

Examiners' Report

GCE O Level Religious Studies (7560)

June 2006

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RELIGIOUS STUDIES 7560, CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

General comments

The standard of scripts was pleasing on the whole, with few that were without merit. The mean mark was higher than in 2005. Fewer candidates made rubric errors.

Section One (a)

Question 1: Most candidates were familiar with the story at the Oaks of Mamre, although one recorded that Abraham sat under a mango tree! Part (b) was generally well answered but few candidates considered that anyone today was a messenger from God, apparently overlooking their local leaders and clergy as well as such public figures as, for example, Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Question 2: Again, the story of Esau and Jacob was well known and understood. In (c) there were some interesting answers which commented feelingly upon the dangers of favouritism and sibling rivalry. Some candidates stated that because the story contained these, nothing could be learnt from it, overlooking the fact that we can learn what to avoid from cautionary tales.

Question 3: Most candidates knew the story of Joseph's sale into slavery although there was some confusion about which brother did or said what. In (b) some candidates chose to illustrate how Joseph's experiences demonstrated that God was with him - an answer to a previous question paper and not this one. Potiphar's wife was transformed into Pharaoh's wife in some accounts. Part (c) answers mostly concentrated upon the importance of faith, but some added that God had a plan - or, in the words of one candidate, "God moves in mischievous ways"!

Question 4: Few attempts were made to answer this question and on the whole they lacked detail and specificity, especially in part (b).

Question 5: Again, a less popular question but most who attempted it handled the material well.

Question 6: Some lively accounts of the fight between David and Goliath which were usually accurate. Parts (b) and (c) also engendered some good replies.

Section One (b)

This was much less popular than Section One (a). Those who attempted it usually chose questions 7, 8 and 12. The textual material was usually well known and the remaining parts of the questions displayed the usual range of quality.

Section Two

This was a very popular section, as usual.

Question 13: Responses to parts (a) and (b) tended to be inaccurate in that extraneous material was introduced, but most candidates were able to discuss the issues arising in (c).

Question 14: The parables were almost universally well known. Part (b) also attracted many accurate and detailed responses. Part (c) was tackled with less confidence but there were still many promising answers.

Question 15 was less popular, and responses varied in quality.

Question 16: Part (a) tended to produce incomplete answers. Many candidates did not explain the significance of Peter's denial in (b), and many responses to (c) lacked depth.

Question 17: Parts (a) and (b) attracted complete and accurate answers in the majority of cases. Candidates were often less confident in part (c) although some explained in detail that the religious authorities acted in their own best interests, rather than 'for the best'.

Question 18: Part (a) was well answered. Many part (b) answers only considered the events on the cross, although others also explained the temple veil being torn. Part (c), perhaps surprisingly, evoked mainly affirmative answers, with references to the Emmaus Road and/or the Upper Room. Very rarely was there an appreciation of the distinction between evidence and proof.

Section Three

This was much less popular than Section Two. Those who had studied the Early Church were obviously well taught, and the textual matter was known and understood. Answers to part (c) questions displayed the usual variation in quality.

Section Four

Few candidates attempted this section. Those who did were well grounded in the subject.

Section Five

This was as usual a very popular section. A wide cross section of opinion was seen. Generally speaking, Muslims displayed an excellent knowledge of Islamic teaching and apologetics, while candidates apparently from a Christian background were less secure in their grasp of doctrine.

Question 31: Part (a) was generally well answered, although some candidates apparently have difficulty counting to four! We were constantly reminded of the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases. In (b), credit was given both for answers referring to the remarriage of the same spouses where divorce took place and was then regretted, and the remarriage of a divorced person to a different spouse during the former partner's lifetime. Part (c) invoked some interesting discussions, with Muslim candidates tending to the practical and logical arguments while others tended to romanticism.

Question 32: This was generally well tackled. Part (a) was almost universally well done. In (b), Muslim candidates found it difficult to understand why anyone would wish to remain childless. There was near unanimity in (c) where abortion was condemned except in cases where the mother's life was at risk.

Question 33: Parts (a) and (b) were handled well, with reference to relevant teaching. The quotation in (c) was almost universally condemned, and the person who said it attracted many derogatory comments! Candidates (and teachers) should

perhaps be aware that quotations offered for discussion are not necessarily any person's actual views - they are designed to provoke thoughtful response.

Question 34: Parts (a) and (b) evoked responses of varying quality, some being very good but others vague. A number of candidates condemned those who are too lazy to work, overlooking the point of part (c) which is for candidates to demonstrate an appreciation of the issues involved, with arguments to support their point of view.

Question 35: Again, parts (a) and (b) were answered according to ability, while several candidates did not read (c) carefully and wrote at length about the dangers of being a workaholic.

Question 36: A less popular question, but tackled competently by most candidates.

Questions 37 - 40: These were less popular choices than the others in Section Five, but candidates who tackled them seemed well prepared.

Section Six

Part (a)

Most Muslim candidates chose this rather than Section Four. It was noticeable that there were many more higher level evaluative responses than in previous years.

Question 41: A less popular question than the others. In part (c), little if any knowledge of Judaism was displayed. Some candidates misunderstood Christian beliefs.

Question 42: All respondents knew the Shahadah but many chose relatively minor beliefs in response to (a)(ii). It was expected that four of the Pillars would be quoted as 'main beliefs'. Part (b) presented no problems and there were some thoughtful answers to (c).

Question 43: Most candidates answered this question accurately and had little difficulty with (b). Part (c) responses were of varying quality but there were some good attempts to grapple with the complexities of the issue.

Question 44: A very popular question which almost all respondents handled well throughout.

Question 45: Another popular question, again evoking good responses. The reasons for approval of marriage in Islam had obviously been well taught and discussed. Most candidates approved of arranged marriage, but there was a greater awareness than in previous years of the arguments in favour of 'marriage for love'.

Question 46: In (b), several candidates failed to explain why the crimes were haram, instead concentrating upon the prescribed sanctions.

The remaining sections of the paper were answered by few if any candidates.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 7560, GRADE BOUNDARIES

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest mark for award of grade	73	65	58	53	48

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.
