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Examiners' Report June 2009

GCE

GCE Religious Studies 6RS01

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Once again both candidates and presenting centres are to be congratulated on producing answers that demonstrated how much effort and preparation had gone into these examinations. In many cases candidates presented answers with a very varied field of content that directly answered the question. It is encouraging to see such a wide-ranging ability to respond to questions on so many areas within Religious Studies, which demonstrates again the commitment and hard work of so many teachers and students in our schools and colleges.

Although there was plenty of evidence of good practice, there were examples of a number of answers that had little evidence of being structured. Quite often this was indicated by poor construction of paragraphs. It may be useful for candidates to be familiar with the level descriptors which can be found, for example, in the Sample Assessment Materials on p 111ff. This states that a feature of AO1 levels 1 and 2 is that the writing may lack clarity and organisation, whereas a level 4 candidate will show 'good organisation and clarity'. Effective paragraph techniques are merely a part of good organisation in essays, but nevertheless an important part, and one that can be targeted for improvement by candidates.

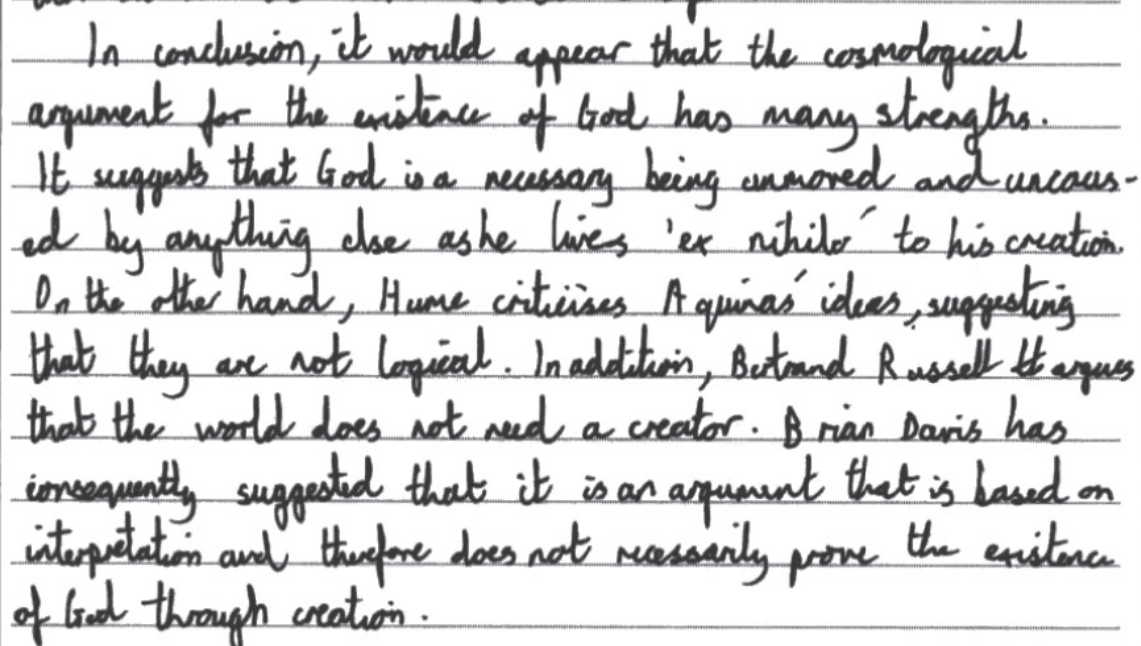
Philosophy

Question 1 (a)

The design argument was well known by a considerable number of candidates. Not all saw the difference between recounting all they knew about it and answering a question about strengths and weaknesses. Quite a number neglected to answer the AO2 part about probability; this was especially true of some scripts that combined parts (i) and (ii) into a single whole. The better candidates focused in on the idea of probability over proof and explored Swinburne's arguments in some detail.

