

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

---

Paper 0490/12  
Paper 1

## General comments

There were many instances of sound understanding and reflection, but some struggled to *develop* an argument rather than to state a few points on either side or to make a simple assertion in **part (c)** of each section.

Some candidates thought, especially in **part (c)**, that starting one list of points 'to a greater extent' and then another with 'to a lesser extent' constituted an argument when it was simply a juxtaposition of assertions.

A critical skill is the use of exemplification. Examples demonstrate real understanding and were powerful in advancing arguments beyond mere generalisation. For instance, it is very difficult to argue that some places of pilgrimage are more or less important than others if none are cited, whereas a very good response could be constructed by reference to a specific comparison, such as between Jerusalem and Lourdes.

There was overall parity of quality in answers on all three religions, though candidates with insufficient knowledge struggled in some areas. It was noticeable that a significant number of candidates with fair knowledge of one tradition produced very sketchy answers in the chosen second.

A minority of candidates seemed to lack practice in using time effectively, not using the number of marks available as an invaluable guide to the expected length of answers. Some penalised themselves by writing at enormous and unnecessary length on **part (a)(i)** and **(a)(ii)**, only to run out of time without completing the required number of questions or producing cursory responses to **parts (b)** and **(c)**.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section A – Christianity**

#### **Question 1**

- (a) (i) 'Places' in the question permitted a wide range of legitimate responses, whether to towns or cities or to individual places such as the Garden of Gethsemane, and most candidates had few difficulties, though some failed to notice the reference to the life of Jesus, offering answers such as Medina, Rome or Lourdes.
- (ii) Generally, this was answered quite well, though some struggled, often confusing Jerusalem with Rome or Bethlehem.
- (b) There were many very pleasing answers with almost all candidates producing a variety of satisfactory reasons based on history and the importance for individual and collective faith. Candidates also developed good explanations of how these places might make pilgrims feel closer to God.
- (c) There were a good number of well developed responses to this question where candidates explored reasons such as walking in the places Jesus had walked or biblical sites which made pilgrims feel closer to God than other sites. Other candidates found this a difficult question which meant answers were sometimes generalisations, lacking specific examples to explain why a given place might be less important than another.

## Question 2

- (a) (i) Responses to this question were mixed, and a significant number of candidates paid insufficient attention to *private* devotion, generalising about prayer without making clear what might be private about the activity. Better responses described meditation, private bible reading and the use of the rosary.
- (ii) As with the first part of this question, a significant number of candidates failed to observe that the question was about *public* worship, though most were able to provide relevant material.
- (b) Many responses gave good explanations of various ways in which the bible is important to Christians particularly as a revelation of God which can be used in teaching and devotion. Other answers gave more limited accounts of the significance of the Bible. For some its only value was as a rule book based on the Ten Commandments, with little or often no reference to God's relation to his people or to salvation history.
- (c) There were some thoughtful answers which discussed the issue in Trinitarian terms, often in relation to the teachings of Jesus, but many candidates appeared unaware that, to a Christian, Jesus is fully God and fully man, making unhelpful distinctions between God and Jesus.

## Section B – Islam

### Question 3

- (a) (i) This was generally competently answered but many did not notice that the question was about the *early* life of Muhammad (pbuh), writing instead about later events.
- (ii) While most found this a straightforward question which they were able to give good descriptions in response, others wrote simply about events, failing to notice that the question was about *character*.
- (b) There were some very good answers to this question, but many simply described *what* happened rather than *why* the persecution happened. Some focused, instead, on why Muhammad (pbuh) became a prophet.
- (c) There were many good responses, especially from those candidates confident in their knowledge of the status of the Sunnah and its relation to the original teaching of the Qu'ran. The best responses gave specific examples of use to develop their answers. Some responses suffered from candidates not understanding what the Sunnah contained.

### Question 4

- (a) (i) This was often answered less well as a result of misunderstanding of the question. Candidates were not asked *when* prayers were said, but to *name* those times. This meant many wrote morning, afternoon and night which was not entirely accurate and did not include any 'names'.
- (ii) A number of candidates unfortunately concentrated on preparations for salah rather than the performance of salah itself, but most candidates were able to provide a full and relevant response.
- (b) There were many effective answers, though some substituted description for an explanation of the importance of salah. The best responses explained that salah is performed because it is one of the Five Pillars, a time to reflect and to improve one's relationship with God which makes the ummah stronger. Weaker responses tended to be about prayer in general rather than salah in Muslim life.
- (c) Those who understood what was meant by 'rituals' were able to give a good account whether or not 'words' were more or less important. Many successfully answered that in Islam they can be seen as most effective when blended together.

