with *ruh*.

In the Quran nafs is sometimes referred to as the individual personality, self or ego and is removed by God at death.

It is subject to accountability at the Day of Judgement. Nafs has appetites and passions, _the soul which incites to evil. This implies a notion of freewill.

Ruh: Ruh is the breath breathed into humans by Allah to create living beings.

It means something like the living spirit '. The spirit of Allah is in all humans.

Ruh is often thought to be the higher —self; the part that desires good and awareness of Allah (taqwa, or God consciousness) – in short conscience.

A Pure Body: THE QUR'AN STATES THAT Human beings are the highest physical creations of God, made from a special type of clay. However, although human bodies are living, they are not conscious without ruh or nafs. Muslims believe that humans are born in a state of fitrah.

The relationship between the body and soul: In this life (and most of the next), the soul and the body are combined together (substance dualism). The soul is the master while the body is its obedient servant. In all forms of **worship (ibadah), the soul and body work together**. Wudu and salah are both rituals which aim to bring about physical and spiritual purity. ***This is because: "Those who purify their souls [nafs] will certainly have everlasting happiness and those who corrupt their souls will be certainly deprived of happiness."* (Surah 91)**

Arguments *against* the soul

1. Empiricist biologists and chemists have not detected a soul in the human body; this suggests that there is nothing in us that can survive its death
2. The mind is merely a product of complex chemical interactions in the brain. It is material.

Islam and Judgement

"We shall set up just scales of on the day of judgment, so that no man shall in the least be wronged. Actions as small as a grain of mustard seed shall be weighed out." Surah 21:49

Muslims believe that life is a test which examines the outcome of their **iman and amal**. This test will determine the type of **Akhira** (afterlife) they achieve.

Barzakh: the Test of Faith

Most Muslims believe that the nafs of those who die before the Day of Judgement are taken by the angel of death (Azra'il) to Barzakh. After death, the Angels of Justice, Munkar and Nakir, will ask three questions to determine whether they will wait in comfort or discomfort in the grave until Maliki Yawmuddin;

1. *Who is your God?*
2. *What is your religion?*
3. *Who is your Prophet?*

Yawmuddin: The Test of Deeds

Amal is then judged by Allah, who weighs your halal deeds against your haram deeds to determine your Akhira, whether it be Jannah or Jahannam.

Free will

Muslims believe in the concept of Free Will; individuals are responsible for their own actions and these can be held accountable by God on the Day of Judgment. For some philosophers, destiny and free will are **inconsistent** and **contradict** each other.

The philosopher **Nelson Pike** tried to explain this in the following argument:

- 1. If God knows that Peter will mow the lawn on Tuesday then Peter must do that or God is wrong*
- 2. If Peter does not mow the lawn and instead chooses to go shopping, then God was wrong*
- 3. An omniscient God cannot be wrong*
- 4. Therefore either Peter has to mow the lawn on Tuesday and has no free will or God is not omniscient*

Islam funeral rituals

- 1. —To Allah we belong and to Allah we return— words spoken when hear of a death (Show faith)**
- 2. Dead body washed in the order of wudu (Purity)**
- 3. Burial (Preserve the body)**
- 4. Wrapped in Hajj sheets (show equality of Muslims)**
- 5. In grave head turned to face Makkah**
- 6. Mourning period limited to 7 days. (Lack of faith in Allah if mourned for more than 7 days)**
- 7. Buried without coffin where permitted (Touch the earth and have nothing between them and their God)**
8. Elaborate graves not permitted (equality)
9. Single graves used (Nothing between them and their God)

Alternative beliefs about Life and Death

Christianity:

- The human being is made up of body, flesh, heart, soul, synderesis, spirit and mind.
- Many Christians believe that a person's conduct in this life will be —weighed at Judgment Day
- Then ultimately be sent to Heaven or Hell, much like Muslims
- Christians vary in their views according to their denominations: Heaven is where people enjoy being in the presence of God and others believers, and there is no suffering and sin. Some believe it is a physical place, some believe it is spiritual. Not all Christians believe in Hell – some believe that bad souls simply cease to exist.
- Some Christians believe that the soul sleeps until Judgment Day, others believe that the soul goes immediately to Heaven or Hell.
- Some Christians, mainly Catholics, believe in Purgatory, a temporary afterlife where your soul is purified of sin before you progress to Heaven.

3. Humanism:

- Like Epicurus, Humanists don't live with immaterial beings in mind.
- They believe in the power of humanity to do the right thing and strive for the good life.

- Their motto is —*For the one life we have.*
- Might accept the possibility of an afterlife because humans don't know everything yet, but they state that since there is no scientific evidence, it makes sense to focus on the present not the future.
- Epicurus argued that reality is comprised of matter and the forces alone, there are no spirits, souls or gods to enable an afterlife.
- He taught that pleasure and pain are the measures good and bad and evil is that which brings about the most pain to yourself and others, in this case humanism can be seen as quite **altruistic**. However, death is simply the end of the body and the soul and should therefore not be feared as there is no afterlife, heaven, or hell. Only decay and soil.
- **The gods do not reward or punish humans.** The universe is infinite and eternal, and the events in the world are ultimately based on the motions and interactions of atoms moving in empty space. — *death, is nothing to us, since when we exist there is no death, and when there is death we do not exist.*”