Question 1 (b)

The cosmological argument was not as commonly answered as the design argument but seemed rather better known by those who did so. Some were quite at home dealing with the various scholars;



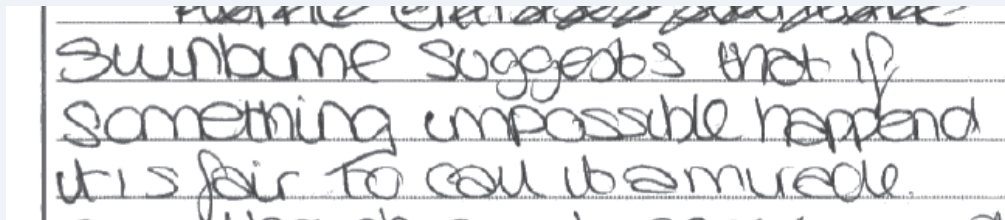
In conclusion, it would appear that the cosmological argument for the existence of God has many strengths. It suggests that God is a necessary being unmoved and uncaused by anything else as he lives 'ex nihilo' to his creation. On the other hand, Hume criticises Aquinas' ideas, suggesting that they are not logical. In addition, Bertrand Russell argues that the world does not need a creator. Brian Davis has consequently suggested that it is an argument that is based on interpretation and therefore does not necessarily prove the existence of God through creation.

Question 2 (a)

This was a very popular question and there were many very good responses which were characterised by a critical analysis of the problems of suffering before addressing two solutions: typically those of Augustine and Irenaeus. It is good to see Hick being credited with the changes he makes to what Irenaeus actually said. Weaker responses did not analyse the problem of evil but plunged straight into a brief description of solutions.

Question 2 (b)

This was probably the least popular question in the philosophy section. Good answers were able to present a full account of Hume's understanding of miracles and to present a variety of philosophical justifications for different definitions of miracle.



Weaker responses tended to be piecemeal and 'to do Hume' and then to give a number of variant definitions of miracle and then to throw in a reason for miracles – but all without cohesion.

The best responses to part (ii) were able to present the weaknesses as an evaluation of what they had done in part (i).

Ethics

Question 3 (a)

Many candidates made proficient use of the Euthyphro argument.

Another argument for religion and morality not being linked would be Euthyphro's Dilemma. This is the argument of: is God the commander of good? or is what he commands good? so is everything that God says good. For example in the Bible God told Isaac to let his son be killed. so does this mean that murder is good, just because God commanded it. Or is there something higher than God allowing morality and goodness to exist outside of his ministry. is God just the messenger of what good is and what acts can be justified as good? Some people would argue that this is the case, so you don't need to be religious to know what is right and wrong, as there is a supreme power existing outside of God's ministry that allows us to recognize what is good and bad.

Other material centred on the negative impact religion can have on moral behaviour, with many candidates drawing upon Dawkins and Russell. Answers to part (ii) of the question tended to lack scholarly argument, with some candidates simply stating unsubstantiated opinion. The better answers challenged the arguments outlined in part (i) and then critically assessed both points of view. There seemed to be, however, a general consensus that religion was no longer relevant which rather reduced the number of students who put forward any further arguments.

Question 3 (b)

Many explored the social context of the development of Utilitarianism and most understood the key differences between the qualitative and quantitative versions of the theory and the Hedonic calculus. Significant numbers talked about Mill's Rule Utilitarianism and its features but many did not give any significant reasons why this was an improvement on Bentham's theory or why dividing pleasures into higher and lower was significant. Many candidates struggled with part (ii) of the question and simply outlined the key features of Situation Ethics. There were some candidates who provided good evaluation between Situation Ethics and Utilitarianism

ii) Situation Ethics deals with each individual situation and does not depend on one ethical theory like utilitarianism.

but others simply outlined problems with Utilitarianism, rather than drawing on the strengths and weaknesses of them both.

Question 4 (a)

Too many candidates saw "Outline the arguments in favour of pacifism" to mean the same as "Describe the various forms of pacifism". However some rooted it in Quakerism, and gave modern examples, as well as Biblical references.

In the box, state whether you are answering part(a) or part(b). a

i) As the Quakers argue, the religious arguments for pacifism are numerous and virtuous.

Pacifism, which places emphasis on the sanctity of life and the brotherhood of human being on earth, is the peaceful alternative to the bloodshed caused by war.

Absolute pacifism, as followed by the Quakers, shows a belief that all war is immoral, damaging, corrupting and wrong. This belief is arguably justified by the examples of horrendous crimes committed within wars such as the genocides in Rwanda, Darfur and in the Holocaust. The belief that these mass murders are caused by war is therefore justified as reasonable.

