



General Certificate of Secondary Education

**Religious Studies (4051/4052)**  
Full or Short Course  
*Specification A*

Unit 9      Islam: Ethics (405009)

**Report on the Examination**  
*2010 examination - June series*

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## Unit 9 Islam: Ethics

### General comments

There were many good scripts which were a credit both to candidates and to their teachers. It was pleasing to see the confidence with which candidates approached many of the questions, and it was clear that many had covered all parts of the specification thoroughly.

Many candidates appeared to be aware of the assessment criteria. They showed detailed knowledge of the specification content and, when necessary, gave full descriptions and explanations. Furthermore, they supported their evaluations with relevant evidence and arguments.

Some less able candidates appeared not to know some of the technical terms used in the questions. They also sometimes included material that was not directly required by the question or offered opinions when none were required. All answers should begin with a direct response to the question set. For example the answer to 'What is meant by x?' best begins with 'x means'.

Not all candidates responded correctly to four mark questions, such as A2(b), A3(a) and A4(b). Maximum marks for such questions can only be given if at least one of the points made is developed or analysed in some way; four simple statements are not enough.

### Question A1 *Conflict and Suffering*

Most candidates were able to answer all parts of this question very well.

In part (a) most candidates knew the difference between greater and lesser Jihad, but some candidates offered irrelevant general information, such as 'it is mentioned in the Qur'an', rather than explaining the meaning. Some of the least able candidates did not attempt Question (a)(i) about greater Jihad.

In part (b) all candidates were able to offer something about Muslim attitudes to terrorism, and there were many high scoring answers. Most referred to the idea that terrorism involved the taking of innocent or civilian lives which Islam, as a religion of peace, could not accept.

Answers to part (c) often showed a clear understanding of the challenges of being a pacifist. Most argued that in some situations Muslims are allowed to use force (e.g. in self-defence) or have a duty to use force (e.g. when called to Jihad for the right reason by a leader with the right authority). Some high-scoring answers argued that pacifism was good but was not always possible. A few less able candidates appeared not to understand the word 'pacifism' and a very few did not consider more than one point of view.

### Question A2 *The Environment*

Most candidates made a pleasing attempt at all parts of this question.

In part (a) most candidates were able to explain the meaning of conservation and often included examples such as recycling in their answer. A few made no attempt at the question.

There were some very good responses to part (b), and many candidates showed a good understanding of stewardship and could support their answers with teaching from the Qur'an. A number of answers could not score full marks because candidates did not develop or analyse any of the points they made.

There were many thoughtful responses to part (c). Some gave reasons for agreeing with the statement, including teaching from the Qur'an or Hadith about the use of money. Others gave reasons for the view that both are equally important because both are commanded by Allah and caring for the environment is one way of caring for the poor. These were both good ways of answering the question.

In part (d) many candidates agreed with the statement and used the example of the Prophet and the halal method of slaughter as evidence to support their view. Some also argued that, while Muslims are expected to treat all animals with respect, in fact not all of them do. These were both good ways of answering the question.

### **Question A3 *Life and Death***

In part (a) most candidates knew that IVF was often acceptable to Muslims as long as the egg and sperm came from the married couple who were hoping for a baby, but not acceptable if the sperm came from another man. They also knew that some Muslims disapprove of IVF because they believe that Allah alone should decide if a baby is to be born, or because IVF often involves the destruction of unwanted embryos which they believe is wrong.

In part (b) some very good answers gave non-Islamic arguments in favour of parents choosing the sort of baby they want and Islamic arguments against this practice. Others focused on the suffering that could be avoided by choosing the child to be born and argued that a compassionate God would want Muslims to use their God-given intelligence to make this possible. Arguments against the practice ranged from the way it could reduce the gene pool or reduce the diversity among people to the view that the decision about who should be born was Allah's alone. Some focused on the kind of decisions parents could make and argued that choosing gender was an abuse of the power but preventing disease was not.

### **Question A4 *Relationships and Lifestyle***

In part (a) most candidates clearly knew that Islam is opposed to usury and were able to explain why.

In part (b) there were many good answers. Candidates knew why drinking alcohol is forbidden in Islam and understood why there is some debate over the use of alcohol for medical purposes, e.g. in hand-washes. Many were able to give examples of problems caused by drinking alcohol to explain why it has been forbidden for Muslims.

In part (c) many good answers offered non-Islamic arguments in favour of gambling and Islamic arguments against. Candidates showed good knowledge of the teaching found in the Qur'an. Many referred to problems that gambling can lead to in their arguments against the claim.

### **Question B5 *Crime and Punishment***

In part (a)(i) there were many good answers. Candidates clearly had a good understanding of why some people commit crime. Many referred to poverty, mental illness and drug dependency. A few listed reasons rather than explaining them which meant that their answers did not show the development or analysis needed for full marks.

In part (a)(ii) there was good knowledge of teachings about justice, and most candidates made a very good attempt at the question. The key ideas mentioned were that all Muslims had a duty to treat everyone justly and that they could not allow people to be treated unjustly. However, some candidates did not develop or analyse any of their points which meant that they could not score full marks.

In part (b) some good answers showed how putting people in prison could have a positive result by protecting society from them, deterring them from committing crime again and reforming them. Candidates also showed that there was evidence that prison did not work as a deterrent and that many criminals re-offended many times. They knew that the Qur'an sets out other punishments for various crimes and argued that these, rather than prison, worked by deterring people from crime. Some weaker answers only gave a few reasons why prison does not work.

In part (c) there were many good and well-informed answers, most of which focused on what will happen at the final judgement according to the Qur'an and Hadith.

In part (d) many good reasons were given against capital punishment. These often mentioned that there was a risk of killing an innocent person or pointed out that some criminals are mentally ill and deserve treatment, not death. In favour of capital punishment they argued that Islam accepts it for some crimes and that the crime rate in countries where it is allowed is lower than in other countries.

### **Question B6 *Wealth and Poverty***

In part (a)(i) most candidates wrote good answers and mentioned a range of causes of poverty including wars and natural disasters. Most also developed one or more of their points which meant that they were able to score full marks.

In part (a)(ii) many candidates knew of the work of organisations such as Muslim Aid and developed their ideas with good examples. Weaker answers tended to make very general points which were sometimes rather vague.

In part (b) most candidates showed a very good knowledge and understanding of Muslim attitudes to wealth. Most argued that, although the rich had a duty to give to the poor, they were also allowed to keep the rest of what they had earned once they had given Allah what they owed him. Others argued that following the example of the Prophet meant that they should give away anything they and their family did not need.

In part (c) candidates knew what British Muslim communities do to help to relieve poverty and were able to use examples in their answer. Fund-raising, helping the poor during Ramadan and Sadaqah were often mentioned.

In part (d) candidates made various good points, including that it was natural disasters that made people dependent on others and not the money that they were given by those wanting to help. Some argued that it was better to give money which could be spent on what was most needed because money could be wasted by buying things that were not so important or simply because of the cost of transporting things to where they were needed. Candidates knew that Islam encouraged people to give money to the poor but that it also encouraged giving education, training and healthcare because, in some cases, these could be more useful than money.