

# **O-Level Islamiyat Notes**

**Paper 1 & Paper 2**

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# Preface

My “ O Level Notes on Islamiyat and Pakistan Studies “ are the result of my rich teaching experience, my constant interaction with the CIE and the results of my brilliant students many of whom managed to be enlisted among the HIGH ACHIEVERS/DISTINCTION HOLDERS in both the subjects. These notes will be updated every year in view of the changes in the style and content of the questions in the CIE examinations. Soon some sort of “ Practice Books” will also be published to make these subjects as interesting as possible. Almost all the topics have been covered in Question-Answer format so that students may not only learn these answers but also feel their thinking skills stimulated that will induce curiosity and minimize the element of rote learning.

When students are capable of “making “new questions, I feel my mission accomplished.

Students as well as teachers should feel free in contacting me as and when required.

Wishing all my students best and praying for their excellent grades.

Good Luck

Dr. Iftikhar-ul - Haq

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## Major themes of the Quran

### P1 Q1

Total Marks 8: 4 marks for two (a) parts and 4 marks for two (b) parts of the two passages chosen out of the given three passages. In (a) parts, describe the main themes contained in the passages while comparing each passage with some other passages on the same themes. In (b) parts, explain the importance or relevance of the themes for daily living of the Muslims.

### Passage 1

Allah in himself

1. Sura 2.255

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

Allah. There is no god but He, the living, the self-subsisting, eternal. No slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there can intercede in His presence except as He permits? He knows what is before or after or behind them. Nor shall they compass any of His knowledge except as He wills. His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them for He is the Most High, the Supreme.

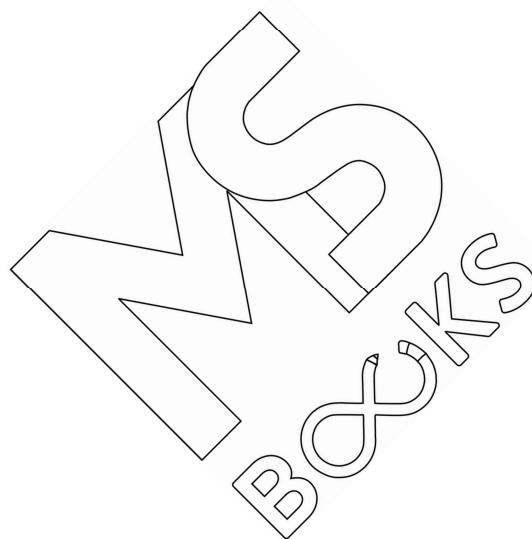
### **Verse of the Throne (2:255)**

#### **(a) Theme:**

Theme of this long verse of a Madinian Surah, al-Baqarah, is Tawhid. It outlines God's inimitable attributes that distinguish Him from His creatures. The words 'al-Hayy-ul-Qayyum' the 'Ever Living' and 'Self Subsisting' refer to His creative and sustaining force behind His existence. God is free from human weaknesses and needs such as tiredness or sleep. His authority encompasses the entire universe and He remains totally uninfluenced in establishing His writ over His created world. The word 'Kursi' signifies both His authority and knowledge about all His domain because He is its sole Creator. Therefore, none of His creations can escape His knowledge in the remotest parts of the universe. It further emphasizes God's unique right of exercising His authority to the extent that no one can intercede or plead for anyone else unless He Himself grants permission for that. The passage ends with the words 'hu'al ali-ul-azeem' that represent His ultimate supremacy and exaltedness. The Quran repetitively mentions God's supreme status, such as, "God be exalted, the True King....the Lord of the Throne of Grace" (23:116, al-Mu'minun).

**(b) Importance of the theme:**

The passage strengthens the belief of the Muslims in Tawhid in terms of God's oneness, uniqueness, majesty and glory. It also crystallizes the belief of Tawhid and trains them to condemn Shirk as humans are vulnerable to go astray under the influence of Satan. There is repetitive mention of God's authority, unlimited knowledge and powers in order to instruct them to worship and depend on God alone. The message of this verse frees the Believers from fear of all other powers, visible and invisible. By believing in God's absolute powers, Muslims tend to develop His fear, as is commanded in another verse, "O You who believe! Fear God as He should be feared." (3:102, Al-e-Imran) At the same time this verse inculcates a sense of accountability in His Court. Muslims usually recite this verse as an invocation for protection of their lives and belongings. The Prophet is reported to have said, "Whoever recited Ayat-al-Kursi after every obligatory prayer, nothing prevents him from entering Paradise except death." Therefore, Muslims recite the Ayat-ul-Kursi while leaving their valuables at or outside home.



