

Religious studies

Answers and commentaries A-level (7062)

Component 2D: Study of religion and dialogues: Islam

Marked answers from students for questions from the June 2022 exams. Supporting commentary is provided to help you understand how marks are awarded and how students can improve performance.

Contents

The below content table is interactive. You can click on the title of the question to go directly to that page.

10 mark question (AO1) mark scheme	3
15 mark question (AO2) mark scheme	4
10 mark question (AO1)	5
15 mark questions (AO2)	10
25 mark questions (AO1 and AO2)	16

Answers and commentaries

This resource is to be used alongside the A-level Religious Studies Paper 2D Study of Religion and Dialogues: Islam June 2022 question paper.

10 mark question (AO1) mark scheme

Levels of response: 10 marks A-level – AO1	
Level 5 9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate, relevant and fully developed in breadth and depth with very good use of detailed and relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural reference where appropriate. Where appropriate, good knowledge and understanding of the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion is demonstrated. Clear and coherent presentation of ideas with precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
Level 4 7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate and mostly relevant with good development in breadth and depth shown through good use of relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate. Where appropriate, alternative views and/or scholarly opinion are explained. Mostly clear and coherent presentation of ideas with good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
Level 3 5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and critical understanding is generally accurate and relevant with development in breadth and/or depth shown through some use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate. Where appropriate, there is some familiarity with the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion. Some organisation of ideas and coherence with reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
Level 2 3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and critical understanding is limited, with limited development in breadth and/or depth shown through limited use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate. Where appropriate, limited reference may be made to alternative views and/or scholarly opinion. Limited organisation of ideas and coherence and use of subject vocabulary.

Level 1 1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and critical understanding is basic with little or no development. There may be a basic awareness of alternative views and/or scholarly opinion. • Isolated elements of accurate and relevant information and basic use of appropriate subject vocabulary.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No accurate or relevant material to credit.

15 mark question (AO2) mark scheme

Levels of response: 15 marks A-level – AO2	
Level 5 13-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very well-focused response to the issue(s) raised. • Perspective discussion of different views, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought with critical analysis. • There is an appropriate evaluation fully supported by the reasoning. • Precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
Level 4 10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A well-focused response to the issues(s) raised. • Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought, with some critical analysis. • There is an appropriate evaluation supported by the reasoning. • Good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
Level 3 7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A general response to the issue(s) raised. • Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought. • An evaluation is made that is consistent with some of the reasoning. • Reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
Level 2 4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited response to the issue(s) raised. • Presentation of a point of view relevant to the issue with some supporting evidence and argument. • Limited attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary.
Level 1 1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic response to the issue(s) raised. • A point of view is stated, with some evidence or reason(s) in support. • Some attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No accurate or relevant material to credit.

10 mark question (AO1)

Question 2.1

Examine the significant ideas of Tariq Ramadan and Sheikh Ahmad Ash-Sharabasi concerning capital punishment.

[10 marks]

Mark scheme

Please refer to mark scheme on [page 3 for levels of response](#).

Target: AO1.1: Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief including religious, philosophical and ethical thought and teaching.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Tariq Ramadan

Tariq Ramadan proposes that as a result of modern interpretations of the Qur'an, and education for all Muslims, more repressive interpretations that approve of capital punishment should be abandoned. Ramadan focuses on the liberty and the rights of the individual and on the emphasis of justice found in the Qur'an.

Ramadan argues that Islam is being used to defend injustices. He argues that as society evolved it became necessary to re-evaluate Muslim authorities, interpretations of scriptures, and beliefs held. Ramadan notes that there is a range of views from conservative to liberal on most issues, including capital punishment; some are opposed to and others approve of capital punishment. He argues there needs to be investigation into which most accurately reflect the views of the Muslim community.

Sheikh Ahmad Ash-Sharabasi

Ash-Sharabasi takes a different stance. He argues that when an action is permitted or ordained, it remains true regardless of any societal developments, because God's law is not subject to change. Ash-Sharabasi believes that every word of the Qur'an should be adhered to without exception including those sections on capital punishment.