**Section C – Judaism**

**Question 5**

- (a) (i) Most candidates found that this was a straightforward question and were able to give a good account of the 613 commandments. Some thought the mizvot contained nothing more than the Decalogue whereas a minority thought they were rituals such as Bar Mitzvah.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to give a good description of covenants. Particularly those between Abraham and God or Moses and God. Weaker responses referred to signs such as circumcision but were limited on the details of the covenants in question.
- (b) Many simply described the mizvot rather than explaining its importance. Few demonstrated specifically – with examples – its use within Jewish life and practice. The best responses explained that mizvot can be seen as a way of God reaching out to his people and obeying them is a way of people reaching back to God.
- (c) Some candidate responses resorted to generalisation, saying simply that the mizvot were outdated without giving and reasons or examples to justify their view. Better responses demonstrated both relevant knowledge and the ability to justify arguments. They, for example, pointed to the importance of a disciplined life even in today's world. Others explored the idea that modern life has thrown up challenges with which the mizvot is too old to help modern Jews.

**Question 6**

- (a) (i) Most gave adequate answers, though some confused synagogues with churches, and a minority thought it a place of sacrifice.
- (ii) Those who knew that the mikvah is a ritual bath performed very well; some, who did not, could not be given credit. Those, for example, who confused it with the yad.
- (b) Many answers were very generalised, making no reference to any individual artefacts or symbols. Good responses exemplified their points, demonstrating the importance of specific symbols and artefacts. A few confused Judaism with the other religions, referring to crucifixes, qiblas and other inappropriate objects.
- (c) There was much generalisation about the importance of family life, with little that was specifically Jewish. Few seemed aware of ceremonies carried out at home, or the involvement of children in, for example, seder meals, and the references to the role of the synagogue in the community were less common than might have been expected.

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

---

Paper 0490/13  
Paper 1

## General comments

There were many instances of sound understanding and reflective material, however many struggled to *develop* an argument rather than to state a few points on either side or to make a simple assertion in **part (c)** of each section. There was overall parity of quality in answers on all three religions, though candidates with insufficient knowledge struggled with parts of **Question 6**.

There were more than the usual number of candidates who were answering the question in the general area of the topic rather than the one on the paper. Credit was given to those parts of their responses which answered the question.

A minority of candidates seemed to lack practice in using time effectively, not using the number of marks available as an invaluable guide to the expected length of answers. Some penalised themselves by writing at enormous and unnecessary length on **parts (a)(i)** and **(a)(ii)**, only to run out of time without completing the required number of questions or producing cursory responses to **parts (b)** and **(c)**.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section A – Christianity**

#### **Question 1**

- (a) (i) Most candidates identified elements such as repentance and forgiveness, though some were uncertain of the meaning of ‘reconciliation’, thus limiting the quality of responses. A significant minority confused reconciliation with rites of initiation, especially baptism.
- (ii) Generally, this was answered well. There were a wide number of descriptions of reconciliation services from local examples to more formal sacramental approaches. Examiners credited all relevant responses.
- (b) The best responses demonstrated understanding of the importance of services of reconciliation both to individuals and communities. However, a significant number paid insufficient attention to the wording of the question, *describing* services rather than explaining why they were important.
- (c) Answers to this question were often quite subtle and nuanced, noting how humans also practice forgiveness in everyday lives, sometimes arguing that this human forgiveness is an expression of the higher forgiveness of God. Many were aware that when a priest grants forgiveness, it is God who forgives, not himself. A few candidates did not recognise that Jesus, in Christian teaching, is wholly God as well as wholly human.

#### **Question 2**

- (a) (i) Many candidates were able to name two or three specific points about Jesus, but some seemed to have no knowledge of the Apostles’ Creed. Others misread the question and stated two or three parts of the Apostles’ Creed which did mention Jesus.
- (ii) On the whole this question was answered very well. Most candidates knew who Mary was and were able to describe several important parts of her life and the significance of her role in Jesus’ life and the history of the Church.