# Theme 1

- (a) Using passages you have studied, write about the main teachings about God in the Qur'an. [10]  
(b) How might these teachings affect a Muslim's life today. [4]

Ans (a)

The set passages are: 2:255;6:101-103;42:37;42:4-5 & 112

They describe various aspects of the belief in Tauheed/Tawhid, foundational pillar of Islam. Ayat ul Kursi or Verse of the Throne (2:255) describes power, authority, knowledge and unique attributes of God that make Him distinct from His creatures. This verse outlines His unusual knowledge, power, majesty and authority. The essence of the verse is described as, **"His Throne /Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth."** This means it is God who exercises unshared authority on every part of universe. Therefore, He alone had knowledge of all and He alone is sustainer of all. The same message is conveyed by another verse,

**"Say, 'Who is it that provides you with sustenance .....and who is it that governs all that exists? 'And they will answer, ( it is) God.'"( 10:31,Yunus)**

The passage 6:101-103( al-An'am) begins with God's unique name of " Badee", that refers to His power to create anything out of absolute nothingness by just a single command. It declares

" To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth." Many Quranic verses state this divine power by mentioning God's command and its immediate result as, "Kun/Be, and Fayakoon/it so happens." The passage proceeds to reject all kinds of polytheistic beliefs including trinity by saying, **"How can He have a son when He has no consort?"** This powerful argument is followed by a command to all to worship Him only. The passage ends by referring to God's knowledge and sublime nature that keep humans from bringing Him to the limited domain of their imaginations.

The passage 41:37 (Fussilat) states God's supreme powers by drawing human attention towards the brighter signs of divinity and cyclic pattern of universe. It mentions the sun and the moon, whose appearance is linked with the alternation of day and night, **"And among His signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon."** It commands the readers to identify the most magnificent creator, One God, and worship Him alone, **"Adore not the sun and the moon, but adore God who created them."**

The passage 42:4-5(al-Shura) discusses God's glory and His ownership of the entire universe and it's acknowledgement by the angels who keep praising Him without a break. It refers to the impact of God's presence on the lower heavens where angels are constantly glorifying Him, **"The heavens are almost rent asunder from above them, and the angels celebrate the praises of their Lord."** They feel the heaven above them might fall apart.

This may also refer to the effect of divine revelations coming from God through the highest heaven. God's word, like His person, may shake the mightiest objects like the Mount Tur that could not sustain a small fraction of Divine Light. The passage finally gives hope to humans of God's mercy and forgiveness as it tells that angels also seek God's mercy for humans. They know human vulnerability before Satan, and they also are aware of God's immense love for His creatures.

Surah al-Ikhlās (112) sums up the fundamental message of Tauheed by answering the queries of idolators and non-Muslims about the nature of God. It silences all questioners by using the words "Ahad", the one and only, and "al-Samad", the eternal, absolute for God's oneness and uniqueness. It reinforces its message by striking at the roots of Shirk, and all corrupted beliefs and about God having or belonging to a progeny the way humans have. It categorically declares,

**"He does not beget nor is He begotten."** The message of the Surah is sealed by a declaration that God is incomparable to any of His creatures as He is everywhere but He is too sublime to be viewed, **"And there is none like Him."** Thus the title of the Surah is fully justified as it removes all impurities in Tauheed and presents it in the purest and original form.

### **Ans (b)**

Quranic teachings revolve around God and His relation with humankind. Focal point of teachings about God is His absolute oneness and uniqueness as well as His powers and authority. These teachings have a strong effect on a Muslim's life and conduct. Muslims develop a clear concept of Tauhid and do not commit shirk (associating partners with God) by realizing that God alone is their helper in all circumstances. They are not intimidated by worldly powers however mighty they might be. This is because Quran tells them that the entire universe is under the supreme command of one God:

**"Glory be to Him in whose hand is the domain" (67:1, al-Mulk).**

Muslims also develop a strong sense of God's presence as is stated in the Quran,

**"He is with you wherever you are" (57:4, al-Hadeed).**

This belief keeps Muslims from sins and indecencies and they are convinced to follow the Right Path. They know that nothing can escape God's knowledge.

However, they also retain hope of God's mercy and forgiveness because they believe that countless angels are constantly invoking His mercy for humans knowing that humans have free will and so can commit sins:

**"It is man that wrongs his own soul" (10:44, Yunus).**

Due to such beliefs Muslims also try to be forgiving and kind towards others so that they might earn God's pleasure and compassion.



