

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations
General Certificate of Secondary Education

RELIGIOUS STUDIES A (WORLD RELIGIONS) (SHORT COURSE) 2396/1
PAPER 6 – Islam

MARK SCHEME

Specimen Paper 2003

1 Breaking the fast after Ramadan

(a) Describe how Muslims keep Ramadan. [8]

Description of fasting during daylight hours for the month of Ramadan. Good candidates are likely to give some details about other aspects of abstinence or specific practices (e.g. not swallowing saliva). Candidates might mention: obedience; self-discipline; one of pillars; example of Muhammad ﷺ; sign that submit to Allah; faith is more important than food or drink; compassion for poor. Qur'an was given during Ramadan.

(b) Explain how celebrating Id-ul-Fitr might strengthen the Muslim community. [7]

Some credit for general remarks about the effects on any community of communal celebration (even if they have the wrong Id.) Good candidates are likely to explain with more sensitive understanding the possible value for the Muslim community of celebrating the festival. Probably in terms of Ummah, solidarity in obedience, commitment, sense of identity, sense of history, continuity, shared experience of discipline and of relief and rejoicing when the fasting is over. Strengthens belief: Muslims believe they get two rewards - the first is the end of the fast, the second at the day of judgement - so there is much to celebrate.

(c) 'Fasts are more important than festivals for true believers.'

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Islam in your answer. [5]

Good candidates are likely to explore the implications of 'more important' and 'true believers' and to develop arguments from earlier parts of this structured question.

2 (a) Describe a mosque and its features. [8]

Description of a mosque: features will probably include minaret(s), prayer hall, minbar, mihrab, and washing area.

(b) Explain the importance for Muslims of Salat-ul-Jumu'ah prayers on Fridays. [7]

Possible description of how Friday congregational prayers are observed after noon with optional prayers then sermon (khutbah) then Imam leads two rak'ah fard compulsory prayers, then more optional prayers. Explanation why might include following the example and command of Muhammad ﷺ and the need to meet as a community, e.g. to discuss and solve problems, to develop unity, co-operation and cohesiveness. Credit references to women and children whether being accommodated in the mosque or praying at home. General responses about how and why prayer is done are not likely to reach more than level two.

- (c) **'There is no need to go to a special building; you can pray to God anywhere.'**

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Islam in your answer. [5]

For good evaluation arguments need to be based on accurate knowledge and understanding of Muslim attitudes. Debate is likely to centre round the definition of the phrase 'no need'.

- 3 (a) **Describe how the body of a Muslim is prepared for burial. [8]**

Description of preparations for burial e.g. ritual washing, prayers, anointing, three sheets of white cloth (five for women), facing Makkah, burial in earth (in West often open inverted coffin).

- (b) **Explain how beliefs about life after death might affect the way Muslims live. [7]**

The focus of is an explanation of how these beliefs might affect behaviour in daily life e.g. to others and living constantly according to Shari'ah in submission to Allah who knows all and sees all.

- (c) **'Life is too short to spend time thinking about death.'**

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Islam in your answer. [5]

Good responses are likely to develop points made earlier in this structured question.

- 4 (a) **Describe Muslim teaching about how Muhammad ﷺ was given messages from Allah. [8]**

Description probably starting from call on Night of Power in 610 CE on Mount Hirah by Jibrail to recite; in the context of the situation in Makkah (idolatry etc.) and personal situation (e.g. married to Khadijah who encouraged Muhammad ﷺ).

- (b) **Explain why family life is important for Muslims. [7]**

Family (and roles within it) provides support (financially, emotionally etc) especially with extended family; respect for elderly; the family benefits from the experience and wisdom of the old, transmission of not only religious beliefs and practices but of moral behaviour, attitudes; social practices etc.

- (c) **'It is good for children to be brought up to follow their religion from a young age.'**

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Islam in your answer. [5]

Good responses are likely to build on (b). Expect diverse reactions to the statement with arguments for and against and responses which deal with 'it is up to the person to choose their own religion' etc.

