

Examiners' Report
June 2018

GCE Religious Studies 8RS0 4D

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Introduction

This is the second year of 8RS0/4D and candidates achieved across the whole mark range and it was good to see a substantial number of answers receiving full marks.

Candidates achieving marks in the higher levels produced work reflecting a close focus upon the demands of the question and good knowledge of the topics. There was no choice within the examination paper and it was therefore necessary for candidates to study all areas of the syllabus.

Marks awarded for questions varied:

Question 1 = 8 marks AO1; Question 2 = 3 marks AO1 and 6 marks AO2; Question 3 = 3 marks AO1 and 6 marks AO2; Question 4a = 8 marks AO1 and Question 4b= 5 marks AO1 and 15 marks AO2.

Question 1

Section A

This question asked candidates to 'Explore beliefs about prophets as one of the Six Beliefs'.

It was pleasing to see that this question was answered well by a substantial number of people and only a small number gained low marks due to brief answers that needed amplifying or simple narrative accounts about Muhammad's call to Prophethood. The better answers were full, though succinct and linked Risalah to the importance of Muhammad as the Seal of the prophets, with careful explanation of the relationship with the Six Beliefs.

1 Explore beliefs about the prophets as one of the Six Beliefs.

Muslims believe that Allah revealed prophets for every nation since the beginning of time and it is ~~from~~ ^{through} the prophets that Allah revealed his message to humanity. Adam is believed to be the first prophet who was given the task of a Khalifah, through his example Muslims learnt about their role as on the earth. Muslims believe that Musa was also a prophet and that he was given the Torah, but because Allah's message in the Torah got corrupted, Allah had to reveal another prophet. Isa (Jesus) is also ~~also~~ considered as a prophet in Islam, and Allah revealed to him the Gospel, but because that was altered, Allah sent down Prophet Muhammad as the final prophet. Ultimately, all prophets brought the same message that Allah is one and ~~at~~ Alone is worthy of worship and that these people should shun down the false good. The beliefs in the prophet is necessary for a muslim, as it is part of the aqida, without believing in the prophets it may mean that a muslim falls out of the fold of Islam. Also, the prophets are clear examples of how we should live our lives, according to divine commands. Therefore to reject the prophet is to reject the words of Allah and to disobey a prophet is to disobey the word of Allah. The ~~Quran~~ Qu'ran says "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the messenger of Allah and Allah has full knowledge of all things. Muslims recognise ~~that~~ Prophet Muhammad as the 'seal of the prophets' and believe that there will be no prophet after him.

1 Explore beliefs about the prophets as one of the Six Beliefs.

Belief surrounding the prophets or Risalan is a central one in Islam. The first prophet was Adam and the final or seal of the prophets was Muhammad. Prophets are chosen by Allah to act as an intermediary between the people and Allah. Each one that is sent, is done has the job of confirming, adding or correcting Allah's wishes^{and Tawhid} for example Muhammad was sent as the final prophet to confirm religions prior like Christianity and ~~re~~-install Tawhid as ^{the concept of} Jesus being a God or son of God is completely forbidden and is Shirk. So each prophet was sent to teach Tawhid and guide the people, since people lack knowledge of past and future and are frail in nature so they need guidance. The main prophets are those from the Abrahamic roots and every prophet was granted a holy text, like Musa receiving the Taurat, Dawud receiving Zabur, Isa receiving the Injeel and Muhammad receiving the Quran. Furthermore ~~it~~ each prophet was sent in an attempt to reveal the Quran which was the one miracle of Muhammad. Also, the prophets are not to be worshipped, which is backed in the Quran due to mentioning Muhammad 4 times and forbidding any pictures of him or for his words to be recorded thus highlighting **(Total for Question 1 = 8 marks)** the importance of Allah and Tawhid.



The candidates were awarded 8 marks.
These two answers gained marks in level three and reflect:

- a wide range of specialist language and terminology appropriately and accurately used
- an wide range of knowledge about prophets and the the Six Beliefs
- knowledge and understanding of the importance of these beliefs for Muslims.

Question 2

This question asked candidates to 'Assess the view that Muhammad could not accept the beliefs and practices of polytheism after his revelations'.

It was pleasing to see that many candidates focused upon the question and gained marks in Level three. These answers gave reasons why Muhammad was unable to accept polytheism and highlighted the changes that took place after the Revelation whilst also explaining the traditions that were taken, changed and reapplied to Islam. Answers gaining marks in the lower levels tended to be brief and were often simplistic responses, emphasising Muhammad's rejection of polytheism.

