

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

---

Paper 0490/11

Paper 1

## General comments

There were some very strong candidates on this paper this year. Many candidates wrote very full answers to all the questions.

Some weaker responses continue to confuse details of the different religions, for instance having the Jewish Synagogue containing features of a Mosque or confusing the Torah and the Quran.

Teaching all three religions does give the candidates a wide understanding of these world faiths though some would benefit from the opportunity to do two in depth which was sometimes missing from the responses.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section A - Christianity**

This was a popular section where candidates were able to show a good knowledge of this world religion through its main teachings and in some pertinent ways through local practices.

#### **Question 1**

- (a) (i) Most candidates could identify at least two uses for an altar in a Christian church though many struggled to identify three. There was also some confusion about giving thanks for the sacrifice Christ made and still using the altar for actual sacrifice.
- (ii) Almost all the candidates who attempted this question recognised that the priest says 'This is the body of Christ' and 'This is the blood of Christ'.
- (b) The majority of candidates who attempted this question were able to give a number of good reasons for attending a weekly service. A few mixed up week with weak, which led to some odd ideas. On the positive side as well as the effects of worship to individuals candidates also made good use of the idea of support for the community by being together regularly. One thing candidates need to be careful about is trying to include alternative points of view which are only required in the (c) part questions.
- (c) Most candidates had a good sense of reasons for Christians getting married in Church; support from the community, the minister witnessing on behalf of God or the liturgy itself. More than in previous years were able to give balanced answers exploring the case for not getting married in Church. Many explored the notion of changes in society and people being less religious. This did mean that Level 3 and Level 4 were more often accessed.

#### **Question 2**

- (a) (i) Most candidates had an idea of the kinds of prayers that might be said at a funeral though a significant number gave very general responses such as prayers of sadness or remembrance. Good use was made of prayers such as 'Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord.'
- (ii) Most candidates had a good idea of Christian beliefs about what happens after we die. Heaven and hell were well understood and a significant number also mention beliefs about purgatory. The idea that Jesus' death and resurrection gives us a hope for our own resurrection was well used.

Weaker responses however confused resurrection with reincarnation and therefore failed to achieve the higher levels.

- (b) Responses to this question were very mixed; those who understood the range of material available within the Bible were able to give a good account of its importance. Answers ranged from the historical context of Christianity found both in the Old and New Testaments. They also made good use of the teachings found in the life of Jesus and moral teachings again from both Testaments. Weaker responses focused on one simple area of the Bible or saw it as a way of predicting the future through the book of Revelation.
- (c) Once again responses to this question were very mixed. Some candidates got their teeth into the many ways Christians can allow their beliefs to affect every part of their lives and others produced very general answers based around Christians being nice people.

## Section B

### Question 3

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to identify at least two purposes for the Muezzin; siting the call to prayer and his place on the minaret.
- (ii) Most answers achieved the top level for this question; though a few saw the running water as purely symbolic.
- (iii) Most candidates had no difficulties with this question, siting a range of roles for the Imam from standing in front leading prayer, to teaching and being responsible for the mosque.
- (b) In many cases this question was responded to with vague answers. Some candidates discussed Islamic attitudes to images/shirk, however they often did not go beyond this to answer the question and pinpoint different features of the mosque. Some candidates did attempt to identify features such as the minbar, however there were a quite a few mixed up descriptions with minbar being confused with quiblah or vice versa. Some said little more than the mosque was beautiful in honour of Allah.
- (c) Candidates had a good understanding of the importance of praying in the mosque and reasons legitimate for not attending. However a significant number only wrote about one side of this issue limiting the level achievable.

### Question 4

- (a) (i) Many candidates did not achieve the top levels for this question. A significant number of responses mentioned the Ka'ba being a place of circumambulation, or a place that Adam built, however many answers were mixed up, saying Muhammad (pbuh) built the Ka'ba (instead of saying he reinstated it as the house of God) and some answers said that the Ka'ba houses the idols of the pagan gods today.
- (ii) Lots of answers described the prohibitions of Ihram and the wearing of Ihram. However, other important parts of preparation such as the Niyyat to fast and settling debts were often overlooked.
- (b) Generally this question was not well answered. Many answers described the day three of Hajj where the Devil is stoned rather than day 2 which is the day where all pilgrims stand on Arafat and pray/prepare for the last day/be close to God. Very few answers mentioned that Hajj would be invalid if the stand on Arafat was not completed. A large number of answers also discussed Muhammad (pbuh) and the Qur'anic revelations or Hagar in the desert/Well of Zamzam which were not relevant to the question.
- (c) On the whole candidates did not have the same problems with this question as with **part (b)**. The main difficulty for some was making a balanced argument that looked at why pilgrimage is not a holiday compared to why it could be viewed as a holiday, however a large number of answers did manage to discuss this question in a balanced way and achieve Level 3 or 4.

### Section C

#### Question 5

- (a) (i) Most had no difficulty with this question however it is one of those where the answer is very specific and it did lead to a few unusual guesses from those who did not now know what type of group a minyan was.
- (ii) Many answers said that the Sefer Torah are scrolls from the Torah, however many answers did not develop this with its importance as a central focus of worship in the synagogue.
- (iii) Most candidates were able to give good descriptions on how Jews show respect for the Torah, though some confused some details with the Muslim respect for the Qur'an.
- (b) Many candidates could identify the importance of clothing as a part of worship and connection with God. Many of the responses mixed up the clothing worn, particularly the tallit and tefillin. A significant number of candidates could write about the clothing as a list however did not describe the significance of each item of clothing and why it is worn.
- (c) On the whole candidates responded well to this question giving a balanced account of the importance to Jews of helping others while making space in their lives for the worship of God and living a moral life as well.