- (b) There were many good answers offered to this question, looking at several aspects of salvation in Christian belief, and noting the role of the Crucifixion and Resurrection in salvation history. Some candidates were also aware of the significance of the Old Testament in contributing to a religious understanding of salvation.
- (c) Too many answers talked about the Bible in general rather than about its role in knowledge of Jesus specifically. Few mentioned ideas such as sacred tradition or other sources, and there was overall a lack of specifics of things that might be known only through the Bible. Some explored the idea of learning about Jesus through the internet or social media but were not clear about where the internet or social media was obtaining this knowledge about Jesus.

### **Section B – Islam**

#### **Question 3**

- (a) (i) Most candidates demonstrated a sound grasp of who were the important people at the start of Shi'ah Islam.
- (ii) This was a straightforward question, generally soundly answered, though most concentrated on the arguments over Ali and Abu Bakr and not other differences, such as belief in the Mahdi.
- (b) There were some good answers, but many simply repeated material from the previous two answers, with little or no development which limited the credit available. A significant number of candidates focused on battles and who died rather than the reasons Shi'ah Islam began.
- (c) Candidates responded very well to this question, especially those confident in their knowledge of the status of the original teaching of the Qu'ran and the status of Muhammad (pbuh) as the Seal of the Prophets and the significance of this in terms of attempts to change Islam. Others explored challenges to Islam raised by living in different times and the effects of different cultures challenging beliefs.

#### **Question 4**

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to write good responses to this question. The few that struggled seemed to be unaware of the meaning of the word 'artefact'.
- (ii) There were, again, many good answers to this question from those who were able to accurately name the artefacts. Throughout the responses examiners found the full range of artefacts described.
- (b) There were some good answers, but many talked just about the rak'ahs as a general concept, without explaining the significance of any individual movements. Others listed the movements without explaining their significance.
- (c) This was generally answered exploring the significance of praying being such an important part of a Muslim's day, though some candidates gave only a single point of view or ventured no opinion of their own. Others questioned whether or not finding five times a day was possible giving the challenges found in modern life.

### **Section C – Judaism**

#### **Question 5**

- (a) (i) This seemed to be a straightforward question for candidates with plenty of books from which to choose. A few had problems because they were unaware of which books belonged in the Nevi'im.
- (ii) Responses to this question were again generally very good, with most recognising the connection to prophecy. Some referenced the Former Prophets and the Latter Prophets.
- (b) Some candidates wrote good answers to this question, however, a significant number described the Nevi'im rather than explaining its significance. Few demonstrated specifically – with examples – its use within Jewish life and practice.

- (c) Some candidates resorted to generalisation, demonstrating limited specific knowledge of the content of the Tenakh. Nevertheless, there were also some very capable answers, reflecting careful thinking on, and justification for, their views.

**Question 6**

- (a) (i) Unfortunately a significant number of candidates thought Simchat Torah was just another name for Torah, unaware that it was a festival, despite the wording of 6 (ii) indicating that it is an event, not a thing. Those who did know that it was a festival were able to access full credit.
- (ii) Those who did not know that Simchat Torah was a festival and not a book were unable to respond accurately to this question: those who understood the term produced generally good answers.
- (b) Again, those candidates who did not understand the term found it difficult to say anything relevant about the importance of Simchat Torah; those who did know produced a variety of creditable responses.
- (c) Those who knew what Simchat Torah is were able to construct good comparisons with Sukkot and come to creditable conclusions from a number of points of view. Some struggled to compare a book with a festival but were able to gain a little credit for assessing Sukkot.

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

---

Paper 0490/22  
Paper 2

## Key messages

The majority of candidates displayed good knowledge of the three world religions in the Syllabus. In **part (a)** questions most candidates selected the correct areas of knowledge. Many achieved higher levels in these questions, some with relative ease.

In **part (b)** questions most candidates selected the correct and relevant body of knowledge from the Syllabus. It is in the application of this knowledge that further development would allow candidates to access the higher levels. Understanding that the assessment objectives for these questions necessitates far more than simply describing will further enhance answers. Candidates must demonstrate a good understanding of religious teachings and clearly demonstrate the relationship between belief and practice.

## General comments

The performance overall was good. Responses showed that candidates were well prepared and answers reflected the fact that candidates of all abilities were able to access the questions. A range of skills were displayed and this was particularly evident in **part (c)** questions which increasingly contained a variety of perspectives.