2 Assess the view that Muhammad could not accept the beliefs and practices of polytheism after his revelations.

Al Banna makes clear that the introducing of the Quran is direct condemnation of what had come before it which is the time of Jahiliyyah. However this is because the main message of Islam was tawhid which is the belief in the uniqueness of Allah, it is a direct forbiddance of shirk which was prevalent in times of Jahiliyyah and as polytheism was a prominent belief. Shirk in Islam is the greatest sin which is unforgivable and taahid therefore is the greatest truth.

Religions of Jahiliyyah had multiple deities and believed in animism which results in idolatry which are not in Islam therefore, a belief and practice Muhammad rejected. In addition, Muhammad rejected all social practices such as usury as it was a sin in Islam and is made clear in the Quran its forbidden, as the Quran is the direct word of Allah and divine in nature it holds authority therefore it cannot be accepted. Other customs such as committing suicides and prostitution was made forbidden and not transferred to Islam.

However, Bahier disagreed with Al Banna and proposed that there are some customs and beliefs that Islam has transferred with slight alteration, such as the idea of tawaf (circumambulation) around the Ka'aba except Islam makes clear that 'physical bodily parts (ma'at) are covered' in times of Jahiliyyah people did tawaf naked. The Abrahamic roots of Ka'abah were known. In addition, the practice of five daily prayers were transferred from the Zoroastrian belief which shows that Muhammad did not wholly reject.

beliefs and practices.

In conclusion, ~~while some practices and beliefs~~
~~were transferred that a majority was rejected~~
while some practices and beliefs were rejected, some
practices and beliefs were still carried on such as
Qisas (retaliation) the idea of someone kill a person they
must face retaliation. however Muhammad rejected other
practices such as tribal relations and advocated ummah
and unity also the idea nobility is based on taqwa
and piety and not wealth and children.

2 Assess the view that Muhammad could not accept the beliefs and practices of polytheism after his revelations.

Muhammad could not accept the beliefs and practices of polytheism which was clear during the battle of Badr. Despite being such a peaceful man, he knew that such lifestyles the Quraysh embedded were toxic and had to use violence to get rid of them and remove such evil from society. The battle of Badr showed the Quraysh that the polytheistic / animistic ideologies were wrong and Tawhid was the only right.

Also, the Hijrah, where Muhammad left Mecca and went to Madinah for almost 10 years showed that he is completely against any polytheist ideologies. He set up a theocracy in Madinah, run on Shariah law where everyone lived peacefully (ie. Christians, Jews, Muslims). He also said that the ummah is made up of people believing in Tawhid and they will enter heaven which demonstrates the enormity of rejection he had towards polytheist beliefs.

Enakly

73. Certainly, Muhammad was completely against any polytheist beliefs as he was a Kafir. Kafirs are men that bring back the idea of Tawhid when humans go astray and disregard Allah. ~~But~~ the fact Allah chose him to be the seal of the prophet shows he is against any and all polytheist beliefs.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The candidates were awarded 9 marks. These two answers gained marks in level 3 and reflect the following:

- clear understanding that the Qur'an and polytheism are incompatible
- the importance of Tawhid and shirk
- use of scholars
- careful use of specialist language and terminology
- coherent and reasoned judgments supported by evidence.

Question 3

This question required candidates to 'Assess the view that sawm (fasting) demonstrates submission to the will of Allah'.

Candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of Sawm and the Five Pillars with some candidates gaining full marks. The better answers focused upon the demands of the question concerning the view that Sawm demonstrates submission to Allah's will. These also compared the restrictions placed upon those who do not have to fast and the nature of submission shown in other pillars, whilst also using a wide range of information relating to attitudes and practices of different Muslim groups. Answers in the lower levels tended to describe the practice rather than focusing on the question.

3 Assess the view that sawm (fasting) demonstrates submission to the will of Allah.

Sawm is the fourth pillar of Islam and it demonstrates fasting in the month of Ramadan. A month of sincere devotion and worship for the sake of Allah to strive and show submission to Allah. As it is a pillar of Islam, Muslims must believe and follow it.

According to Turner Sawm is an "implicit attack on man's carnal cravings". It teaches Muslims how to control their desires for worldly things and instead worship and submit to their creator. This shows submission to Allah as in this month Muslims are doing what they were created for.

On the other hand it could be argued that Salah demonstrates submission to Allah. In the Quran it says to "hasten to prayer", this reflects how a Muslim should hurry to worship Allah. Salah is the point in the day when Muslims leave the worldly life and commune with Allah. Muslims demonstrate submission to God by praying 5 times a day too.