#### Question 6

- (a) (i) Most candidates managed good descriptions of the building of sukkah in terms of the material used and that the roof should be open to let in light from the stars. However, very few answers said that the materials used for the sukkah have to be cut specifically for that task.
- (ii) Candidates generally demonstrated a good understanding of how the sukkah is used during the festival, saying that most Jews eat in the sukkah and in some countries sleep in it as well.
- (b) Some candidates gave a clear description of why this festival is celebrated with some candidates developing their descriptions by describing lulav and etrog/growth of crops in the past and now for survival. Most candidates discussed the sukkah as a remembrance of how the ancestors lived in the desert.
- (c) Most candidates developed good balanced answers to this question showing why festivals are family occasions but also understanding that there may be good reasons for all the family not being in attendance on occasions. Some were aware that festivals celebrated in the home were always family occasions but that by their nature some festivals celebrated in the synagogue could only be attended by men.

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

---

Paper 0490/12

Paper 1

## General comments

There were some very strong candidates on this paper this year. Many candidates wrote very full answers to all the questions.

Some weaker responses continue to confuse details of the different religions, for instance having the Jewish Synagogue containing features of a Mosque or confusing the Torah and the Quran.

Teaching all three religions does give the candidates a wide understanding of these world faiths though some would benefit from the opportunity to do two in depth which was sometimes missing from the responses.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section A - Christianity**

This was a popular section where candidates were able to show a good knowledge of this world religion through its main teachings and in some pertinent ways through local practices.

#### **Question 1**

- (a) (i) Most candidates could identify at least two uses for an altar in a Christian church though many struggled to identify three. There was also some confusion about giving thanks for the sacrifice Christ made and still using the altar for actual sacrifice.
- (ii) Almost all the candidates who attempted this question recognised that the priest says 'This is the body of Christ' and 'This is the blood of Christ'.
- (b) The majority of candidates who attempted this question were able to give a number of good reasons for attending a weekly service. A few mixed up week with weak, which led to some odd ideas. On the positive side as well as the effects of worship to individuals candidates also made good use of the idea of support for the community by being together regularly. One thing candidates need to be careful about is trying to include alternative points of view which are only required in the (c) part questions.
- (c) Most candidates had a good sense of reasons for Christians getting married in Church; support from the community, the minister witnessing on behalf of God or the liturgy itself. More than in previous years were able to give balanced answers exploring the case for not getting married in Church. Many explored the notion of changes in society and people being less religious. This did mean that Level 3 and Level 4 were more often accessed.

#### **Question 2**

- (a) (i) Most candidates had an idea of the kinds of prayers that might be said at a funeral though a significant number gave very general responses such as prayers of sadness or remembrance. Good use was made of prayers such as 'Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord.'
- (ii) Most candidates had a good idea of Christian beliefs about what happens after we die. Heaven and hell were well understood and a significant number also mention beliefs about purgatory. The idea that Jesus' death and resurrection gives us a hope for our own resurrection was well used.

Weaker responses however confused resurrection with reincarnation and therefore failed to achieve the higher levels.

- (b) Responses to this question were very mixed; those who understood the range of material available within the Bible were able to give a good account of its importance. Answers ranged from the historical context of Christianity found both in the Old and New Testaments. They also made good use of the teachings found in the life of Jesus and moral teachings again from both Testaments. Weaker responses focused on one simple area of the Bible or saw it as a way of predicting the future through the book of Revelation.
- (c) Once again responses to this question were very mixed. Some candidates got their teeth into the many ways Christians can allow their beliefs to affect every part of their lives and others produced very general answers based around Christians being nice people.

## Section B

### Question 3

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to identify at least two purposes for the Muezzin; citing the call to prayer and his place on the minaret.
- (ii) Most answers achieved the top level for this question; though a few saw the running water as purely symbolic.
- (iii) Most candidates had no difficulties with this question, citing a range of roles for the Imam from standing in front leading prayer, to teaching and being responsible for the mosque.
- (b) In many cases this question was responded to with vague answers. Some candidates discussed Islamic attitudes to images/shirk, however they often did not go beyond this to answer the question and pinpoint different features of the mosque. Some candidates did attempt to identify features such as the minbar, however there were a quite a few mixed up descriptions with minbar being confused with quiblah or vice versa. Some said little more than the mosque was beautiful in honour of Allah.
- (c) Candidates had a good understanding of the importance of praying in the mosque and reasons legitimate for not attending. However a significant number only wrote about one side of this issue limiting the level achievable.

### Question 4

- (a) (i) Many candidates did not achieve the top levels for this question. A significant number of responses mentioned the Ka'ba being a place of circumambulation, or a place that Adam built, however many answers were mixed up, saying Muhammad (pbuh) built the Ka'ba (instead of saying he reinstated it as the house of God) and some answers said that the Ka'ba houses the idols of the pagan gods today.
- (ii) Lots of answers described the prohibitions of Ihram and the wearing of Ihram. However, other important parts of preparation such as the Niyat to fast and settling debts were often overlooked.
- (b) Generally this question was not well answered. Many answers described the day three of Hajj where the Devil is stoned rather than day 2 which is the day where all pilgrims stand on Arafat and pray/prepare for the last day/be close to God. Very few answers mentioned that Hajj would be invalid if the stand on Arafat was not completed. A large number of answers also discussed Muhammad (pbuh) and the Qur'anic revelations or Hagar in the desert/Well of Zamzam which were not relevant to the question.
- (c) On the whole candidates did not have the same problems with this question as with **part (b)**. The main difficulty for some was making a balanced argument that looked at why pilgrimage is not a holiday compared to why it could be viewed as a holiday, however a large number of answers did manage to discuss this question in a balanced way and achieve Level 3 or 4.

### Section C

#### Question 5

- (a) (i) Most had no difficulty with this question however it is one of those where the answer is very specific and it did lead to a few unusual guesses from those who did not now know what type of group a minyan was.
- (ii) Many answers said that the Sefer Torah are scrolls from the Torah, however many answers did not develop this with its importance as a central focus of worship in the synagogue.
- (iii) Most candidates were able to give good descriptions on how Jews show respect for the Torah, though some confused some details with the Muslim respect for the Qur'an.
- (b) Many candidates could identify the importance of clothing as a part of worship and connection with God. Many of the responses mixed up the clothing worn, particularly the tallit and tefillin. A significant number of candidates could write about the clothing as a list however did not describe the significance of each item of clothing and why it is worn.
- (c) On the whole candidates responded well to this question giving a balanced account of the importance to Jews of helping others while making space in their lives for the worship of God and living a moral life as well.