Some rubric infringements were in evidence which reduced the amount of time (and hence marks) that candidates had for an answer that was credited.

**Section A and Section B** (Christianity and Islam) were the most popular combination of questions. **Section C** (Judaism) also attracted a significant number of candidates.

## Comments on specific questions

### *Section A Christianity*

#### Question 1

- (a) Most responses identified at least one artefact or aid to worship. Most popular among the answers cited the Christingle and Christmas carols or hymns. Nativity scenes and the advent candle also featured relatively often. Few made reference to Christmas Bells or vestments and altar clothes, all of which are worthy of credit.
- (b) Overall, this question did not produce very high scoring answers. Some responses retold the visit of the magi to the baby Jesus. A number of responses confused it with another event. Answers would better fit the assessment objectives for **part (b)** questions if they had greater focus on the word 'importance' in the question. Instead, responses often described what happened at Epiphany. Those that did know what Epiphany is were able to refer to the symbolic meanings behind the gifts presented to Jesus.
- (c) Candidates were able to give at least two perspectives in their answer. This demonstrates that there is a very good grasp of the assessment objectives for these questions. Many suggested that a church service is the most conducive atmosphere for the celebration of Christian festivals. There was also the recognition that the celebration of festivals can be done in the home or at least is not confined to a church service.

## Question 2

- (a) This was an extremely popular question and responses reflected the full range of answers and abilities. A vital skill here is to select information that is pertinent to the question on a *Christian marriage ceremony*. Therefore, some generic responses did not score as highly as they might have done had they focused on the specifically Christian aspects. Similarly, what happens before and after the ceremony are not strictly relevant.
- (b) Some candidates did find this question difficult. Those that recognised that the vows are made before God which heightens the importance of keeping the vows showed a good understanding of the Christian context. Further reference can be made to Jesus' view that God intended for man and woman to become one flesh and this bond should not be separated by another.
- (c) Candidates who knew some of the traditional Christian teachings on marriage found it easier to access the higher levels. The majority showed confidence in debating how the changes in society and accepted norms may indeed be challenging for couples today. Common amongst the answers was a suggestion that sex before marriage is considered more acceptable today. Also, a popular way to respond was to refer to the changing roles of men and women which might challenge a traditional Christian teaching. Further consideration of denominational differences with regard to divorce, homosexuality and same-sex marriage would add different dimensions to responses.

## Question 3

- (a) The majority of candidates identified the Two Greatest Commandments as being 'love your neighbour as yourself' and 'love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul.' It produced some excellent answers which not only referred to Jesus' citing of these as being the Greatest Commandments but also how they in fact cover all of the Ten Commandments.
- (b) Candidates should note that this question asked for '**one** way in which Christians today might follow each of the Two Greatest Commandments.' Those answers that were little more than a list of a number of ways in which these Commandments might be followed would have their best example credited. Most candidates did separate the two Commandments and gave 'one' way for each. Examples were such things as caring for the needy and praising God. Some however did suggest 'one way' in which **one** could love your neighbour which would also serve to show a love of God. Both ways are legitimate.
- (c) The main thrust of this question lies with the word 'can.' Many candidates referred to the fact that not all Christians can be generous to others in a financial sense. This may be because they do not have the financial means to do so. Many recognised that generosity can come in a variety of other forms. The question is not asking 'should' Christians be generous as that would be difficult debate. Some candidates did somewhat alter the question from the one set though.

## Section B Islam

### Question 4

- (a) This part question was the main one that many candidates found it difficult to score highly on. This was mainly because there was little acknowledgement of what happens at Arafat. Those that were able to comment on occurrences at Arafat were generally able to refer to Adam and Eve being reunited with God there or referred to 'the stand.' Muzdalifah and Mina were approached more confidently with some being able to say that Mina features on two occasions during the Hajj.
- (b) This question was done well. Candidates gave a number of different reasons as to why Hajj is important to Muslims. These included its obligatory nature due to the fact that it is one of the Five Pillars as well as its ability to unite the ummah.
- (c) In the majority of cases candidates discussed whether or not pilgrimage is difficult. The overwhelming response was that it is. The higher order skill here demands that candidates discuss the *relative* difficulty of pilgrimage in comparison with the other Four Pillars. This is what the question was asking and there was differentiation by outcome therefore in this part question.