Furthermore, as demonstrated in the Quaker belief, the evidence of more peaceful means are provided in Jesus' teachings. Such lessons as to turn the other cheek to an evil or aggressive attacker, to "love your neighbour" ~~love~~ as yourself or to

"^{love} pray for your enemies and ^{pray for} ~~persecute~~ those who persecute you" seem to imply that violence is not a justifiable answer. Thus, it can be argued that pacifism is reinforced by the teaching in the Bible and is in accordance with Christianity.

A variety of Biblical references were used to support positions and the examples of people such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King used. In part (ii) candidates tended to focus on the necessity of war to resist certain enemies. A common example used to justify this position was WWII and the Nazis. Unfortunately some candidates thought that a description of the Just War criteria would be sufficient to answer the question.

Question 4 (b)

Some candidates narrowed the question to focus on a particular sexual ethic and then explore the possibility of reaching a clear judgement; popular choices were homosexuality and pre-marital sex. This was an effective approach and those candidates who chose to do so often provided focused and salient answers, but many wrote broadly about sexual ethics without focus or clarity. Many candidates struggled with part (ii) and seemed unable to get to grips with the demands of the question. Many simply wrote that religious sexual ethics was out of date with secular approaches without any discussion of the relative values or that the demise of religion made it irrelevant in the discussion about sexual issues. This in turn made it more difficult to develop any other discussion other than GCSE standard answers.

ii) Some people argue that religious beliefs are not helpful because they come from ancient teachings e.g. the bible, ^{46 of 19} they argue that these teachings are no longer relevant to today's society as it has moved on. Society has different morals and values. Therefore for example sex for pleasure may not have been moral in the past but today modern society values pleasure & more highly. Therefore religious beliefs would not be very helpful as they do not apply to the current generation. However ~~relig~~ Hume argues they are not to be taken leg

Buddhism

Question 5 (a)

There were some very thorough answers on the religious context prior to the time of Buddha although most answers incorporated information relating to the religious context at the time of Buddha. The most able candidates were able to explain how religious teachings were adapted by Buddha, others simply identified which were rejected and which were adapted. Surprisingly few candidates identified meditation practice as a key feature. (ii) Candidates answers tended to overlap in content with part (i) either repeating information about what was adapted or rejected, or addressing that issue in (ii) instead of in (i). Few candidates were able to debate with fresh ideas.

Question 5 (b)

(i) Generally this was answered less well than 5a in terms of focusing material to the question asked. Weaker candidates went for the biographical approach telling Buddha's life story with little focus on how the events related to the teaching of Buddha. Very few students wrote about 'his disciples'. A few candidates had a good grasp of the concepts taught by Buddha. (ii) Some interesting answers dealt with the pre-existence of the dharma and Buddha's understanding and communication of it, with subsequent debate as to whether or not this counted as 'founding'. Some argued whether the Buddha did intend to found a religion, others whether what he founded was indeed a religion or was it a philosophy; both approaches are valid.

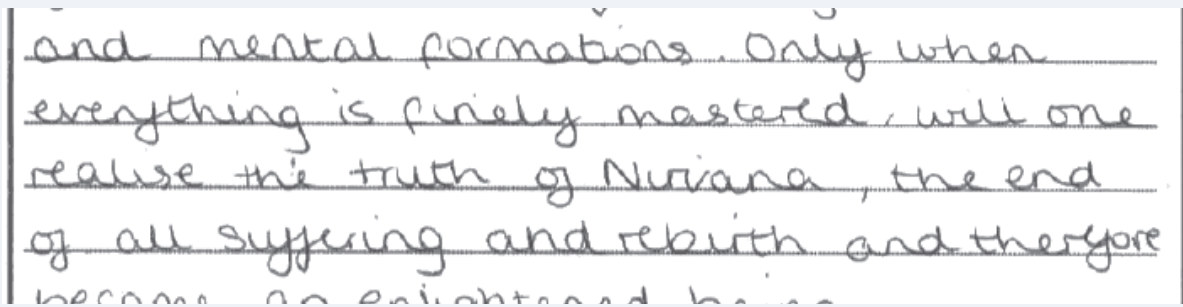
...dharma created being. In this sense, one could argue that Buddhism is a philosophy rather than a religion as there are no deities in which to worship. But Buddhism has a community and...

Question 6 (a)

Candidates had a good understanding of the meaning of 'refuge' but were less able to write fluently about the links between the refuges. Some candidates, instead of focusing on the links between these refuges chose to answer which refuge was the most important. (ii) Candidates tended to repeat or expand information from (i) about each refuge. Some focused on the relationship between the laity and the monks.