Chaos and cosmology

Islamic Cosmology

- The Qur'an teaches that everything is Allah's creation and that He is the Rabb.
- The Qur'an describes Allah creating the universe in six days.
- Muslims believe that using philosophy, reason, and empiricism, one can demonstrate that Allah is the Rabb of the universe.
- The Kalam cosmological argument and Al-Kindi's intelligent design argument (see earlier in this document) back this up.
- Modern day Kalamists believe in a 'double truth theory' which argues that these logical arguments parallel the Qur'an's statements on the universe, which in turn is supported by the general outlines of the Big Bang theory. Sufists and salafists disagree.
- Big Bang Theory – universe began from a single point

Islam and the history of science

Evolution

Charles Darwin '*On the Origins of the Species*' in 1859. He suggested that all complex organisms evolved from simpler ones that arose from a 'primordial soup' over millions of years. This occurred through survival of the fittest, known as natural selection. There is evidence in fossils and genetics. We share much of the same DNA and genetic make-up as monkeys, whom we are believed to have evolved from.

Islamic beliefs on evolution & the origins of life

The Qur'an perhaps implies the theory of evolution when it describes that Allah 'made from water every living thing'.

Whilst Islam recognises the general idea of the development of non-human life forms from water and wet earth in stages over long periods of time, **human beings are considered to be a special act of creation whereby Allah combined mud, clay, and the soul, thus did not randomly evolve from primates**; the life of human beings began with the creation of two parentless people – the man and woman, Adam and Hawwa. Humanists would disagree etc.

Muslims acknowledge that life developed over a long period of time, but believe that Allah guides evolution.

Islam and the environment

Human beings are on the world as trustees, stewards, or khalifahs.

They are told to look after the world for Allah and for the future.

3 central beliefs are central in their environmental ethics.

1. **Tawhid** – oneness and unity, which emphasises God’s supremacy and that all of his creation is one unity with human sharing in this oneness with the planet
2. **Taqwa** (god consciousness) and **Akrah** (responsibility/accountability), which reminds humans that they are responsible for their own actions and wellbeing of creation
3. **Akrah** is subject to judgement at Yawmuddin

Muslims are duty-bound to live in harmony with the world and can seek to be more ‘green’ in daily life; recycling, supporting environmental organisations, reducing waste, pollution, and energy, protecting animals and plants.

Islam and Animal Rights

Humans occupy the highest place and have **dominion** over animals, but we should still not abuse them.

Animals which can be eaten must be killed using halal methods – slit the throat. They can be used for medical research but not trivial things such as cosmetic research.

Islam and the Problem of Evil

5 main attitudes towards good and evil

- Good and evil are real substances in the universe, in all beings
- Good and evil refer to the qualities of things that have or haven’t achieved their purpose
- Good and evil are only the properties of human beings who have misused their free will
- Good and evil are adjectives – feelings we attribute to things that dis/please us
- What good and evil are is unknown

Aristotle and St. Augustine

- Aristotle believed all things in the universe contain a telos, or purpose, and if they did not achieve it they ‘missed the mark’ (hamartia)
- Augustine, after converting from Manichaeism, agreed with Aristotle
 - *All things in the universe are good as they are created by god but evil if they do not realise their telos*

Epicurus (founder of Epicureanism, secular Humanist) and David Hume (Humanist)

- Epicurus was an atheist and a hedonist – he taught that pleasure and pain are synonymous with good and evil – outlined the ‘inconsistent triad’ model which questions how God can be benevolent and all-powerful but allow evil to exist:
 1. If God is benevolent and altruistic he wants to stop evil and suffering
 2. If he is omnipotent he can create a world without evil and suffering
 3. But there is evil and suffering, it is undeniable
 4. Therefore, God is either not omnipotent or not Omnibenevolent or allows evil for some reason, but what possible reason?

Islamic notions of good and evil

Egotistical behaviour that results in suffering due to injustice, cruelty, lying etc. arises from:

- Misuse of free-will, instead using nafs to help people and be altruistic, people act in a way that harms others.
- Shirk, 'polytheism' and the sin of acquaintance
- Shaytan's (original name Iblis) temptations, a Jinn that strayed from the path of God as he refused to bow down to humanity and now spends his free time helping people to burn in hell. Some also believe he is the cause of natural evil (disasters i.e. earthquakes etc.), others believe it is Allah's way of testing us.

The Al-Fatihah (the thing about Allah being the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful...) is of interest to us for two reasons

- It outlines why Muslims believe Allah is the summum bonum – the greatest, most perfect, and most 'good' being in existence
- It suggests to Muslims that the way to achieve moral purity is via following the 'straight way' of Allah, to prevent spoiling their state of fitrah.

There are six primary sources of moral guidance for Muslims

1. Qur'an
2. Hadith (Muhammad's sayings)
3. Mystical experience
4. Taqwa (individual intuition/conscience of Allah)
5. Sharia Law

Halal is permitted and haram is forbidden.

Attempt to justify Allah's existence despite the Inconsistent triad with **theodicies** – Theoretical responses to God's allowance of evil. Such as the fact that freewill requires good and evil so there is a genuine choice to make etc.

Moral Category	Name	Meaning	Example
Halal	<i>Fard</i>	Mandatory action	Salah
	<i>Mandub</i>	Recommended	Dua (personal prayer), extra charity giving
	<i>Mubah</i>	Decided by reason	Watching the news
	<i>Makruh</i>	Disapproved of	Divorce
Haram	<i>Haram</i>	Strictly forbidden	Max and Rebecca

END