### Question 5

- (a) Many responses noted that the Shahadah is recited to a dying person. Also, many were aware that the deceased is ritually washed by members of the same sex and often wrapped in ihram. Far less was known about rituals specifically at the graveside other than the ritual of the deceased being buried with their head facing Makkah.
- (b) There was a great tendency for candidates to give information here rather than an explanation. It would be of benefit to candidates to support their answers with a structure. This would involve them stating a particular Muslim custom, such as mourning should not be excessive. This would then be followed by the explanation, 'this shows that death should be treated with acceptance because it suggests to mourners that death is a natural occurrence and that life needs to move on.'
- (c) Discussion was generally balanced with a number of reasons given as to why belief in akhira could both be a challenge to some but no challenge to others. Most said that a belief in akhira is what Muslims are brought up believing in and therefore it is a belief that is unquestioned. An alternative view is that any belief in life after death can be challenged due to there being no proof of such a concept.

### Question 6

- (a) The focus of most responses was to refer to Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice Ishmael which is the focus of **part (b)** although responses were by no means restricted to this aspect. Most noted that Id al-Adha is a great celebration within the Muslim community which is accompanied by the wearing of new clothes. There was less awareness of it being a festival which takes place during Hajj or of the special Id prayers which are said at this time.
- (b) Candidates are well versed in the historical context of Id al-Adha. There were descriptions of the willingness of Ibrahim to sacrifice Ishmael and how today an animal is sacrificed to commemorate this act. In order to access the higher levels candidates need to bear in mind the assessment objectives for this question. More can be made of the obedience and willingness to submit to Allah shown by Ibrahim which is a connection to the celebration of Id today making the festival such a special celebration for Muslims.
- (c) In general this part question was very well addressed. There were a variety of perspectives given and most candidates were able to express a personal opinion. A popular response was that festivals undoubtedly unite the ummah as festivals are a prime time for bringing people into close proximity creating a feeling of brotherhood. However, many perceptively realised that there are a number of other factors such as Salah and Sawm that can unite the ummah.

## Section C Judaism

### Question 7

- (a) Candidates were aware of when Shabbat begins and ends. It should be noted that the celebration of the specific details of the Shabbat meal were not required in this question. The exception would be if there was reference made to the fact that the preparation for the meal had been completed before Shabbat had begun in order not to break the rule on not working on Shabbat. Some noted that there are 7 categories and 39 regulations which govern the rules. The majority concentrated on what work is forbidden by giving a list of prohibited activities.
- (b) In general the first part of this question was answered more comprehensively than the second. Most candidates understood the historical context of the festival of Sukkot. Some did confuse the Sukkah with the tabernacle. The fact that Jews are encouraged to eat and even sleep in the Sukkah was acknowledged. Less well known were details regarding the construction of the Sukkah or of the reasons for using such items as lulav and etrog at this time.
- (c) There was a general understanding that Shabbat is a holy day and useful links were made with God creating the heavens and the earth in six days and designating the seventh day a holy day, a day of rest. Much was made of the current rapid pace of life and the inability of some to observe a holy day every week. Such contemporary reference is to be encouraged as it shows religion as a dynamic in today's society.

### Question 8

- (a) There was a good use of technical terms such as chuppah and ketubah. Some reference was made to blessings given by the rabbi (or chazzan) as well as to symbolic actions such as the groom breaking a glass with his heel. There is scope for the addition of the description of denominational differences in Jewish marriages. This will raise awareness that although most features are similar there are differences across marriage ceremonies.
- (b) There were a variety of reasons given as to why Jews believe it is important to choose someone Jewish when they marry. Responses that were explained well included recognition of the fact that some believe that marrying outside of Judaism might weaken the religion. The importance of children and of wider family life within Judaism was emphasised and these aspects were used to good effect in the response. The benefit of marrying another Jew was highlighted as making the marriage one that involved fewer complications.
- (c) Those who accessed the higher levels did so as they referred to challenges that could be faced specifically by the Jewish community. Examples of this were how traditional Jewish teachings on family life could lead to a feeling of isolation amongst some groups within Judaism. This notion of being 'separate' can lead to the discriminatory behaviour of others towards them. Also, there may well be traditional roles expected of women, men and of children which are challenging in today's world. However, it can be discussed that being 'separate' actually helps maintain traditional teachings. A number of candidates commented that for people of faith any challenge can be overcome.