Question 6 (b)

(i). Many candidates chose to write about Samatha and Vipassana, while some wrote about the Brahma Viharas. They tended to write descriptively rather than focus on key features although the best answers were very thorough. Some scholarly material was used to describe the aspects of mental cultivation. Weaker students were confused about 'enlightenment' and so were not able to understand the relationship between it and meditation. However some were clearer



and mental formations. Only when everything is purely mastered, will one realise the truth of Nirvana, the end of all suffering and rebirth and therefore become an enlightened being.

(ii) There were some excellent answers with good understanding of the nature and purposes of meditation.

Christianity

Question 7 (a)

The majority of candidates were able to choose a controversy such as the Arian Controversy and give an account of the doctrine on the relationship between Jesus and God recognising that there were issues within the early church regarding the divinity of Jesus. Many candidates were able to use appropriate technical vocabulary indicating control of the subject matter.

Arius
believed that Jesus was not of the same substance as the father and there had been a time before he existed. This conflicted with the belief of Jesus' position in the Trinity - Arius concluded that Jesus was God's very special creature - a subordinate, non-divine God. This goes against the church teaching that Jesus is of the same substance as the father (homoousios.) Under Arianism, father and son are of 'like substance' (homoiousios) but not homoousios.*

Reference to the Nicene Creed was made to determine the significance of the debates and relevance for Christians today, particularly regarding salvation.

Question 7 (b)

This question gave rise to misinterpretation and was probably the least popular. Candidates appeared to be confused by 'one religious context' and interpreted the Church's teaching about the life and work of Jesus from a biblical perspective so gave simplistic accounts of Jesus life and work. It should be noted that the specification says clearly: "The Church's teaching about the life and work of Jesus in its historical, religious and social context."

Better candidates however did grasp the intention of the question and typically referred to the Reformation period using the key figures of Luther and Calvin who wrote within these contexts. Candidates considered justification by faith and election (who will be saved) and the difficulties associated with them. Most answers were at a basic level indicating that candidates found this topic hard.

Question 8 (a)

A lot of candidates were tempted to give an account of the days of creation in Genesis and not much more. Weaker candidates gave poor observations about the Big Bang versus Christian creation story. Better candidates did discuss the difference between God as creator and creation itself; and ideas of stewardship referring to how it is humanity's responsibility to look after God's creation which he said was 'good'.

In the box, state whether you are answering part(a) or part(b).

(i) God being a creator is the epitome of vital Christian belief. In classical terms, the belief is that God is intrinsically good, omnibenevolent, omniscient and omnipotent. These are all the characteristics of how a God 'should' be.

(ii) The second part of the question included a variety of responses such as how Christians accept the fact that the world is not perfect, how there are difficulties raised by scientific discoveries and advancement for example cloning. Vague statements were made about the difficulty of accepting God as Creator and scientific developments.

Question 8 (b)

Arguably the most popular question as in previous years, the majority answered this well indicating a thorough understanding of the practice within the different denominations studied. Candidates were able to give fairly detailed descriptions of what happens at Eucharistic services. Better candidates added depth to their descriptions and explained the significance of the sacrament, supporting their answers with biblical references and scholarly opinions. Candidates tended to contrast the Roman Catholic Church with the Methodist Church. Part (ii) again was quite well answered. Most made the observation that the Eucharist was modelled on the Last Supper and was a regular practice in the Early Church as a commemoration of Jesus' death and something shared by believers as a means of fellowship. Candidates discussed the nature of the sacrament itself referring to transubstantiation and consubstantiation or whether it is symbolic, few knew the phrase declaratory or efficacious. Scholarly opinion was used to support answers from better candidates.

