



General Certificate of Education

Religious Studies (2060)

RSS10 World Religions 2

(either Christianity

or Judaism

or Islam 1 *The Way of Submission*)

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - January series

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General Comments

Section A *Christianity*

There were very few candidates for this section of the paper.

Question 1 (Topic 1 *Some beliefs about God: Trinity and salvation*)

Part (a)

Candidates who attempted this question had, in the main, a good understanding of the Christian concept of the Trinity.

Part (b)

This question was addressed poorly. There was a disappointing lack of consideration of the implications of the concept of the Trinity being unreasonable which led to some unbalanced responses.

Question 2 (Topic 2 *Christian Scriptures: nature and purpose*)

Part (a)

No candidates seemed to address the status of scripture as well as authority which was a little disappointing and of course this meant that candidates were unable to access the higher level marks for this part of the question.

Part (b)

Candidates tended to respond well to this covering a range of viewpoints and responding in a balanced and informed way.

Question 3 (Topic 3 *Aspects of Christian worship*)

Part (a)

The few candidates who responded to this question found it fairly straightforward and were able to offer explanations about beliefs and practices with a good range of knowledge and understanding.

Part (b)

Candidates tended to respond well to this covering a range of viewpoints and responding in a balanced and informed way.

Question 4 (Topic 4 *A Christian way of life; initiation, marriage and death*)

Part (a)

Only one candidate answered this question but with a fairly weak answer which did not really fully consider beliefs associated with death.

Part (b)

Some balance in analysis was evident from the candidate who understood this question better than part (b), but the response did not access above Level 3 because of a lack of depth.

Section B Judaism

Questions 5 and 7 were the most popular in this section of the paper.

Question 5 (Topic 1 *God and his people*)

Part (a)

A few candidates misread the question and tended to ignore 'relationship' although the question was generally well answered, with references to covenant, chosen people, two-way nature of relationship etc. There were also some excellent responses which were given from more able candidates, with a thorough examination of Jewish beliefs about God's relationship with the Jewish people. The quality of some of the answers revealed a very thorough treatment of the topic which was pleasing.

Part (b)

Very well answered on the whole with almost all candidates using the same examples but they had been really well taught. The evaluation question did pose problems for the weaker candidates who seemed unable to evaluate fully.

Question 6 (Topic 2 *Scripture*)

Part (a)

Not a popular question with only two candidates attempting this but offering very poor responses with no reference to Torah, tefillim or even during a bar mitzvah ceremony. There tended to be a limited expression of the way in which scripture can be used.

Part (b)

Answers were characterised by largely one-sided views in response to the evaluation statement. It should be noted that the command to 'assess this claim' requires that candidates consider the reasons why statements might be true **and** also give alternative views.

Question 7 (Topic 3 *Aspects of worship and festivals: Shabbat, Yom Kippur and Pesach*)

Part (a)

Some good descriptive answers, although many only discussed the Seder or spent a page describing bedikat hometz. Candidates included few statements that reform Jews don't practice any of it and just have the meal. That said, generally, the Pesach as a topic was well received and 'beliefs and practices' reflected understanding so responses were mostly of a good quality and were characterised by clarity, focus and direction on the beliefs and practices associated with Pesach. This proved to be a very accessible question.

Part (b)

Candidates gave much weaker responses to part (b) in general and appeared to struggle with the issue of 'no relevance for today'. Answers lacked depth and often vague ideas were offered with little discussion. Few responses seemed to say anything about it being a major family event, and even Reform Jews making sure they went to some kind of Seder. Only one candidate talked about modern slavery.

Question 8 (Topic 4 *Styles of Judaism: Orthodox and Reform beliefs and practices*)**Part (a)**

Candidates in the main offered good answers although many focused exclusively on worship in the synagogue and ignored the many other practices that take place in synagogue. Candidates had clearly learnt about aspects of worship in the synagogue in a focused and well observed way.

Part (b)

Overall good answers to part (b), with good ideas being presented, in the main. Many candidates explained articulately both support and refutation of the claim linking to whether synagogue practices are in fact the greatest difference between the two traditions. It was refreshing to see balanced and reasoned responses from the more able candidates and some supporting evidence used by the remainder of candidates although it must be said that a significant minority missed the point of the question and just discussed differences instead of whether worship is the biggest difference. Many answers contained factual inaccuracies like: Reform Jews never keep kosher or Reform Jews never circumcise their sons because they think it is barbaric.

Section C Islam 1 *The Way of Submission*

This was, by far, the most popular section of the paper, with Questions 9 and 10 being the most popular questions.

Question 9 (Topic 1 *The Qur'an*)**Part (a)**

Candidates' responses to this question were, in the main, excellent though worship sometimes received a stronger response than everyday life with more appropriate examples offered. Some candidates failed to respond to the actual question set and included lots of information about the revelation of the Qur'an or how it is kept on the highest shelf etc. Some candidates seemed to have prepared for a different type of question, notably the importance of the Qur'an for Muslims. Whilst there were some implicit links drawn, the direction of the question required a different response. As with comments made after last January's exam, it would be helpful if centres could remind candidates of the importance of addressing the actual question set.

Part (b)

Some excellent answers which discussed sunnah and sources of shariah. The stronger responses tended to be where candidates were able to look for other sources of guidance. Appropriate examples were offered although not always fully developed. Clearly the better answers offered a balanced assessment of different sources of guidance for Muslims.

Question 10 (Topic 2 *The Five Pillars*)**Part (a)**

Not all candidates addressed the question of *significance* of salah and sawm. A few weaker candidates missed the key word significance and offered mere descriptions instead which may have addressed importance. Equally, the weaker answers tended to write about, and around, the general topic. On reflection, responses about salah were far stronger than sawm. That said, some candidates at the top end offered a more mature response in dealing with both areas together. Focussing on examining the significance of both aspects allowed the top levels of the mark scheme to be accessed.

Part (b)

Candidates generally produced some good answers here with most looking at niyyah and some tackling the 6 pillars of Iman. The weaker candidates produced responses merely describing each of the 5 pillars and missed the key word duty. This question proved to be challenging to some candidates and weaker responses tended to neglect different duties for a Muslim.

Question 11 (Topic 3 *The doctrine of God*)

Part (a)

There were some superb answers, most candidates were able to deal with both areas clearly examining both oneness and uniqueness. Some candidates made the mistake of answering a question on the types of Tawhid and not the question asked.

Part (b)

There were some very good responses to this evaluation question with the very best being both balanced and thoughtful. Many looked at whether it is possible to *begin* to understand Allah. Some candidates were a little more simplistic in their response looking at the 99 names of Allah and the sense of Allah as beyond human comprehension.

Question 12 (Topic 4 *Key Beliefs*)

Part (a)

This was the least popular of the questions in the Islam section of the paper. Overall, there were some poor answers with either only one of the two beliefs being completed satisfactorily or there was a lot of unselective description of hell or the revelation of the Qur'an. There were also some very long answers produced although, again, some of these lacked focus. Some candidates overlooked the key word examine in their responses and it was then a case of giving as much information as possible for each key belief. This question did lead to a few candidates mixing the beliefs and facts. It was obvious they knew the material but it did lead to a lower mark which was a pity.

Part (b)

Some candidates failed to offer a single good point in support of the statement though many wrote effective answers against the statement. Timing did appear an issue for this part of the question – occasionally a response was non-existent! Most answers lacked focus on the issue and responses were too short in length.