#### Question 6

- (a) (i) Most candidates managed good descriptions of the building of sukkah in terms of the material used and that the roof should be open to let in light from the stars. However, very few answers said that the materials used for the sukkah have to be cut specifically for that task.
- (ii) Candidates generally demonstrated a good understanding of how the sukkah is used during the festival, saying that most Jews eat in the sukkah and in some countries sleep in it as well.
- (b) Some candidates gave a clear description of why this festival is celebrated with some candidates developing their descriptions by describing lulav and etrog/growth of crops in the past and now for survival. Most candidates discussed the sukkah as a remembrance of how the ancestors lived in the desert.
- (c) Most candidates developed good balanced answers to this question showing why festivals are family occasions but also understanding that there may be good reasons for all the family not being in attendance on occasions. Some were aware that festivals celebrated in the home were always family occasions but that by their nature some festivals celebrated in the synagogue could only be attended by men.

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

---

Paper 0490/13

Paper 1

## General comments

There were some very strong candidates on this paper this year. Many candidates wrote very full answers to all the questions.

Some weaker responses continue to confuse details of the different religions, for instance having the Jewish Synagogue containing features of a Mosque or confusing the Torah and the Quran.

Teaching all three religions does give the candidates a wide understanding of these world faiths though some would benefit from the opportunity to do two in depth which was sometimes missing from the responses.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section A - Christianity**

This was a popular section where candidates were able to show a good knowledge of this world religion through its main teachings and in some pertinent ways through local practices.

#### **Question 1**

- (a) (i) Most candidates could identify at least two uses for an altar in a Christian church though many struggled to identify three. There was also some confusion about giving thanks for the sacrifice Christ made and still using the altar for actual sacrifice.
- (ii) Almost all the candidates who attempted this question recognised that the priest says 'This is the body of Christ' and 'This is the blood of Christ'.
- (b) The majority of candidates who attempted this question were able to give a number of good reasons for attending a weekly service. A few mixed up week with week, which led to some odd ideas. On the positive side as well as the effects of worship to individuals candidates also made good use of the idea of support for the community by being together regularly. One thing candidates need to be careful about is trying to include alternative points of view which are only required in the (c) part questions.
- (c) Most candidates had a good sense of reasons for Christians getting married in Church; support from the community, the minister witnessing on behalf of God or the liturgy itself. More than in previous years were able to give balanced answers exploring the case for not getting married in Church. Many explored the notion of changes in society and people being less religious. This did mean that Level 3 and Level 4 were more often accessed.

#### **Question 2**

- (a) (i) Most candidates had an idea of the kinds of prayers that might be said at a funeral though a significant number gave very general responses such as prayers of sadness or remembrance. Good use was made of prayers such as 'Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord.'
- (ii) Most candidates had a good idea of Christian beliefs about what happens after we die. Heaven and hell were well understood and a significant number also mention beliefs about purgatory. The idea that Jesus' death and resurrection gives us a hope for our own resurrection was well used.



Weaker responses however confused resurrection with reincarnation and therefore failed to achieve the higher levels.

- (b) Responses to this question were very mixed; those who understood the range of material available within the Bible were able to give a good account of its importance. Answers ranged from the historical context of Christianity found both in the Old and New Testaments. They also made good use of the teachings found in the life of Jesus and moral teachings again from both Testaments. Weaker responses focused on one simple area of the Bible or saw it as a way of predicting the future through the book of Revelation.
- (c) Once again responses to this question were very mixed. Some candidates got their teeth into the many ways Christians can allow their beliefs to affect every part of their lives and others produced very general answers based around Christians being nice people.

## Section B

### Question 3

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to identify at least two purposes for the Muezzin; citing the call to prayer and his place on the minaret.
- (ii) Most answers achieved the top level for this question; though a few saw the running water as purely symbolic.
- (iii) Most candidates had no difficulties with this question, citing a range of roles for the Imam from standing in front leading prayer, to teaching and being responsible for the mosque.
- (b) In many cases this question was responded to with vague answers. Some candidates discussed Islamic attitudes to images/shirk, however they often did not go beyond this to answer the question and pinpoint different features of the mosque. Some candidates did attempt to identify features such as the minbar, however there were a quite a few mixed up descriptions with minbar being confused with quiblah or vice versa. Some said little more than the mosque was beautiful in honour of Allah.
- (c) Candidates had a good understanding of the importance of praying in the mosque and reasons legitimate for not attending. However a significant number only wrote about one side of this issue limiting the level achievable.

### Question 4

- (a) (i) Many candidates did not achieve the top levels for this question. A significant number of responses mentioned the Ka'ba being a place of circumambulation, or a place that Adam built, however many answers were mixed up, saying Muhammad (pbuh) built the Ka'ba (instead of saying he reinstated it as the house of God) and some answers said that the Ka'ba houses the idols of the pagan gods today.
- (ii) Lots of answers described the prohibitions of Ihram and the wearing of Ihram. However, other important parts of preparation such as the Niyat to fast and settling debts were often overlooked.
- (b) Generally this question was not well answered. Many answers described the day three of Hajj where the Devil is stoned rather than day 2 which is the day where all pilgrims stand on Arafat and pray/prepare for the last day/be close to God. Very few answers mentioned that Hajj would be invalid if the stand on Arafat was not completed. A large number of answers also discussed Muhammad (pbuh) and the Qur'anic revelations or Hagar in the desert/Well of Zamzam which were not relevant to the question.
- (c) On the whole candidates did not have the same problems with this question as with **part (b)**. The main difficulty for some was making a balanced argument that looked at why pilgrimage is not a holiday compared to why it could be viewed as a holiday, however a large number of answers did manage to discuss this question in a balanced way and achieve Level 3 or 4.