Ash-Sharabasi also defines capital punishment as a form of self-defence. He argues that if the perpetrator has murdered a member of society, then the capital sentence is itself a form of self-defence. He argues that self-defence is upheld by all courts of law. Therefore, self-defence is seen as reasonable where necessary.

Student responses

Response A

Tariq Ramadan is a Muslim Professor educated in Britain who has significant views on the impacts of Capital Punishment. Tariq Ramadan believes that due to the fast growing Religion that Islam is the main and important parts of the teachings of the Religion have been lost. Tariq is a Professor in Islamic studies and believes that the essence of the Quran needs to be revisited and reinterpreted. Due to these beliefs Tariq believes that Islam needs to ~~temporarily~~ temporarily stop Capital Punishment and revisit the scriptures of the Quran that Muslims are not reading but deciding on their own interpretations. Tariq says that some forms of Corporal Punishment do not reflect the main teachings of Islam and thus largely reflects the quotation 'forgiveness is better than retaliation'. Tariq believes that we need a teaching that reflects the belief of modern society better and a more human way. Tariq does not want a full ban of Capital Punishment as he agrees that it is rooted in the Quran.

~~On the other hand,~~

On the other hand, Sheikh Ahmad Ash-Sharabasi states that 'Capital punishment is not a new legislation and was ordained a long time ago'. Sharabasi makes this undeniably clear due to his strong beliefs that Capital Punishment is a core belief of Islam and we can not deny its ~~importance~~ importance within the religion. Sharabasi also feels strongly that Capital punishment is a 'state of self defence' and that

ut of a punishment for crimes against the Ummah. Shrabasi believes that we need it as self defence as it is key to have understanding that to murder / hurt one member of the ummah is to hurt All. Shrabasi also makes it clear that we need capital punishment to stop 'spreading mischief across the land'. This refers to crimes such as adultery, rape, homosexuality, piracy and murder. All of these crimes are seen as disrupting the Ummah and having significant harmful impacts on the Ummah.

Shrabasi is a strong candidate for looking for old references to the Quran, ~~there~~ due to his education as a professor in Egypt. However, Canada is more secular and western.

Shrabasi also makes it clear that Capital Punishment is important for 'justice and law', this being that it is a way to legally support the Ummah and give justice to those that have been wronged by mischief. For example, homosexuality are deemed unacceptable by Shrabasi due to the fundamental views of sharia law from the Quran and the teachings of Muhammad. Therefore, deemed to be 'mischief'.

This is a Level 5 response

This response is accurate, relevant and fully developed. It gives a detailed explanation of the views of both scholars and unpacks their ideas using referencing from scripture throughout. There is both depth and breadth in the response with clear explanations of the points that are being made. The evidence provided in both parts of the response are detailed and relevant; both parts of the question have been fully addressed and no more could be expected in exam conditions.

10 marks

Response B

Capital punishment in Islam is one of those topics which creates a lot of controversy. This is due to the fact that this use of punishment is still in use throughout Islamic countries.

Tariq Ramadan's ideas towards capital punishment are of the fact that it shouldn't be in use. This is because such punishments include ~~as~~ stoning to death. This is significant as Ramadan argues the fact that ~~the~~ only Allah has the right on ~~the~~ his people to call them to death. This would be agreed on by most Muslims as death is written for everyone and we as humans have no right to determine this. This leads on to the fact that the criminal should be ~~left~~ left to be dealt with Allah as He is only worthy of punishing.

On the other hand, Sheikh Ahmad Ash-Sharabasi has somewhat different views concerning capital punishment. This is due to the fact that the extent of the crime should be taken into consideration. If the crime was one of which deserves capital punishment then it should be used to ~~the~~ full effect. As well as that, Ahmad Ash-Sharabasi argues the fact that capital punishment should always be there. This is because it will make any person think twice before committing a crime perhaps ~~putting~~ ^{putting} them off it as the consequences are much worse.

