

Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Religious Studies

Candidate Exemplar Work

Unit A: *Religion and Ethics 1*

Candidate's Response to *Abortion*

(Islamic perspective)



CANDIDATE EXEMPLAR WORK

GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY

RELIGIOUS STUDIES UNIT A RELIGION AND ETHICS 1

RSS01



EXAMPLE OF CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE

For this paper you must have:

- an 8-page answer book.

Time allowed: 1 hour 15 minutes

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book.
The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is **RSS01**.
- Answer **two** questions.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 90.
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- In each question, part (a) tests your knowledge and understanding, while part (b) tests your skills of reasoning and evaluation.
- You will be marked on your ability to use English, to organise information clearly and to use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

RSS01: Religion and Ethics 1 – *Abortion*

- 4 (a) ***Explain the religious arguments both for and against abortion with reference to at least one religion.***

(30 marks) AO1

Candidate Response

One Hadith says:

'For forty days it is a seed...forty days a clot of blood...forty days a morsel of flesh then the breath of Allah (ruh) is breathed into him'.

This is Muhammad talking about when ensoulment takes place. According to this Hadith, it is at 120 days. Muslims take a dualist approach, in that it is when the soul is enjoined to the body that the foetus is a human. From this verse we can therefore conclude an abortion is wrong after 120 days. Islam has different schools of law, though. Officially two allow abortion until 120 days and two up to 40 days. Although this is true, Muslim scholars argue it is simply morally wrong before that time.

They are able to argue this due to sura 3, which says

'No one can die except by Allah's leave, this is a decree with a fixed term'.

It may be argued therefore that Allah is the only person to be able to take a life away. This does fit in with the Islamic belief that ~~Mu~~ Allah has a masterplan and ~~ea~~ controls all that happens on the earth.

In the Qur'an it also says:

'Kill not your children for fear of want, for we shall provide for you + them both'.
(17:31)

Although originally this applied to infanticide, by analogy Muslim scholars have taken this to mean any child. It can therefore be concluded Muslims must be against abortion. This statement reassures mothers that feel that they will not be able to cope or provide enough for their child. This tells the mothers that no matter what happens Allah is by her side and will protect both the mother and the child.

Sura 2 says 'A mother should not be made to suffer because of her child.

Some Muslim scholars say that this means abortion should be allowed if the mother is in danger of dying.

Commentary

The answer provides an overview of teaching in Islam and includes a range of information. This information is only occasionally developed and, at some points, would have benefited from an explanatory example. In the time available a longer answer can reasonably be expected.

Some obvious points where the answer could have been developed include:

The link between the 'breath and Allah ' and the soul;

The jump from ' from this point the foetus is human' to the conclusion that 'abortion is wrong after 120 days';

The use of sura 3 and 17.31 – the teaching quoted applies when the 'person' is living so the debate about when the person is living has to be decided first. These verses on their own do not explain why the 120 days does not apply;

The sura 2 reference – this would benefit greatly from an example.

The answer clearly covers key ideas and facts (Level 5) and there is some development and some understanding of how Quran'ic verses are used as a basis of law. The style of writing also matches at least the descriptor parallel to Level 5 and makes good use of some specialist vocabulary. Given the specific use of source material from Hadith and Qur'an and the attempt to show how teachings have been derived from there – rather than general observations, the answer may be awarded bottom of Level 6.

<http://www.geocities.com/mutmainaa/food/abortion.html>

2.233: "A mother should not be made to suffer because of her child." As a result, abortion is possible for health reasons up to day 90 according to a number of scholars.

However, there is one exceptional situation. If, say the jurists, after the baby is completely formed, it is reliably shown that the continuation of the pregnancy would necessarily result in the death of the mother, then, in accordance with the general principle of the Shari'ah, that of choosing the lesser of two evils, abortion must be performed.

Hanafi and Shafii 120

Hanbali and Maliki 40

Level 6 (24 marks)