### Section C

#### Question 5

- (a) (i) Most had no difficulty with this question however it is one of those where the answer is very specific and it did lead to a few unusual guesses from those who did not now know what type of group a minyan was.
- (ii) Many answers said that the Sefer Torah are scrolls from the Torah, however many answers did not develop this with its importance as a central focus of worship in the synagogue.
- (iii) Most candidates were able to give good descriptions on how Jews show respect for the Torah, though some confused some details with the Muslim respect for the Qur'an.
- (b) Many candidates could identify the importance of clothing as a part of worship and connection with God. Many of the responses mixed up the clothing worn, particularly the tallit and tefillin. A significant number of candidates could write about the clothing as a list however did not describe the significance of each item of clothing and why it is worn.
- (c) On the whole candidates responded well to this question giving a balanced account of the importance to Jews of helping others while making space in their lives for the worship of God and living a moral life as well.

#### Question 6

- (a) (i) Most candidates managed good descriptions of the building of sukkah in terms of the material used and that the roof should be open to let in light from the stars. However, very few answers said that the materials used for the sukkah have to be cut specifically for that task.
- (ii) Candidates generally demonstrated a good understanding of how the sukkah is used during the festival, saying that most Jews eat in the sukkah and in some countries sleep in it as well.
- (b) Some candidates gave a clear description of why this festival is celebrated with some candidates developing their descriptions by describing lulav and etrog/growth of crops in the past and now for survival. Most candidates discussed the sukkah as a remembrance of how the ancestors lived in the desert.
- (c) Most candidates developed good balanced answers to this question showing why festivals are family occasions but also understanding that there may be good reasons for all the family not being in attendance on occasions. Some were aware that festivals celebrated in the home were always family occasions but that by their nature some festivals celebrated in the synagogue could only be attended by men.

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

---

Paper 0490/21

Paper 2

## General Comments

The overall performance this year was of a good standard. The candidature covered a wide ability range and there were many very good and competent answers and only a minority of weaker or uneven performances. There were some very strong candidates and there was evidence that in the majority of cases the study of two religions had been carried out with the appropriate time and attention allocated to both.

With regard to part (c) of all questions, it should be noted that to gain the highest level of marks, responses should be discursive. In some cases, there was a tendency to ignore the instruction to consider other points of view. Some able candidates wrote at length presenting arguments and evidence in support of one view but then failed to discuss arguments for other views and so failed to achieve the higher level of marks. Some candidates contented themselves with offering one clear personal viewpoint but did not consider alternatives.

There was evidence that some candidates had studied all three of the religions offered in the Syllabus and then made a choice of two from the three, choosing, on the day, the options on which they felt their answers might be the strongest. In most cases their choices were successful but **it should be emphasised that there is no need for candidates to study more than two of the specified religions.**

Some candidates ignored the rubric and answered all the questions or became confused between religions in their use of terminology and so weakened their overall performance.

As with Paper 1, there were a number of rubric errors. The main error was answering too many questions. Some candidates answered all three questions from their chosen sections and a minority of candidates answered nine questions.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### *Section A Christianity*

#### Question 1

- (a) Candidates answered this question in a variety of ways all equally worthy of credit. Some candidates described and explained the importance of worship activity on Good Friday in remembrance of the death of Jesus on the cross. Other candidates concentrated solely on the meaning for Christians of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross in terms of redemption and salvation. The most successful answers combined these two elements of Good Friday observance.
- (b) There were many excellent responses to this question on the joyfulness of Easter Sunday services of worship. Candidates gave detailed explanations of the symbolism used in churches to show joy and happiness and to reflect the hope inspired by the Resurrection. A high number of responses attained Level 4. Most candidates correctly omitted references to the commercial aspects of Easter which are non-religious, although many mentioned eggs as symbolising new life. A minority of candidates confused Good Friday and Easter Sunday and so limited their marks for part (a) and part (b) of the question.
- (c) There were some excellent answers which balanced good knowledge of Christian festivals and the frequency of their celebration against a lack of commitment or over-commercialisation in a largely secular society. Some candidates made perceptive observations about the deliberate decision of some Christians not to celebrate festivals because of the misuse and misunderstanding attached to festivals by both churches and society.

However, there were also some confused answers to this evaluation question. Many responses tended to argue from one point of view or were able to give a clear personal view but were not able to give a discursive answer. In some answers, the arguments were often repetitive and negative and not truly evaluative.

### Question 2

- (a) There was generally a good performance on this question – the Christmas story was well known and related in accurate detail. Common omissions in some answers were the role of angels or visitors in the nativity story.
- (b) Even candidates who gained Level 4 for part (a) achieved a less satisfactory performance on this question. Responses were often solely an explanation of Jesus as the ‘Saviour of our sins’ and were repetitive on this point. Many made no reference to the important beliefs inspired by the birth of Jesus (as God incarnate) in a humble stable and the visit of shepherds, or, the glorification by angels and the Magi and the belief in Jesus as Messiah. Some candidates explained the exalted role of Mary but only a few candidates gave a full and comprehensive answer to gain Level 4 marks.
- (c) A small number of excellent responses contained perceptive and intelligent evaluation of different views of the birth stories and the Bible as either the true word of God or the interpreted word of God and assessed how Christians might respond to this in terms of what they believe. It was notable that many candidates expressed only a personal view in answer to this question: a positive view, in support of the statement, justified, in some cases, solely by the reason that all Christians should believe what is written in the Bible. Most responses would have benefitted from more evaluation of the fact that there are only two accounts in the New Testament of the birth of Jesus and the fact that they differ.