Hinduism

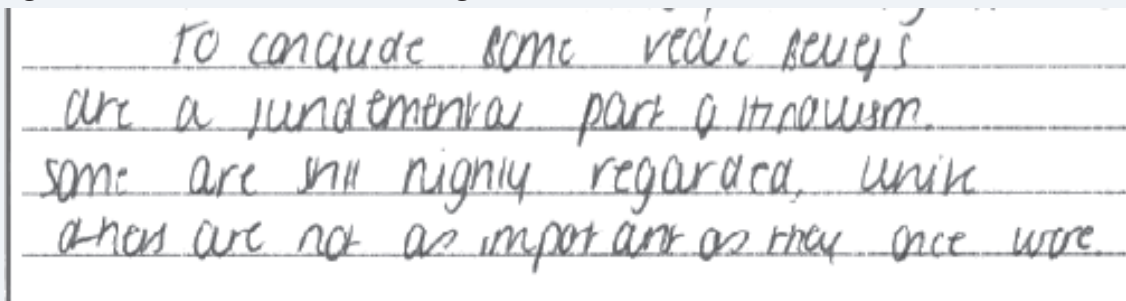
Question 9 (a)

Some candidates took a long time to address the question and wrote about the history of exploration with mainly descriptive rather than analytical answers; less able candidates simply wrote all they knew about the Indus valley. Part (ii) was not well answered. Most candidates spent far too much time on part (i) than (ii) but those who knew the material included well produced very good responses.

Question 9 (b)

There were very few responses to this question but some were able to pick out fundamental features of Vedic religion. Part (ii) was very well answered with good links made to later Hinduism.

Eg In a conclusion to an answer that gained full marks.



To conclude some vedic beliefs are a fundamental part of Hinduism. Some are still highly regarded, while others are not as important as they once were.

Question 10 (a)

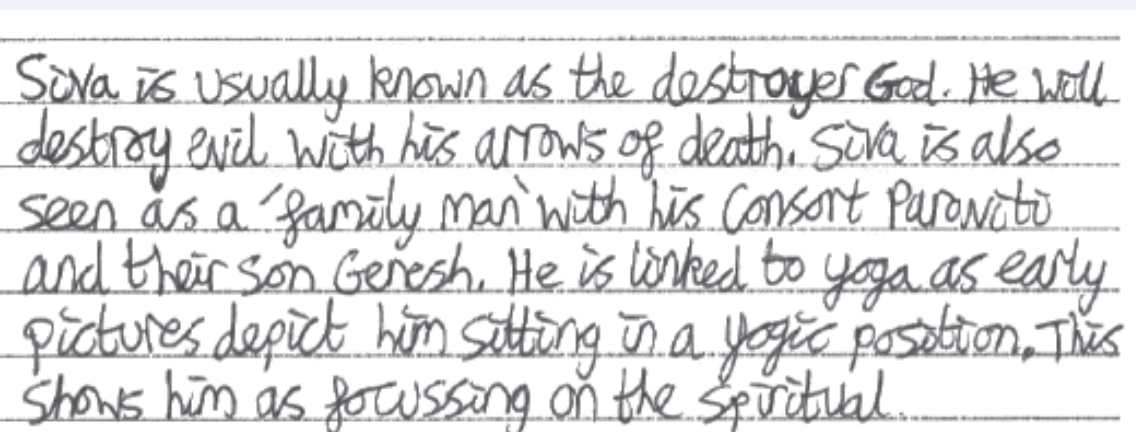
Good responses included beliefs and practices associated with Bhakti yoga with reference to ISKON.

Candidates who answered this question knew their material well.

Weaker answers wrote too much information about one type of yoga and only partly addressed the second yoga. Part (ii) was not well answered by most candidates. Most failed to grasp the significance of the word *purpose* in the question.

Question 10 (b)

There were some excellent answers which were able to offer a full exposition of Krishna, Siva and Rama. The best were not just descriptive but interpretative.



Siva is usually known as the destroyer God. He will destroy evil with his arrows of death. Siva is also seen as a 'family man' with his consort Parvati and their son Ganesha. He is linked to yoga as early pictures depict him sitting in a yogic position. This shows him as focussing on the spiritual.

There were also answers that included information on the various Bhakti movements associated with these Gods but failed to address the specific question. Weaker answers mixed up features of Rama and Krishna. Those who answered (ii) offered a clear understanding and evaluation, together with the views of scholars.

Islam

Question 11 (a)

Zoroastrianism can be perhaps be said to successfully attempt to create a balance between monotheistic beliefs and polytheistic ones. It did believe in one main God - Al Uda Mazda, "Lord Wisdom", and it attempted to retain some recognition in reference to polytheism by adding in his daughters, each representing either truth or lies. It was the belief of Zoroaster (the prophet for Zoroastrianism) that everyone would meet on the bridge of discrimination and those who followed truth would be sent to heaven, whilst those people who chose ~~lies~~ ^{the wrong lies} would be sent to Hell. However scholars commenting on the origin of Zoroastrianism have found it to contain references similar to that in Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism.