### Question 9

- (a) Many candidates provided an extensive list of what food is considered to be treyfah for Jews. Generally this went beyond the most well known food items such as pork. Broader answers took this further and commented that in order to be kosher an animal has to be slaughtered by a trained schochet. By the very nature of the question responses with regard to clothing were briefer. Most knew the rule prohibiting the mixing of wool and linen though the use of the technical term shaatnez is welcome. Some candidates referred to the expectation that women should dress modestly.
- (b) It was identified as being important that the food laws are kept. More could have been made of the word 'all' which might have raised an interesting point regarding the importance of some of the food laws. The majority explained that these laws are in the Torah and therefore it is a duty to follow them. Others maintained that keeping the food laws strictly is a way of ensuring both the continuity of the religion as well as being what is expected of Jews as the chosen people.
- (c) Most candidates said that kashrut food laws are important today. Some responses did discuss the difficulty of eating out at restaurants and at the homes of non-Jews. However, this has been the case for some time so perhaps needs to be extended to relate more to the importance 'today.' There was virtually no mention of how some food laws may seem pointless today in the sense that there does not seem to be a reason as to why some exist. Candidates could discuss the fact that these laws were compiled in a very different era with very different living standards and a different understanding of how food can be prepared, stored and cooked.

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

---

Paper 0490/23  
Paper 2

## Key messages

The majority of candidates displayed good knowledge of the three world religions in the Syllabus. In **part (a)** questions most candidates selected the correct areas of knowledge. Many achieved higher levels in these questions, some with relative ease.

In **part (b)** questions most candidates also selected the correct and relevant body of knowledge from the Syllabus. It is in the application of this knowledge that further development would allow candidates to access the higher levels. Understanding that the assessment objectives for these questions necessitates far more than simply describing will further enhance answers. Candidates must demonstrate a good understanding of religious teachings and clearly demonstrate the relationship between belief and practice.

## General comments

The performance overall was good. Responses showed that candidates were well prepared and answers reflected the fact that candidates of all abilities were able to access the questions. A range of skills were displayed and this was particularly evident in **part (c)** questions which increasingly contained a variety of perspectives.

Some rubric infringements were in evidence which reduced the amount of time that candidates had for an answer that was credited.

**Section A and Section B** (Christianity and Islam) were the most popular combination of questions. **Section C** (Judaism) attracted slightly fewer candidates overall.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section A Christianity**

#### **Question 1**

- (a) Most candidates knew that Advent is a preparation for Christmas. There was awareness that Advent calendars may be used as well as the lighting of candles on Advent Sunday. This could be tied in with Christingle services which represent Jesus as the light of the world. Advent wreaths were often mentioned though few responses referred to the red candles at each corner.
- (b) There was some confusion between Good Friday as the day on which Jesus died and Easter Sunday as the day on which he was resurrected. The result was that some responses did not score highly due to this error. Similarly, answers to **part (b)** questions did not show that candidates had an awareness of the relevant assessment objectives. Some reasons as to why this day is important for Christians could include the redemption of mankind through Jesus' death as well as illustrating God's love for humanity. Weaker responses described what happened on Good Friday, which was not the focus of the question.
- (c) Candidates divided Christian festivals into two groups. One group contained Christmas and Easter and responses discussed how widely celebrated these festivals are. The other group contained such festivals as Epiphany and Lent. The comments here were mainly that these were far less widely celebrated. There was considerable comment regarding how certain festivals have been commercialised but this did not always add to the point that the candidate was trying to make. In

order to achieve the higher levels responses needed to include an evaluation of the 'Too many' in the statement.

### Question 2

- (a) In general many knew that baptism involved the use of water and/or the anointing with oil. Weaker responses talked about infant baptism and missed some important elements of a believer's baptism. Stronger responses showed an awareness of the symbolism of dying and raising with Christ in this act. A number of responses commented that it is believed that the Holy Spirit is given to the believer at this time. Both the actual procedure and the belief in what changes happen to a person at this time were credited.
- (b) This question was often answered generically rather than with the particular religious ritual being mentioned. Rituals that were mentioned included Confirmation. It was generally understood that such religious rituals were expressions of commitment as well as signifying entry into a community of believers. Responses could also have drawn the distinction between infant and believer's baptism.
- (c) This was answered very well. The majority of responses stated that Christians should not fear death. Evidence offered included the assurance that heaven awaits Christians. Responses could have referred to the resurrection of Jesus as 'first fruits' of the resurrection of all Christians. On the other side it was argued that some Christians might fear death due to the fact that fear is quite natural. Also, there was some debate about heaven not being assured for those who sin.