### Question 3

- (a) There was a mixed response here. The best answers correctly quoted the Two Greatest Commandments as given by Jesus and explained in detail how these two summarise the principles laid down in the Ten Commandments. Some responses correctly identified the Two Greatest Commandments and the principle of ‘love’ but without reference to the Ten Commandments and in some cases answers were repetitive. Weaker candidates were unable to identify the two commandments correctly and chose a random two from the Ten Commandments, in most cases some credit was usually gained but only at the lower level.
- (b) There was plenty of scope in this question for candidates to explain the value of obedience to the commandments, both for the individual and for society. The majority of responses concentrated on the importance for Christians of obedience to God’s Laws and fulfilling their personal obligations to God. The best responses developed this further by explaining the benefits of observing the commandments to create a peaceful and just society.
- (c) The majority of candidates responded well to this question. Most considered reasons and justifications for two or more points of view. All acknowledged the importance of forgiveness as a Christian duty but there were also some good, interesting views and conclusions on the difficulty of forgiveness in some circumstances. Some excellent Level 4 answers explored the inter-relatedness of ‘love of others’ and forgiveness.

### Section B Islam.

#### Question 4

- (a) Most candidates offered detailed and accurate descriptions of the way in which the fast is observed during Ramadan. The best responses also contained details of related activities such as extra prayers, diligent reading of the Qur’an and good behaviour.
- (b) Again, a generally good performance on the importance of Ramadan.
- (c) Some competent, well-balanced answers showed an appreciation of the difficulties that might be experienced by some Muslims in carrying out obligatory duties but also an appreciation that this

might be a challenge Muslims should strive to meet. Some pointed out that a solution was already provided within Islam in the allowed exceptions to the obligations. Some weaker answers struggled to present more than a single personal viewpoint.

#### Question 5

- (a) Not all candidates who answered this question understood that it was about the historical origins of the division between Sunni and Shi'ah Muslims. There were a few good, accurate answers but the majority of responses were weak.
- (b) The performance on this question was similar to that on part (a). Many candidates wrote about Jihad as holy war only and answers were brief. However, the candidates who understood the concept of greater Jihad as well as lesser Jihad achieved Levels 3 and 4.
- (c) Some candidates did try to give multiple viewpoints in answer to this question but, again, as with other part (c) questions, most answers argued only one point of view in support of the statement. Very few candidates made any attempt to discuss why some Muslims might want to maintain and protect their differences in belief and practice.

#### Question 6

- (a) The best responses gained Level 4 for excellent, detailed descriptions of the first revelation to the Prophet in Cave Hira with accurate quotations of Sura 96:2-5, (the words of the first revelation), the subsequent events outside the cave and the return home to Kadijah. This was a key event in the life of Muhammad (pbuh) which candidates might ensure that they know well. Some candidates achieved Level 3 marks for largely accurate accounts with some misquotes or omissions. There were some weak answers in which knowledge of the event was negligible.
- (b) The performance on this question was, generally, good. The majority of responses showed understanding of the relationship between the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet and emphasised the two as primary sources with the Qur'an, as the word of Allah, never being contradicted.
- (c) See the comments on other part (c) questions in this section and in the preamble to this report. Many candidates answered at length but offered arguments for only one view e.g. that Muslims can easily follow the example of the Prophet because they have the Qur'an and his Sunnah. Only a few candidates discussed the challenge for Muslims today of following the lifestyle of a man who was, according to his wife, 'a living Qur'an'.

#### Section C Judaism.

#### Question 7

- (a) Generally, a well answered question; candidates were familiar with the Seder and its symbolic meaning but most were able to go beyond this and consider the preparations and the progress of the meal and the interaction between members of the family. There were very few weak answers to this question.
- (b) Candidates responded to this with varying degrees of success. The best answers explained why the deliverance from slavery is central to the history of Judaism and the Jews' subsequent relationship with God and also proof of his love and his promise to redeem them. Jews celebrate Passover every year to thank God for their freedom today. Some answers concentrated only on a description of the plagues or the events of the first Passover night.
- (c) There were good, genuinely discursive, responses to this question about suffering. Various types of suffering and its cause were assessed and, in most responses, several points of view were evaluated. The best answers provided a conclusion and a personal opinion.

### Question 8

- (a) Those who chose this question appeared to do so because they were confident of the answer.

Responses usually contained accurate generic and specialist terms used to describe the nature of God in a monotheistic religion. Most candidates gained the higher level of marks by being able to relate their answer to Judaism.

- (b) Candidates who attempted this question were, again, mostly confident in their knowledge of the Shema and could explain its importance for Jews and responses were generally good. Some weaker answers confused the Shema with the Talmud.

- (c) Generally, candidates made a good attempt to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of formal, traditional prayers and their place in worship. Most attempted to evaluate more than one view on the issue.

### Question 9

- (a) The majority of candidates produced a very good response to this question. Candidates were knowledgeable about the purpose of the ceremony and its participants although some candidates lacked the technical religious language to name the participants (e.g. terms such as mohel, sandek). Unfortunately, a few candidates confused Brit Milah with Bar Mitzvah.

- (b) Again, in part (b) candidates showed good understanding of the purpose of Brit Milah and its importance in maintaining tradition and strengthening the Jewish community. The majority of responses gained the higher levels of marks.

- (c) Many answers here contained strong opinions and a good discussion of multiple viewpoints. The best answers recognised the importance in Judaism of birth and identity as well as the effect of 'separateness' on young people as well as discussing whether choice of religion was possible or desirable. Most answers were discursive but some of the weaker ones were too brief.

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

---

Paper 0490/22

Paper 2

## General Comments

The overall performance this year was of a good standard. The candidature covered a wide ability range and there were many very good and competent answers and only a minority of weaker or uneven performances. There were some very strong candidates and there was evidence that in the majority of cases the study of two religions had been carried out with the appropriate time and attention allocated to both.

With regard to part (c) of all questions, it should be noted that to gain the highest level of marks, responses should be discursive. In some cases, there was a tendency to ignore the instruction to consider other points of view. Some able candidates wrote at length presenting arguments and evidence in support of one view but then failed to discuss arguments for other views and so failed to achieve the higher level of marks. Some candidates contented themselves with offering one clear personal viewpoint but did not consider alternatives.