This is a Level 3 response

The knowledge and critical understanding shown here is generally accurate and relevant. The response begins with an introduction about capital punishment, this is not required; students are advised to get straight into answering the set question. Although the student attempts to answer both parts of the question and addresses the views of both scholars they are lacking detail. The content is accurate, but the points being made need to be unpacked in more detail, for example with reference to evidence from scriptural sources. There is not enough development or depth to move into Level 4.

6 marks

15 mark questions (AO2)

Question 2.2

'Hadiths are very important sources of authority for Muslims.'

Evaluate this claim.

[15 marks]

Mark scheme

Please refer to mark scheme on [page 4 for levels of response](#).

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to the consideration of the following specification content: different views about the nature and value of Hadiths as sources of knowledge of the sayings and actions of Muhammad.

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

Many Muslims argue that the Prophet's sayings and actions which comprise the Hadiths can be checked against the Qur'an and against the chain of transmission; this makes them important sources of authority. However, some Muslims do not recognise the authority of other schools of Islam, and Sunni and Shia Muslims view different Hadiths as authoritative so they cannot be important sources for all Muslims.

Many Muslims consider Hadiths to be an authoritative guide to behaviour for everyday life because they accurately record the actions and sayings of the Prophet. However, some Muslims believe the Hadiths contradict and disagree about their authentication making it unclear how they should be used to provide details for key practices such as prayer and pilgrimage. This limits their authority for Muslims.

Many Muslims argue that Hadiths can be useful for guidance relating to any modern day topic, for example, genetic engineering. They reflect the thinking of the Prophet so they can be relied upon. However, some Muslims argue that applying the Hadith to issues such as genetic engineering is too difficult because they lack specific guidance and any application will be conjecture.

Student response

'Hadiths are very important sources of authority for Muslims!'

Hadiths are clearly important sources of authority for Muslims compared to other sources due to the Hadith being a biography of Muhammad.

Muslims may argue that the Hadith is not the most important source of authority for Muslims due to the Holy Quran. The Quran (6th) is the most important source to Muslims of a fundamental view due to the Quran being the word of Allah.

The Quran was revealed by Muhammad in the Cave of Hira and Muhammad was told to 'recite' by the angel Jibril. The Quran was through Muhammad, but the direct word of Allah. Due to the Quran being the direct word of Allah, it cannot be questioned.

However, a more modern Liberal Muslim may say that the Hadith has more authority over the Quran due to it being all about Muhammad. Muhammad quotes 'the Holy Book and my Sunna', this shows authority because we need Muhammad guidance because he is the 'excellent example!'

Even though the Quran is the Book of God and Muhammad should not be idolised or 'we make no distraction', it is important to note that due to the Hadith giving clarity and not being able to read the Arabic of the Quran, the Hadith is ultimately used more. Therefore, having more authority.

Another important reason why a Muslim would say that the Quran is more important is due to its fundamental teachings of Shariah law. Shariah law has the literal meaning of 'path to the watering hole' - this being the path to paradise. This in turn shows the Quran is more important as this shows ~~the~~ Muslims to reach Allah the Quran is the only way. This is a significant argument because Allah is a vital being within Islam.

However, Muhammad is the Dime Seal and the Final Prophet. This shows more authority within the Hadith because of Muhammad's Religious experiences/miracles. For example, the Night Ascension. During the Night Ascension Muhammad passed all the Prophets and experienced complete silence with Allah. 'Dime' seal gives ~~an~~ connotations that Muhammad is on level with Allah. Therefore, this is a strong argument because if Muhammad is the seal to Islam then he is the only individual that Muslims can follow.

However, Muslims would state that the Quran is clearly more important and has ultimate authority due to the Quran being literally true, written in Arabic and poetry.

The Quran being in poetry shows authority because it is uncorrupted or completely true. This is a very strong argument due to the significance of the text and if it were not in Arabic the Quran would be completely corrupted. A more important point to raise is that due to Muhammad's death, the Quran could be corrupted to the

circulation of multiple copies due to the rapid expansion of Islam.