## Theme 2

- (a) From passages you have studied from the Qur'an, write about God's relationship with humankind.

[10]

- (b) Explain the significance of the Qur'an being revealed to humankind.

[4]

The set passages are: 1 (al-Fatihah), 2:21-22 (al-Baqarah), 96:1-5 (al-'Alaq), 99 (al-Zilzal) and 114 (al-Nas)

Surah al-Fatihah presents a summary of God's relation with humankind. It begins with a praise of God who is Lord of all the worlds, full of utmost degree of mercy and Master of the Day of Judgement. The Surah then mentions that God alone is worthy of worship, and His help is to be sought in all matters. It teaches Muslims to beg Him for guiding them to the path of righteousness, **"Show us the Right Path."** The Right Path, contained in the Quran and Hadith, is the way of living acceptable to God. Those communities who treaded this Path were able to earn God's pleasure. Those who deviated from it, became victims of His anger and wrath. The verses 21-22 of Surah al-Baqarah give a description of God's love for humans, and His expectation from them to recognise Him as the only creator of all humans. Verse 21 ends with the expression, **"So that you may have the chance to learn righteousness"**. This reminds humans to accept one God in order to get a chance of salvation from Hell. Verse 22 enlists God's bounties in terms of, "earth as your couch and heavens your canopy." Earth is the ultimate resting place for all after a daylong hectic life. Heaven or sky acts as a shield that provides shade and keeps earth vibrant and productive for the survival and growth of humans. Rainfall comes from the sky to feed earth to produce food essential for humans. The purpose of mentioning all these is to alert humans to identify their True Lord and avoid Shirk.

The passage 96:1-5(al-'Alaq), the first revelation of the Quran, elaborates the ways humans are dependent on God. It invites humans to recall to their minds how God created them from a humble origin, then matured them and enabled them to acquire knowledge, "He who taught (man) by the pen." This is how God made humans distinct from and superior to other creatures. The passage, therefore, begins with the command, "Read in the name of your Lord." The five verses concisely describe God's greatest blessings on humans: granting them the skills to acquire knowledge, and sending for them divine revelations for their guidance and success in both the worlds. These blessings have exclusively been bestowed on humans who need to acknowledge them and express their gratitude to God by obeying His code of conduct.

Surah 99 (al-Zilzal) presents some of the horrifying scenes of the end of time. It states the unusual tremors the earth will experience with the start of the Day of Judgement, **“When the earth is shaken to her utmost convulsion.”** The subsequent events include the earth revealing its hidden contents much to the shock of all humans, **“On that day shall she declare its tidings.”** This means the earth will bear witness to the performance of all humans in their worldly living. They will then be categorised according to their deeds. The Surah finally states the immaculate divine justice by which all all humans will be rewarded for the smallest of good or bad deeds.

Surah 114 (al-Nas) is the concluding Surah of the Quran. It was revealed with Surah 113 in the same context. Both are collectively called al-Mu’awwadhatin or the Two Protectors against evil forces. The Surah begins in a reassuring tone by mentioning God’s relation with humans in three capacities, **“Lord of mankind. King of mankind. God of mankind.”** It commands Muslims to seek God’s refuge against all evil forces. It also tells about Satan’s mode of misguiding humans , “ From the mischief of the whisperer who (whispers and )withdraws.” Satan entices humans by pouring attractive temptations into their hearts. The Quran, therefore, repeatedly warns against the devil,

**“Satan, surely he is for you a clear enemy.”(2:168, al-Baqarah)**

However, Muslims should always trust in God’s supremacy against all evils as He is the best protector.

### Ans (b)

The Holy Quran is the last divine message revealed on the last messenger of God, Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ. It contains guidance for all ages and communities starting from the community of Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. It is to serve as the ultimate touchstone to tell right from wrong as is declared in many of its verses. For instance, "Blessed is He Who sent down the Criterion to His servant that it may be an abomination to all creatures" (25:1, al-Furqan).

The Quran shows God’s concern about humans who are target of Satan and his host of helpers. By revealing the Quran, God provided a shield to humans against all evils, and a guidance to the Right Path:

“Verily this Quran guides to that which is most right” (17:9, al-Isra).

Thus, Quran guarantees man’s success in both the worlds. It guides humans in matters concerning beliefs, acts of worship as well as issues related to social interaction so that a balanced way of life is followed by its readers. It is the medium through which humans can contact God and seek His mercy and guidance:

“This is (nothing but) lights from your Lord, and guidance, and mercy” (7:203, al-A’raf).