However Saum also teaches Muslims "Taqwa"
Self restraint. It teaches Muslims to better
themselves through the worship of Allah.

Submitting themselves purely to Allah through
praying and recitation of the Quran Muslims
become better people.

This ~~shows~~ ^{concludes} that Saum is also an
essential pillar which teaches Muslims
to submit to Allah and worship him
as well as the other 5 pillars.

"cornerstone of social injustice" - Turner

3 Assess the view that sawm (fasting) demonstrates submission to the will of Allah.

Sawm demonstrates submission to the will of Allah as it requires a muslim to remain patient and show gratefulness to Allah as well as empathy toward the less fortunate. It requires giving 2.5% of your wealth in the month of Ramadan which highlights the importance of giving to charity and uniting the Ummah who are suffering and are in need of help. This is the Sunni belief. Turner says "cornerstone of social injustice"

However, there are also Shia Muslims who do also understand the importance of sawm but instead they give 1/5 of their wealth to charity to signify their obedience and submission to Allah as well as providing for others.

Sawm is also submission to Allah as it has many requirements such as not eating ^{or} ~~drinking~~ purposes, invalid when on period and must not have sex which highlights the significance of purity and staying in submission of Allah. However, if one eats accidentally, this will not break the fast. Ghulam says "we have a

duty toward others" which shows the significance of Sawm and remembering those less fortunate as well as obeying Allah as it's one of his pillars. "Eat when the white thread of dusk appears before you".

Sawm is also important for submission as it gets rid of habits and addictions such as smoking and drinking as well as having physical benefits such as reducing risk of illnesses and morally which brings you closer to Allah. This highlights this as a blessed

(Total for Question 3 = 9 marks)

And holy month, supporting families as well as uniting them e.g. on Ramadan prayers in a mosque for men ~~at home~~ with a sermon and Adhan. However, women must read at home. This may include reading Quran and using Subha beads to show submission to Allah. Other prayers also such as du'a, tahaajud and jummah to unite ummah.

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 26 MARKS



The candidates were awarded 8 marks. Both answers were awarded marks in level three and demonstrate:

- good ability to focus upon the demands of the question
- a wide range of specialist knowledge, language and terminology
- coherent and reasoned judgments showing the relationship between sawm and submission to Allah
- an individual approach relating to the trigger word 'assess' in which one answer relates it to salah and the other, to payment of zakat.

Question 4

Section B

Question 4a

In this question candidates were asked to 'Explore the key features of Muhammad's work in Madinah'.

This question had a variety of responses with a spread of marks. Most candidates were able to show the difference made by Muhammad in Madinah. Weaker answers were brief and generalised whereas the better responses were full and detailed and demonstrating a good knowledge of political developments during this period and details of the Constitution of Madinah.

Question 4b

This was the question with most marks and gave the greatest differentiation.

It is good to note that whereas some candidates provided answers that were brief or lacking debate and analysis, a few candidates were awarded full marks, whilst a substantial number gained marks reflecting sound knowledge and understanding. The better responses used their material well and gave full reasons for the Qur'an being a source of authority for Muslim belief and practices. Many compared the authority of Sharia, Sunnah and Hadith to that of the Qur'an and included the views of different Muslim groups.

4 (a) Explore the key features of Muhammad's work in Madinah.

(8)

Formerly Yathrib, Madinah was where Muhammed moved to during the Hijrah of 622CE. The Hijrah allowed Muhammed to establish himself as a ~~political~~ leader, and not just a political refugee. In Madinah, Muhammed gained support from the people and grew his following and army, established a constitution which made Madinah the first city-wide theocracy and granted peace between all monotheistic religions. The constitution made all citizens inherently muslim as they all had to follow Islamic teachings and principals such as the 5 pillars. For example, even before the establishment of the constitution of Madinah, Muhammed encouraged a regular Zakat donations, which contrasted to the sporadic giving of sadaqa that occurred during the Jahilliyah. Furthermore, Muhammed's night journey had resulted in a change of direction of the qibla, from Jerusalem to Mecca, had established the call to prayer, and the building of mosques which encourages group prayers, especially on Friday, Jummah.

(b) Analyse the view that the Qu'ran is the source of authority for all Muslim belief and practice.

(20)

The Quran is the holy book of Islam and is considered by Muslims to be the infallible word of Allah. It was revealed by the arch angel Jibreel, who is an intermediary between Allah and humanity, to the prophet Muhammad over many years. In this essay, I will be discussing the Quran as a source of authority for all Muslim belief and practice.