There was evidence that some candidates had studied all three of the religions offered in the Syllabus and then made a choice of two from the three, choosing, on the day, the options on which they felt their answers might be the strongest. In most cases their choices were successful but **it should be emphasised that there is no need for candidates to study more than two of the specified religions.**

Some candidates ignored the rubric and answered all the questions or became confused between religions in their use of terminology and so weakened their overall performance.

As with Paper 1, there were a number of rubric errors. The main error was answering too many questions. Some candidates answered all three questions from their chosen sections and a minority of candidates answered nine questions.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### *Section A Christianity*

#### Question 1

- (a) Candidates answered this question in a variety of ways all equally worthy of credit. Some candidates described and explained the importance of worship activity on Good Friday in remembrance of the death of Jesus on the cross. Other candidates concentrated solely on the meaning for Christians of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross in terms of redemption and salvation. The most successful answers combined these two elements of Good Friday observance.
- (b) There were many excellent responses to this question on the joyfulness of Easter Sunday services of worship. Candidates gave detailed explanations of the symbolism used in churches to show joy and happiness and to reflect the hope inspired by the Resurrection. A high number of responses attained Level 4. Most candidates correctly omitted references to the commercial aspects of Easter which are non-religious, although many mentioned eggs as symbolising new life. A minority of candidates confused Good Friday and Easter Sunday and so limited their marks for part (a) and part (b) of the question.
- (c) There were some excellent answers which balanced good knowledge of Christian festivals and the frequency of their celebration against a lack of commitment or over-commercialisation in a largely secular society. Some candidates made perceptive observations about the deliberate decision of some Christians not to celebrate festivals because of the misuse and misunderstanding attached to festivals by both churches and society.



However, there were also some confused answers to this evaluation question. Many responses tended to argue from one point of view or were able to give a clear personal view but were not able to give a discursive answer. In some answers, the arguments were often repetitive and negative and not truly evaluative.

### Question 2

- (a) There was generally a good performance on this question – the Christmas story was well known and related in accurate detail. Common omissions in some answers were the role of angels or visitors in the nativity story.
- (b) Even candidates who gained Level 4 for part (a) achieved a less satisfactory performance on this question. Responses were often solely an explanation of Jesus as the ‘Saviour of our sins’ and were repetitive on this point. Many made no reference to the important beliefs inspired by the birth of Jesus (as God incarnate) in a humble stable and the visit of shepherds, or, the glorification by angels and the Magi and the belief in Jesus as Messiah. Some candidates explained the exalted role of Mary but only a few candidates gave a full and comprehensive answer to gain Level 4 marks.
- (c) A small number of excellent responses contained perceptive and intelligent evaluation of different views of the birth stories and the Bible as either the true word of God or the interpreted word of God and assessed how Christians might respond to this in terms of what they believe. It was notable that many candidates expressed only a personal view in answer to this question: a positive view, in support of the statement, justified, in some cases, solely by the reason that all Christians should believe what is written in the Bible. Most responses would have benefitted from more evaluation of the fact that there are only two accounts in the New Testament of the birth of Jesus and the fact that they differ.

### Question 3

- (a) There was a mixed response here. The best answers correctly quoted the Two Greatest Commandments as given by Jesus and explained in detail how these two summarise the principles laid down in the Ten Commandments. Some responses correctly identified the Two Greatest Commandments and the principle of ‘love’ but without reference to the Ten Commandments and in some cases answers were repetitive. Weaker candidates were unable to identify the two commandments correctly and chose a random two from the Ten Commandments, in most cases some credit was usually gained but only at the lower level.
- (b) There was plenty of scope in this question for candidates to explain the value of obedience to the commandments, both for the individual and for society. The majority of responses concentrated on the importance for Christians of obedience to God’s Laws and fulfilling their personal obligations to God. The best responses developed this further by explaining the benefits of observing the commandments to create a peaceful and just society.
- (c) The majority of candidates responded well to this question. Most considered reasons and justifications for two or more points of view. All acknowledged the importance of forgiveness as a Christian duty but there were also some good, interesting views and conclusions on the difficulty of forgiveness in some circumstances. Some excellent Level 4 answers explored the inter-relatedness of ‘love of others’ and forgiveness.

### Section B Islam.

### Question 4

- (a) Most candidates offered detailed and accurate descriptions of the way in which the fast is observed during Ramadan. The best responses also contained details of related activities such as extra prayers, diligent reading of the Qur’an and good behaviour.
- (b) Again, a generally good performance on the importance of Ramadan.
- (c) Some competent, well-balanced answers showed an appreciation of the difficulties that might be experienced by some Muslims in carrying out obligatory duties but also an appreciation that this



might be a challenge Muslims should strive to meet. Some pointed out that a solution was already provided within Islam in the allowed exceptions to the obligations. Some weaker answers struggled to present more than a single personal viewpoint.

#### Question 5

- (a) Not all candidates who answered this question understood that it was about the historical origins of the division between Sunni and Shi'ah Muslims. There were a few good, accurate answers but the majority of responses were weak.
- (b) The performance on this question was similar to that on part (a). Many candidates wrote about Jihad as holy war only and answers were brief. However, the candidates who understood the concept of greater Jihad as well as lesser Jihad achieved Levels 3 and 4.
- (c) Some candidates did try to give multiple viewpoints in answer to this question but, again, as with other part (c) questions, most answers argued only one point of view in support of the statement. Very few candidates made any attempt to discuss why some Muslims might want to maintain and protect their differences in belief and practice.

#### Question 6

- (a) The best responses gained Level 4 for excellent, detailed descriptions of the first revelation to the Prophet in Cave Hira with accurate quotations of Sura 96:2-5, (the words of the first revelation), the subsequent events outside the cave and the return home to Kadijah. This was a key event in the life of Muhammad (pbuh) which candidates might ensure that they know well. Some candidates achieved Level 3 marks for largely accurate accounts with some misquotes or omissions. There were some weak answers in which knowledge of the event was negligible.
- (b) The performance on this question was, generally, good. The majority of responses showed understanding of the relationship between the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet and emphasised the two as primary sources with the Qur'an, as the word of Allah, never being contradicted.
- (c) See the comments on other part (c) questions in this section and in the preamble to this report. Many candidates answered at length but offered arguments for only one view e.g. that Muslims can easily follow the example of the Prophet because they have the Qur'an and his Sunnah. Only a few candidates discussed the challenge for Muslims today of following the lifestyle of a man who was, according to his wife, 'a living Qur'an'.