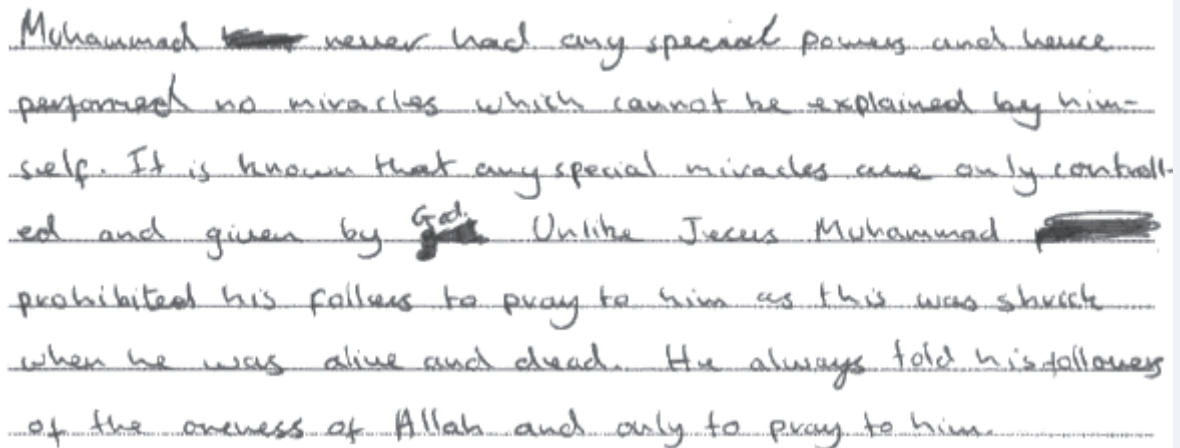
Most answers reflected a good understanding of polytheism as a key religious feature. While some included discussions about other religions i.e. Christianity and Judaism, fewer referred to Zoroastrianism.

There was some reference to social features in this answer and some candidates just discussed society and very little about religion, overall though there were many good answers to this question.

Question 11 (b)

Many responses were quite basic, giving an overview to Muhammad's life and very little reference to specific examples of problems and successes. At some levels there was mention of problems in Makkah especially, persecution and boycott, but fewer examples of successes in Madinah. Examples given included the battles, the first Mosque, the introduction of pillars and the conquest of Makkah. Few referred to the Constitution of Madinah.

Some struggled with (ii); this candidate compared Muhammad to Jesus though, of course, that is not necessary.



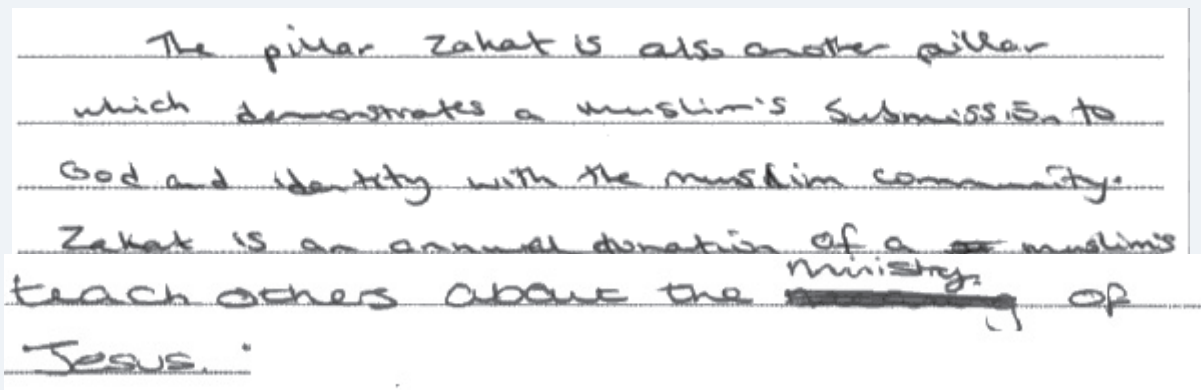
Muhammad ~~was~~ never had any special powers and hence performed no miracles which cannot be explained by himself. It is known that any special miracles are only controlled and given by God. Unlike Jesus Muhammad ~~prohibited~~ prohibited his followers to pray to him as this was shirk when he was alive and dead. He always told his followers of the oneness of Allah and only to pray to him.