However, it is clear that the Hadith has more authority due to the Hadith being applicable to more modern day problems. For example, the Qur'an does have ~~quotations~~ like 'have your gaze', which implies women should protect their modesty. However, the Hadith has more scripture on problems of marriage, celibacy, modesty, sex, money, shirk etc. Therefore, the Hadith is more reliable for Muslims of a more secular society because they can refer to the Hadith on issues such as Jihad. Greater Jihad can be a huge problem for Muslims in secular society. Therefore, with the Hadith and guidance from the Prophet, they get more support than the Qur'an.

Therefore, it is ~~clear~~^{clear} that due to the secular issues of the modern day world, the Hadith is more important than the Qur'an because of the guidance from Muhammad 'I have perfected your religion for you'. The information in the Hadith is perfect and that is all a Modern Muslim needs.

This is a Level 5 response

A very well-focused response which is clear, detailed and evaluative, and considers both sides of the argument. It considers the role of the Hadith and uses several sources of evidence to critically analyse. The counter argument looking at the role of the Qur'an is also well developed with strong lines of arguments supported with relevant evidence. Some further connection between points made, to aid critical analysis, would have helped this answer attain full marks.

14 marks

Question 1.2

'Muslims cannot justify the use of weapons of mass destruction.'

Evaluate this claim.

[15 marks]

Mark scheme

Please refer to mark scheme on [page 4 for levels of response](#).

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to the consideration of the following specification content: Sanctity of life; ...lesser jihad as a duty of the Ummah and how it applied to warfare at the time of the Prophet; debates about its application today, including to the use of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism.

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

Many Muslims reject the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) because of the belief in the sanctity of life. The Qur'an states that God is the author of all life and death. Humans should not interfere with this, especially on such a large scale. However, other Muslims believe that, should the Ummah come under attack and require protection, then the use of WMD may be necessary and justifiable.

Many Muslims would agree that the use of WMD could never be justified because there is no prime authority to approve of such an act. Without a direct instruction from the Prophet, some Muslims would avoid such an act. However, others would argue that lesser jihad remains a duty. Protection from, and combat with those outside the Ummah, is permissible if necessary. Therefore, if WMD were required in modern warfare they could be justified.

Many Muslims would agree because the nature of warfare has changed. At the time of the Prophet, combatants engaged in hand to hand fighting as individuals. This type of warfare is far more morally permissible than the use of WMD. However, the Prophet never ruled on the use of WMD specifically so Muslim scholars have to rely on analogy and the principle of analogical inference.

Student Response

One reason why Muslims cannot justify the use of weapons of mass destruction is due to their duty to be a Khalifa. The use of weapons of mass destruction is damaging to the environment which should be taken care of as mentioned in Hadiths. This shows why the use of weapons of mass destruction cannot be justified.

However, one reason why the use of weapons of mass destruction can be justified is as a result of retaliating in war in order for protecting religion. ~~Therefore~~ This may be accepted in order to retaliate against those attacking believers for being Muslim.

Another reason why Muslims cannot justify the use of weapons of mass destruction is because of the amount of people or living creatures it could kill or hurt. Killing one person is like killing the whole of mankind therefore cannot be justified.

This is a Level 3 response

This is a general response to the issue raised. It provides three simple points which lack development, critical evaluation and supporting evidence. The points made are reasonable but lack critical engagement. In order to move into a higher band a more detailed critical discussion with evaluation is required; for example, counter argument and evaluation could be included within each paragraph and a conclusion could be added at the end to explain the overall judgement on the statement.

7 marks

25 mark questions (AO1 and AO2)

Question 4.1

'The beliefs of all religions are equally valid.'

Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Islam and philosophy.

[25 marks]

Mark scheme

Please refer to mark scheme on [page 3 for levels of response for AO1](#) and [page 4 for levels of response for AO2](#).

Target: AO1.4: Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects and approaches to religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

AO1

Islam

There is considerable emphasis on exclusivism within Islam, which is often supported with reference to Qur'an 3:85, and there are also some tensions between different sects in Islam, for example over the authority of Imams. Teaching in the Qur'an also provides a basis for an inclusivist approach to both Judaism and Christianity. Some see actions as more important than the particular beliefs or interpretations of beliefs that individuals may hold.