#### Section C Judaism.

#### Question 7

- (a) Generally, a well answered question; candidates were familiar with the Seder and its symbolic meaning but most were able to go beyond this and consider the preparations and the progress of the meal and the interaction between members of the family. There were very few weak answers to this question.
- (b) Candidates responded to this with varying degrees of success. The best answers explained why the deliverance from slavery is central to the history of Judaism and the Jews' subsequent relationship with God and also proof of his love and his promise to redeem them. Jews celebrate Passover every year to thank God for their freedom today. Some answers concentrated only on a description of the plagues or the events of the first Passover night.
- (c) There were good, genuinely discursive, responses to this question about suffering. Various types of suffering and its cause were assessed and, in most responses, several points of view were evaluated. The best answers provided a conclusion and a personal opinion.

### Question 8

- (a) Those who chose this question appeared to do so because they were confident of the answer.

Responses usually contained accurate generic and specialist terms used to describe the nature of God in a monotheistic religion. Most candidates gained the higher level of marks by being able to relate their answer to Judaism.

- (b) Candidates who attempted this question were, again, mostly confident in their knowledge of the Shema and could explain its importance for Jews and responses were generally good. Some weaker answers confused the Shema with the Talmud.

- (c) Generally, candidates made a good attempt to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of formal, traditional prayers and their place in worship. Most attempted to evaluate more than one view on the issue.

### Question 9

- (a) The majority of candidates produced a very good response to this question. Candidates were knowledgeable about the purpose of the ceremony and its participants although some candidates lacked the technical religious language to name the participants (e.g. terms such as mohel, sandek). Unfortunately, a few candidates confused Brit Milah with Bar Mitzvah.

- (b) Again, in part (b) candidates showed good understanding of the purpose of Brit Milah and its importance in maintaining tradition and strengthening the Jewish community. The majority of responses gained the higher levels of marks.

- (c) Many answers here contained strong opinions and a good discussion of multiple viewpoints. The best answers recognised the importance in Judaism of birth and identity as well as the effect of 'separateness' on young people as well as discussing whether choice of religion was possible or desirable. Most answers were discursive but some of the weaker ones were too brief.

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

---

Paper 0490/23

Paper 2

## General Comments

The overall performance this year was of a good standard. The candidature covered a wide ability range and there were many very good and competent answers and only a minority of weaker or uneven performances. There were some very strong candidates and there was evidence that in the majority of cases the study of two religions had been carried out with the appropriate time and attention allocated to both.

With regard to part (c) of all questions, it should be noted that to gain the highest level of marks, responses should be discursive. In some cases, there was a tendency to ignore the instruction to consider other points of view. Some able candidates wrote at length presenting arguments and evidence in support of one view but then failed to discuss arguments for other views and so failed to achieve the higher level of marks. Some candidates contented themselves with offering one clear personal viewpoint but did not consider alternatives.

There was evidence that some candidates had studied all three of the religions offered in the Syllabus and then made a choice of two from the three, choosing, on the day, the options on which they felt their answers might be the strongest. In most cases their choices were successful but **it should be emphasised that there is no need for candidates to study more than two of the specified religions.**

Some candidates ignored the rubric and answered all the questions or became confused between religions in their use of terminology and so weakened their overall performance.

As with Paper 1, there were a number of rubric errors. The main error was answering too many questions. Some candidates answered all three questions from their chosen sections and a minority of candidates answered nine questions.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### *Section A Christianity*

#### Question 1

- (a) Candidates answered this question in a variety of ways all equally worthy of credit. Some candidates described and explained the importance of worship activity on Good Friday in remembrance of the death of Jesus on the cross. Other candidates concentrated solely on the meaning for Christians of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross in terms of redemption and salvation. The most successful answers combined these two elements of Good Friday observance.
- (b) There were many excellent responses to this question on the joyfulness of Easter Sunday services of worship. Candidates gave detailed explanations of the symbolism used in churches to show joy and happiness and to reflect the hope inspired by the Resurrection. A high number of responses attained Level 4. Most candidates correctly omitted references to the commercial aspects of Easter which are non-religious, although many mentioned eggs as symbolising new life. A minority of candidates confused Good Friday and Easter Sunday and so limited their marks for part (a) and part (b) of the question.
- (c) There were some excellent answers which balanced good knowledge of Christian festivals and the frequency of their celebration against a lack of commitment or over-commercialisation in a largely secular society. Some candidates made perceptive observations about the deliberate decision of some Christians not to celebrate festivals because of the misuse and misunderstanding attached to festivals by both churches and society.

However, there were also some confused answers to this evaluation question. Many responses tended to argue from one point of view or were able to give a clear personal view but were not able to give a discursive answer. In some answers, the arguments were often repetitive and negative and not truly evaluative.

### Question 2

- (a) There was generally a good performance on this question – the Christmas story was well known and related in accurate detail. Common omissions in some answers were the role of angels or visitors in the nativity story.
- (b) Even candidates who gained Level 4 for part (a) achieved a less satisfactory performance on this question. Responses were often solely an explanation of Jesus as the ‘Saviour of our sins’ and were repetitive on this point. Many made no reference to the important beliefs inspired by the birth of Jesus (as God incarnate) in a humble stable and the visit of shepherds, or, the glorification by angels and the Magi and the belief in Jesus as Messiah. Some candidates explained the exalted role of Mary but only a few candidates gave a full and comprehensive answer to gain Level 4 marks.
- (c) A small number of excellent responses contained perceptive and intelligent evaluation of different views of the birth stories and the Bible as either the true word of God or the interpreted word of God and assessed how Christians might respond to this in terms of what they believe. It was notable that many candidates expressed only a personal view in answer to this question: a positive view, in support of the statement, justified, in some cases, solely by the reason that all Christians should believe what is written in the Bible. Most responses would have benefitted from more evaluation of the fact that there are only two accounts in the New Testament of the birth of Jesus and the fact that they differ.