Question 12 (a)

There were very few good answers for this. Most attempts reflected a poor understanding of the subject, and were very general. Typically they referred to Muhammad but not to other Prophets.

Question 12 (b)

As in previous years, many responses dealt with this at a basic level. While they outlined details of the different pillars, they sometimes failed to refer to how these show submission and identity. Some candidates, however, successfully did so.



The pillar Zakat is also another pillar which demonstrates a muslim's submission to God and identity with the muslim community. Zakat is an annual donation of a muslim's ^{wealth} ~~teach~~ ~~others~~ ~~about~~ ~~the~~ ~~teachings~~ ~~of~~ Jesus.

(ii) However the comments about problems and solutions seemed to get better responses.

Judaism

Very few candidates answered questions 13 and 14.

Sikhism

Very few candidates answered questions 15 and 16.

New Testament

Question 17 (a)

(i) and (ii). Luke candidates knew and understood the concepts and the better ones backed this up with scholarly debate and evaluation. Answers tended to be a little short and responses to (ii) were a little thin. Fourth Gospel candidates answered well and knew the material and there was some impressive referencing to Old Testament scriptures and supporting scholars.

As Reid identifies, Jesus says "I am" 26 times in the Fourth Evangelist. The phrase seems to be deliberate and possesses great significance. There are seven main "I am" sayings corresponding to seven signs and seven discourses performed by Jesus. These "I am" sayings are only relative to John's Gospel and the fact that there are seven might suggest that they are perfection. Each saying has tremendous meaning and background information. Furthermore, they all have Christological purpose and

In (ii) evaluation was generally good, though some candidates repeated the information given in (i).

Question 17 (b)

(i) and (ii). This was the least popular question. Answers to Luke were a little thin with a number of candidates doing little more than re-tell the textual narrative. Some were able to distinguish the miracle as seen from the reader's standpoint,

as to help provide a basis for the people's faith.
 For instance, an example could be said to be the calming of the storm, readers are able to see God's power ^{and authority} over nature materialise, though ~~the~~ even though the disciples show a lack of faith.

The more able were able to link the incidents to Old Testament prophecy and could use this in (ii) to show how Jesus was the Son of God. Fourth Gospel candidates did better and most understood the significance of the incidents and were able to relate them to the fulfilment of scripture. For (ii) a number gave rather broad answers about miracles as a whole.

Question 18 (a)

(i) and (ii). The most popular question, and the best done. For Luke, candidates offered a variety of Jesus' teachings and examples from his own life and were able to relate them well to Jewish tradition. In (ii) a few weaker candidates simply re-told the incidents without applying their knowledge to the question itself. For the Fourth Gospel, most knew the material very well and were able to use it well in conjunction with scholarly opinion.

(i) Women are seldom mentioned in the bible for many reasons. They are often deemed inferior and their accounts and witnesses are not often considered. At the time of Jesus, they were treated like possessions, they would belong to their father until passed onto her husband. Women were not educated, or even allowed to read the Torah or enter the inner temple. People believed knowledge brings power therefore wanted

to keep the women protected. The bible was written mainly by men in a male dominated society.

For (ii) a number wrote a little too much about the state of women in Judaism generally, rather than address the attitude and teaching of Jesus.

Question 18 (b)

(i) and (ii). Although not very popular, most answers on this question were good. In (i) the candidates were able to explain Jesus' teaching on discipleship and the more able were able to apply scholarly opinion and extensive textual referencing. Some listed various demands made by Jesus without prioritising them some prioritised them; both approaches are valid.

There are various demands of discipleship, the most important being to believe in Jesus, as he says in John 6:
"The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."
Belief is linked to life as it gives physical life in all its fullness and eternal life through Jesus. Thomas is the contrast to a good disciple.

In (ii) better candidates used a range of incidents, supported by quotations from the text and scholars, and came to various conclusions.

Some scholars argue that the Twelve are less important in John's Gospel than in the Synoptics. John tends to focus on individuals such as the blind man or the Samaritan woman. John may have been trying to say that all disciples are equally important to Jesus.

Grade Boundaries

6RS01: Unit 1 - Foundations

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N
Raw boundary mark	90	62	55	48	41	35	29
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40	30

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