Philosophy

This can be approached in a variety of ways. For example, philosophy may challenge the validity of all faiths. It may also point out that arguments used by one faith to support, or attack, belief in miracles or religious experiences must be applied to the claims of all faiths in relation to these topics. Mystical experiences may be seen as the common core of all faiths. Similarly, arguments for God's existence relate to God in general, rather than God as specifically understood by Christians, Muslims or Jews, or to Brahman or the Trikaya.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Islam and philosophy.

AO2

All arguments from philosophy in favour of, or against, a religious belief are common to all faiths where the belief is present, for example, beliefs about miracles, religious experiences and life after death. An argument supporting the possibility of personal existence beyond death, for example, supports all those religions that include that belief and arguments against the existence of a metaphysical dimension to life challenge all faiths that believe that such a dimension exists. This suggests that philosophy finds all faiths equally valid/invalid. However, many of the beliefs are contradictory, which seems to show that they cannot all be valid, and certainly some followers of individual religions claim that they alone know the truth.

The view may be supported by inclusivists who see all religions/minority Muslim groups as historically and culturally relative expressions of the same underlying awareness or path. The individual faiths, on this view, are merely different ways of talking about ultimate reality which enables individuals to deepen their understanding of it, but the one reality lies beyond these. However, some Muslims are exclusivists and argue, often based on Qur'an 3:85, that they alone have the true faith, and it is very difficult to see some other faiths as expressions of the same underlying reality because of the great differences between them.

Tolerance of other faiths is a characteristic of much Muslim teaching, and within a secular context, freedom of religious expression is extended to all faiths. However, there are values and practices in other faiths or Muslim sects which some Muslims find intolerable. These vary, but may include, for example, the use of drugs and idol worship. Divisions on ethical issues such as abortion are also evident. Beliefs that operate in the personal realm but are not expressed in practice may be accepted as 'valid' while acting on them is not.

Student response

The claim	Islam
- They are there's 3 likes (Havel)	- Agree
- Language creates - must understand separate believers	- Agree but Islam is the true religion & correct believe
Secularisation - trying to be pluralist	'so you may get to know one another'
Inclusivism	'believers... do not fear'
Exclusivism	'There are many paths to God' - Sufi hadith
	Traditionalist - I have respect for your religion - It is the perfect religion 'lowest ranks' - in Allah's Quran.

The claim states that all religious beliefs are equally valid. Philosophy raises that we all have separate beliefs that are valid and acceptable. This can be compatible with Muslim Pluralists but Muslim Exclusivists would have an issue with the claim.

Hare argued that everyone has unchanging beliefs and assumptions about the world he called these blik. Bliks can refer to religious or non-religious beliefs. Hare observed that religious beliefs are stronger and are less likely to be able to be changed. Hare argues that these bliks are cognitive for the believer. Hare would argue that these are assumptions and we cannot know which is the 'true' belief so they are equally valid. Muslims would agree with Hare here, they would attest to the fact that their Islamic bliks are strong. However, they may challenge, depending if they are fundamentalist or liberal, that all religious bliks are equally reasonable. They would argue their bliks are absolutely proved through the Qur'an. So, while Hare's bliks is compatible with Islam's view on the claims that religious beliefs in general are valid, they may disagree with Hare that they are equally valid.

Wittgenstein argues that all religions and belief systems have different 'language games'. Wittgenstein argues that if we learn to understand the rules of all the different religious 'language games', we would most likely all agree with the claim because we would understand the meaning and reasoning behind their beliefs. Islam would agree with Wittgenstein that religious beliefs need to be understood by looking at the 'rules' of their 'language game'. However, Muslims would argue that the Islamic language game is the true one. We can try to understand the religious beliefs of other for inclusivity, but they would disagree with the claim and Wittgenstein on the argument that all these religious beliefs/'language games' are equally valid. Thus, whilst Wittgenstein's language game theory is compatible with the Muslim view that Islam should be understood more, but they might challenge that all language games are equal in validity.