Firstly, as the Quran was revealed to Muhammad, who is the seal of the prophets, it is clear that the Quran is a summation of the previous messages sent down by Allah. This emphasises the fact that, for Muslims, the Quran is infallible as nothing was sent down after it and furthermore, ~~the Quran is the~~ it is uncorrupted, making it the source of authority for all Muslim belief and practice as it is the only ~~solid~~ source of authority directly from Allah.

~~Also,~~

However, it could be argued that the Quran, although a ~~solid~~ solid source of authority, it is not so for all Muslim belief and practice as the Quran is, at times, vague. For example, in the Quran it states that all "true believers must

pray to Allah" (Sura 9 v 26) but it ~~does~~ is only through the hadith and sunnah that a muslim understand that prayer must be 5 times a day and at specific times. Therefore the Quran is not a source of authority for all muslim belief and practice as the hadith and sunnah is needed to elaborate on the Quran. Also, Muhammed himself stated during his final sermon that muslims must refer to the "Quran and the sunnah" in order to be truly submissive to Allah. This meaning that muslims must refer to Muhammed's example for guidance on belief and practice as well as the Quran.

Furthermore, the Quran is not the source of authority for all muslim belief and practice as during the hijrah of 622CE, which Karen Armstrong described as an "unforeseen" move on the path of ~~the~~ Muhammed as it was unheard of to leave your tribe and move away, ~~the~~ Muhammed went on his night journey which resulted in the ~~direction of~~ ~~pro~~ qibla being changed from Jerusalem to Mecca, specifically towards the Ka'abah. This is important as

all muslims to this day still pray in that direction. Moreover, the Hijrah provided muslims with the first call to prayer, which still takes place today and the building of the first mosque, which muslims use and pray in to this day. Therefore, the Quran is not the only source of authority for all muslim belief and practice as there are other aspects of Islamic history that contribute to it.

Lastly, for shia muslims, a source of authority is the 12 infallible imams who they look to for guidance on interpreting the Quran and behaviour in aspects such as mourning and prayer, which is done differently to sunnis. Therefore it is not just the Quran that is a source of authority for all muslim belief and practice as different sectors of Islam have different sources of authority.

Overall, despite the Quran being the main source of authority and the only part of Islam that is directly from Allah, there are many other sources of authority for

Muslims that have, over time contributed to belief and practice.

4 (a) Explore the key features of Muhammad's work in Madinah.

(8)

He went on hijrah to Medina ~~to~~ (known as yathrib then) to create peace and harmony between the Jews in which he did ~~nothing~~ through the constitution of Medina. There he ~~acted~~ acted as a mediator, ^{as he had a good reputation of being} and a governor for many ^{the honest one} years and there was peace. ~~Then he~~ ~~where~~ where he built the first ever mosque ~~and~~ which is ^{now} known as Masjid al Qibla tayyib as ~~it was~~ the qibla changed from Bayt al maqdis in Jerusalem towards the Kab'ah. ~~Then~~ He also had ~~seen~~ the Battle of Badr whilst in ~~Medina~~ Medina where he ~~was~~ had defeated the Quraysh who were oppressing him and had gained respect throughout the Arabian peninsula. ~~As a result of this~~ This had lead him to ^{conquer} ~~gain~~ Makkah, ~~as he was a law~~. He ^{started} ~~wrote~~ the Islamic calendar on the year 0 ^{during the} ~~of the~~ hijrah, when they got to Medina. He also ~~started~~ ^{gave} the first ever Islamic governance to a lawless land, creating ~~a~~ theocracy in Medina. And then in Makkah after.

(b) Analyse the view that the Qu'ran is the source of authority for all Muslim belief and practice.

(20)

The Quran is the direct and infallible word of Allah hence why it is essential and important to all Muslims, however, it is not the only source of authority that Muslims use in their lives in ~~add to~~ hope of a successful after life.

The Quran is the basis of every Muslim's faith as it is the direct, infallible word of Allah that ~~no one~~ ^{everyone} needs to ~~follow~~ adhere to. ~~as~~ The Quran contains multiple laws that are important to follow otherwise ~~of~~ the Akhirah is looking bleak as they will be thrown into the fire of hell and there in forever. Hence the Quran acts as a reminder for Muslims ~~as~~ as to what awaits for them if they disobey Allah ~~but~~ but it Allah glorifies and shows them what the Jannah will be like if they are ~~from~~ from the mutaqoon (the righteous ones). Therefore it ~~is the source of authority~~ is the source of authority ~~for~~ for all Muslim belief as Muslims ~~cannot~~ can not find out about the after life in any other way as Allah through his omnibenevolence informed us ~~about~~ about what awaits to give Muslims hope and to strive for a good eternal life as the life is nothing but a test from the Almighty being.

