

2.1 Compile a profile of 'the human person' presented in Islam and Christianity

Christianity

The Good Nature of Man

- Humans were created in the image of God. As a result humans have the ability to love, be compassionate and be rational. These reflect characteristics of God also. 'So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.' (Genesis 1:27)
- The first humans were created with a good nature. They were also given free will. This free will allowed them to choose between the path of God or to go astray.

The Fallen Nature of Man

- God forbid the earth's first humans, Adam and Eve, from eating from the tree of knowledge that was situated in the Garden of Eden, however Satan in the form of a serpent tempted them to betray God.
- As a result of this, physical death entered the world. These actions also permanently damaged the human soul and now every human has the innate tendency to commit sin.

Original Sin

- All humans are not only born with a predisposition to sinful behaviour but with an inherently sinful nature.
- As every person is born with Original Sin, they are born deserving eternal damnation whether or not they committed a sin or not yet. When a person is baptised they are cleansed and forgiven for all of their sins both original sin that they have been born with and personal sin.
- Saint Augustine emphasised the doctrine of Original Sin.

Islam

Khalifahs - Steward

- The Arabic word 'Islam' means submission or surrender. The word was derived from the root word 'Salam' meaning peace.
- A Muslim surrenders and submits to the will of Allah.
- As a result of this submission they accept the role as Allah's viceregents on earth. (Surat al-Baqara 2:30)
- Therefore earth must be looked after on behalf of Allah according to His will.

Nature of Man

- Humans are not sinful by nature but they are vulnerable to temptation because they forget their dependence on Allah. They forget the rewards of Jannah (paradise) because they are caught up with getting rewards of Dunya (this temporary world).
- Unlike Original Sin in Christianity, Muslims believe that all humans are born in a pure state (fitra). Therefore everyone is born Muslim as they are on the path of truth but the material world misguides them as they grow. It is for this reason converts are called 'reverts' in Islam as they are returning to the true path.
- Sins cannot be committed until puberty.

Forgiveness

- Allah knows humans are weak and tend to sin. He is therefore 'Merciful' and 'Compassionate' to those who turn to Him in repentance.
- Sincere repentance is accepted in Islam. In Christianity one must confess their sins to a mediator, usually the priest, in order to be forgiven. In Islam one directly asks Allah for forgiveness.