A secular society like the UK would agree with the claim. Secular Britain is trying to be a pluralist society. This is a society where all beliefs, religious and non-religious are accepted. For example, under the UK laws Human Rights Act and the Equality Act religious expression was made a 'protected characteristic', so person could be discriminated against for their religious beliefs. Muslim Pluralist, which tend to be liberal Muslims would argue that could create a range of people with all different and equally valid religious beliefs on the planet for a religion. It is God's will that there are different religious beliefs. They might refer to a quote from the Qur'an which says that God put all different people together on the planet 'so you [they] may get to know one another'. This indicates for Muslim Pluralists that Allah intended for all believers and people to embrace one another's religious beliefs and treat them as equal. So Muslim Pluralist views on the claim are compatible with secular views because God created all different types of believers for a reason.

Inclusivism is where a society has all different beliefs that are accepted but only one belief system is seen as dominant and valid. Secular UK does have inclusivism still since Christianity is still dominant in the legal system and in the formation of the state and monarchy. Muslim Exclusivists, while having an issue with the favour of Christianity in the UK would agree with the inclusivist view that their belief system is correct but others are accepted. One quote from the Qur'an that Muslim Inclusivists may refer to is 'believers... Jews...Christians...do not fear' to show that whilst Islam is seen as the true religion to Muslims, any believer who believes in God, monotheism, the afterlife and the Day of Judgment will be rewarded in the afterlife and will not be punished greatly. Therefore, Muslim Inclusivists would agree with Inclusivist thinking in the UK, but would disagree with the claim that all religions are *equally* valid.

Exclusivism in secular UK is uncommon and it is not represented in the UK law. Muslim Exclusivists would disagree with the claim. Muslim Exclusivists would argue Islam is the only valid religion and all others are wrong and unacceptable. Muslim Exclusivists might refer to the quote from the Qur'an that non-Muslims, particularly atheists, will be in the 'lowest ranks' of hell. Muslim Exclusivists would argue that Islam is the only uncorrupted religion as Allah says in the Qur'an 'I have perfected your religion for you'. For Muslim Exclusivists, the claim is untrue. Muslim Exclusivism is not compatible with secular UK.

Overall, the claim is untrue for Muslims so Wittgenstein's language game theory and the arguments from Secular Pluralism are incompatible with Islam. Muslims believe that their religion is the only true one so other religious beliefs are not equally valid.

This is a Level 5 response for both AO1 and AO2

A very well-focussed response with accurate and fully developed knowledge and critical understanding shown. It includes a good range of views, each of which is supported by a range of evidence, both secular and religious. Both aspects of the 'dialogue' are covered effectively with links made between philosophical theory and Islamic belief and teaching. Good use of key terms throughout with excellent control of meaning. Evaluation and critical analysis are evident throughout the response, and the reasoning leads to an overall judgement.

23 marks (AO1:10 marks and AO2:13 marks)

Question 5.1

'Bentham's way of making moral decisions is compatible with Muslim ethics.'

Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Islam and ethical studies.

[25 marks]

Mark scheme

Please refer to mark scheme on [page 3 for levels of response for AO1](#) and [page 4 for levels of response for AO2](#).

Target: AO1:4: Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects and approaches to religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

AO1

Islam

Islamic ethics may be unpacked with reference to the classification of actions in Shari'ah law, and the sanctity of life and its application. The importance of compassion, and of considering the consequences of all actions, may also be unpacked.

Ethics

Bentham's key ideas may be identified as: how consequences of pain or pleasure determine whether an action is right or wrong; the goal of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, the hedonic calculus and the equality of pleasures. Bentham's approach may be identified as act utilitarianism, meaning that each situation is judged on its own merits rather than any moral rules or laws applied.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Islam and Bentham's way of making moral decisions.

AO2

There are likely to be many issues on which both Bentham and Islam would reach the same conclusions, because the virtue of compassion for all is easily translated into a desire for the happiness of all, or 'the greatest good for the greatest number'. However, Bentham's system potentially justifies any action as long as it contributes to that goal while the moral teachings of Islam do appear to prohibit certain actions, such as murder and theft, regardless of their consequences.