However, some ~~people~~ ⁱⁿ disagree as the Quran it ~~not~~ ~~the~~ states that the prophet Muhammad is the "best of men" and therefore should be followed in his ways, ~~as~~ ~~every~~ Everyday

Muslims make a dua (supplication) to Allah asking him to guide them upon the "Straight Path". The straight path is the one of Muhammad and therefore Muslims try to live their life in accordance to his sunnah as he asked them to in his first sermon. However, the Quran only mentions him 4 times and making it impossible to submit to Allah will if we did not have the Hadiths. Hadiths are the written/recorded sayings and actions of the prophet. ~~that are the only~~ ^{only} a source of authority. Overall, making the Quran ~~an impossible~~ ^{only} for Muslim belief and practice.

However, there is an increasing number of Quran only Muslims as the Hadiths are categorised dependent upon who recorded them and who said what as the hadiths at first were transported word by mouth ~~through~~ and could have therefore been lost through the ~~record~~ chain of ~~story~~ stories. ~~There are~~ ^{there are} hence why ~~are there~~ 3 categories - ~~the~~ sahih (sound), Hasan (good) and da'if (weak). These categorisations themselves mean that the Sunnah can never ~~truly~~ truly be followed as we have no way of knowing if the ~~the~~ Prophet had ever ~~actions~~ actually done these actions. Also at the beginning of prophet hood Muhammad never allowed people to record his sayings, or actions in fear that they might start worshipping him hence why Muslims have no pictures

of him. This means that the Quran should only be used as the source of authority as that is certain to be ~~the Quran~~ authentic and true.

The Quran has some rules that people view as being barbaric as illustrated through the media, ^{increasingly} propaganda against Muslims. ~~as the~~ However, ~~these rules are~~ ^{viewed} this as ~~unjust things~~. However, these rules are only given context to through the hadiths and therefore it is important for both Muslim belief and practice as you must follow the Quranic laws in order to be a good Muslim. Therefore, you must cut the hand off a thief but it is only in the hadiths that you learn you cannot do so if the person is starving or ~~has~~ has a valid reason for doing so. Also, in the Quran it states that Muslims should pray at set times but it is only in the hadiths that Muslims know how to pray and ~~at what times~~ at what times. Thus illustrating that both the hadiths and the Quran are needed as sources of authority for Muslims to be ~~set~~ upon the "straight path".

In conclusion, both the hadiths and the Quran are needed in order ^{in the compelling of the} ~~to follow~~ the shariah law which is known as being the well ^{clear} trodden "path of truth" which illustrates that they are just as important as

one another as ~~stated~~ the shari'ah law is what Muslims need to adhere by in order to reach ~~the~~ Jannah as it categorises things into 'halal' (allowed), ~~haram~~ (not allowed) and Makruh (disliked). If Muslims adhere to these rules then they will surely enter Jannah ~~and~~ Thus illustrating that the Quran is not the only source of authority needed for Muslim belief and practice.



The candidates were awarded 7 marks for 4a and 18 marks for 4b.

The two sets of 4a/4b answers were awarded marks in the highest level and demonstrated:

- an excellent ability to focus upon the question
- a wide range of specialist knowledge, language and terminology
- an awareness of the views of scholars
- coherent and reasoned judgments that were supported by evidence.

Paper Summary

- Centres must ensure that all content of the specification is covered.
- Candidates should be encouraged to focus closely upon the question. It is important to note the number of marks awarded for each question and be aware of whether these are AO1 requiring relevant information, or AO2 which involves analysis and debate. Where questions are awarded a smaller number of marks, the answers should be succinct but full and must address a range of key religious ideas and beliefs to show a depth of understanding. Where questions require AO1 and AO2 material, specialist knowledge, language and terminology should be selected and used appropriately, and reasoned judgements should be made.
- Where a comparison of views is required, these must be clear and coherent, with reasoned judgements being fully supported with evidence.
- For the longer final question, it is vital that candidates select material carefully to make an evaluation based upon a wide range of knowledge that provides convincing and reasoned judgements that are fully supported by the evidence.

Grade Boundaries

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