### Question 3

- (a) There was a mixed response here. The best answers correctly quoted the Two Greatest Commandments as given by Jesus and explained in detail how these two summarise the principles laid down in the Ten Commandments. Some responses correctly identified the Two Greatest Commandments and the principle of ‘love’ but without reference to the Ten Commandments and in some cases answers were repetitive. Weaker candidates were unable to identify the two commandments correctly and chose a random two from the Ten Commandments, in most cases some credit was usually gained but only at the lower level.
- (b) There was plenty of scope in this question for candidates to explain the value of obedience to the commandments, both for the individual and for society. The majority of responses concentrated on the importance for Christians of obedience to God’s Laws and fulfilling their personal obligations to God. The best responses developed this further by explaining the benefits of observing the commandments to create a peaceful and just society.
- (c) The majority of candidates responded well to this question. Most considered reasons and justifications for two or more points of view. All acknowledged the importance of forgiveness as a Christian duty but there were also some good, interesting views and conclusions on the difficulty of forgiveness in some circumstances. Some excellent Level 4 answers explored the inter-relatedness of ‘love of others’ and forgiveness.

### Section B Islam.

#### Question 4

- (a) Most candidates offered detailed and accurate descriptions of the way in which the fast is observed during Ramadan. The best responses also contained details of related activities such as extra prayers, diligent reading of the Qur’an and good behaviour.
- (b) Again, a generally good performance on the importance of Ramadan.
- (c) Some competent, well-balanced answers showed an appreciation of the difficulties that might be experienced by some Muslims in carrying out obligatory duties but also an appreciation that this

might be a challenge Muslims should strive to meet. Some pointed out that a solution was already provided within Islam in the allowed exceptions to the obligations. Some weaker answers struggled to present more than a single personal viewpoint.

#### Question 5

- (a) Not all candidates who answered this question understood that it was about the historical origins of the division between Sunni and Shi'ah Muslims. There were a few good, accurate answers but the majority of responses were weak.
- (b) The performance on this question was similar to that on part (a). Many candidates wrote about Jihad as holy war only and answers were brief. However, the candidates who understood the concept of greater Jihad as well as lesser Jihad achieved Levels 3 and 4.
- (c) Some candidates did try to give multiple viewpoints in answer to this question but, again, as with other part (c) questions, most answers argued only one point of view in support of the statement. Very few candidates made any attempt to discuss why some Muslims might want to maintain and protect their differences in belief and practice.

#### Question 6

- (a) The best responses gained Level 4 for excellent, detailed descriptions of the first revelation to the Prophet in Cave Hira with accurate quotations of Sura 96:2-5, (the words of the first revelation), the subsequent events outside the cave and the return home to Kadijah. This was a key event in the life of Muhammad (pbuh) which candidates might ensure that they know well. Some candidates achieved Level 3 marks for largely accurate accounts with some misquotes or omissions. There were some weak answers in which knowledge of the event was negligible.
- (b) The performance on this question was, generally, good. The majority of responses showed understanding of the relationship between the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet and emphasised the two as primary sources with the Qur'an, as the word of Allah, never being contradicted.
- (c) See the comments on other part (c) questions in this section and in the preamble to this report. Many candidates answered at length but offered arguments for only one view e.g. that Muslims can easily follow the example of the Prophet because they have the Qur'an and his Sunnah. Only a few candidates discussed the challenge for Muslims today of following the lifestyle of a man who was, according to his wife, 'a living Qur'an'.

#### Section C Judaism.

#### Question 7

- (a) Generally, a well answered question; candidates were familiar with the Seder and its symbolic meaning but most were able to go beyond this and consider the preparations and the progress of the meal and the interaction between members of the family. There were very few weak answers to this question.
- (b) Candidates responded to this with varying degrees of success. The best answers explained why the deliverance from slavery is central to the history of Judaism and the Jews' subsequent relationship with God and also proof of his love and his promise to redeem them. Jews celebrate Passover every year to thank God for their freedom today. Some answers concentrated only on a description of the plagues or the events of the first Passover night.
- (c) There were good, genuinely discursive, responses to this question about suffering. Various types of suffering and its cause were assessed and, in most responses, several points of view were evaluated. The best answers provided a conclusion and a personal opinion.

### Question 8

- (a) Those who chose this question appeared to do so because they were confident of the answer.

Responses usually contained accurate generic and specialist terms used to describe the nature of God in a monotheistic religion. Most candidates gained the higher level of marks by being able to relate their answer to Judaism.

- (b) Candidates who attempted this question were, again, mostly confident in their knowledge of the Shema and could explain its importance for Jews and responses were generally good. Some weaker answers confused the Shema with the Talmud.

- (c) Generally, candidates made a good attempt to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of formal, traditional prayers and their place in worship. Most attempted to evaluate more than one view on the issue.

### Question 9

- (a) The majority of candidates produced a very good response to this question. Candidates were knowledgeable about the purpose of the ceremony and its participants although some candidates lacked the technical religious language to name the participants (e.g. terms such as mohel, sandek). Unfortunately, a few candidates confused Brit Milah with Bar Mitzvah.

- (b) Again, in part (b) candidates showed good understanding of the purpose of Brit Milah and its importance in maintaining tradition and strengthening the Jewish community. The majority of responses gained the higher levels of marks.

- (c) Many answers here contained strong opinions and a good discussion of multiple viewpoints. The best answers recognised the importance in Judaism of birth and identity as well as the effect of 'separateness' on young people as well as discussing whether choice of religion was possible or desirable. Most answers were discursive but some of the weaker ones were too brief.