Bentham's way of moral decision making identifies the right action as that which produces the greatest happiness of the greatest number in the concrete situation in which a decision is required. This is consistent with a compassion based decision making process which some Muslims use to over-rule specific laws in extreme circumstances. However, not all Muslims would accept this way of making moral decisions as Islamic, and see Muslim ethics as rule based.

Bentham's system treats all sentient beings equally so that the happiness of each individual is taken into account in the decision making process: this appears to be consistent with the ethical teaching of Islam. However, Bentham's system allows the interests of the minority to be sacrificed to benefit the majority, and values all pleasures equally. Islam values spiritual happiness above all other forms and can have serious objections to the 'tyranny of the majority'.

Student response

The statement 'Bentham's way of making moral decisions is compatible with Muslim ethics' is true to a certain extent as they both share in common similar values but differ in some ways. Although there may be ~~more~~^{other} ethical ways.

~~But~~ Bentham main approach to decision making is with his Utilitarianism, ~~which~~ which main ~~philosophy~~ philosophy is the maximum amount of happiness for the maximum amount of people. Furthermore Bentham ensures this ~~as~~ with his hedonic calculus that has certain criteria of, e.g. purity, the balance, certainty, the duration and more. This attends to many peoples difficulties with moral decision making.

Islam could be seen as compatible since for example, Islam does care about peoples wellbeing, for example abortion is allowed when considering the women's mental health and wellbeing. Furthermore women are not forced to wear hijabs, & and have permission to kill their rapist as said in the Quran.

However it can be argued that Islam does not always care about maximum amount of happiness like Bentham as warfare is allowed when protecting your country or for your religion.

Also women are not allowed to not deny reproduction as it is highly encouraged to have children. This word mean marriage is also necessary as sex before marriage is not allowed. A more modern view would find certain Islamic rules to be too restricting causing the failure of maximum amount of happiness for the maximum amount of people.

A more fitting way of moral decision making with Muslim ethics may be ~~Kant's~~ Kant's way. Kant's categorical imperative is key in his moral decision making. This includes lying and refusing to help others, Kant ~~to~~ finds these things to be not something to follow when making moral decisions. Both aspects of categorical imperative are highly valued. Furthermore Kant also ~~is~~ brings up ~~practical~~ practical imperative and universality which is similar to Bentham's ~~hedonic~~ hedonic calculus or utility principle. To understand moral decision making in specific situations.

Muslims ethics would agree with ~~Kant's~~ Kant's way of moral decision making as terms like lying and refusing to help others are very ~~for~~ frowned upon in Islam

Lying to others can be regarded as a sin, when stealing or manipulating someone, will cause injury and suffering. Allah says to respect others and similarly refusing to help others is also not ^{kind} and respectful. However some ^{extreme} religious scholars may argue that refusing to help others is allowed if the person is of a different religion, or is disrespectful first. Although this could be countered as in the Quran ~~Allah~~ Allah specifically states that even if someone has a different way do not deserve to be refused help as we all live on Earth and are God's creation.

~~In conclusion~~. In conclusion I think that aspects of both Bentham and Kant moral decision making ways definitely have similarities with Islam. Although I would only to a small extent with the statement that Bentham is comparable with Muslim ethics. Kant's ~~moral decisions~~ way of making moral decisions is much more similar to Muslim ethics.

This is a Level 2 response for AO1 and a Level 3 response for AO2

Although the response has attempted to give both views they lack detail and accuracy; the AO1 knowledge and critical understanding is limited, with limited development. The student uses the work of Kant which is not what the question is asking, therefore the answer lacks focus on the question. The evidence provided is superficial and lacks critical evaluation, the student could have included scriptural sources to support points made. The answer does address two points of view in relation to the statement, so this tips it into Level 3 for AO2, although the critical analysis and focus of the answer is lacking and so it cannot progress further.

11 marks (AO1: 4 marks and AO2: 7 marks)

Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at aqa.org.uk/7062

You can talk directly to the Religious Studies subject team

E: religiousstudies@aqa.org.uk

T: **0161 957 3881**

Copyright © 2024 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

AQA Education (AQA) is a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723).

Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