### Question 3

- (a) This was not a popular question. Some responses incorrectly stated that Jesus had been born or had died in Rome. Those that did know some of the reasons why Rome is a place of pilgrimage for Christians generally commented on Vatican City and the Pope. Some reference was made to St. Peter's basilica. Other features that attract pilgrims to Rome would be the seven great basilicas in Rome as well as other sites of pilgrimage. The connection of St. Paul to Rome was largely ignored.
- (b) This could either be answered in one of two ways. One is in a generic fashion which is without referring to any particular place of pilgrimage. The second way is by homing in on particular pilgrimage sites such as Jerusalem. Many chose to respond in a combination of these two ways. In a general sense, going on pilgrimage at Easter can unite Christians in a common purpose. Equally, one could mention that going to Jerusalem at Easter allows Christians to follow in Jesus' footsteps such as walking the Via Dolorosa.
- (c) Most were able to distinguish between a pilgrimage and a holiday. Some read 'holiday' as 'holy day' and this made the response somewhat confused. Many focused on the financial difficulty of going on two separate journeys, one on holiday and another on pilgrimage. There was some pertinent recognition of a pilgrimage being a spiritual journey which is very different from the kind of journey a holiday is. However, many holiday companies and church organisations for logistical reasons do combine the two.

### Section B Islam

#### Question 4

- (a) This was answered in a variety of ways. In this sense it is similar to the approach taken in **Question 2 part (a)**. Some focused on the procedure of the feast, that is, what actually happens in terms of what can be physically seen (for example the eating of dates at the break of the fast). Others described how the observance of the fast during Ramadan brings a sense of brotherhood to Muslims as well as the feeling of empathy towards the poor. More use can be made of technical terms such as 'niyyah' and 'iftar'. As well as this another dimension would be to refer to the last 10 days that some Muslim men spend in seclusion 'itikaf'.
- (b) Most candidates addressed both parts of this question. A list of those exempt from fasting could generally be given as well as the reasons why exemptions would be wise for those groups. In terms of compensation for not fasting, responses were fairly general. Common responses included having to make up the number of days at a later stage. Credit could be given to responses

explaining the concept of 'fidia,' the obligatory charitable contribution made if you cannot make up the days after the fast.

- (c) Responses to this were balanced and lengthy. The majority of responses considered more than one point of view. The spiritual benefit to the person fasting was recognised. By far the greater number of responses also commented that the fasting of an individual can inspire others. Also, some excellent answers noted that one benefit to the individual of fasting is that they feel more inclined to help those around them. Some misunderstandings including that fasting is done primarily to lose weight.

#### Question 5

- (a) (i) Very few candidates were able to give a comprehensive response to this. At times the dowry was confused with the witnesses. On other occasions some stated that the dowry was given by the wife to the husband.
- (ii) This question could have been answered more accurately and with more description. Responses could have included the fact that women do not have to attend the Nikkah ceremony and also the fact that the bride can send her Wali (representative) with the need for two witnesses also.
- (b) There was good recognition of the status of arranged marriages in Islam. Such marriage can bind families and communities together and is one of the reasons for arranged marriages. Alongside this is the reason that a married couple may be in the best position to be able to choose a marriage partner for their child. Shared values and beliefs can be important in any marriage and this is another reason why some Muslim marriages are arranged.
- (c) Generally, responses gave more than one point of view. The main view expressed was that it is a good idea to migrate if this is necessary to preserve religious traditions. Some responses discussed the possibility of fleeing a country due to persecution. Others pointed out that leaving your country, work and possibly family would be a very difficult thing to do. Some responses stated that the strength one may develop by being a religious minority might actually be a way of avoiding the need for migration.

#### Question 6

- (a) In order to access the higher levels, candidates could adopt a more contemporary approach to their study of Shariah law. There was a general awareness of what it is. A few countries were referred to but candidates would do well to research how Shariah is actually put into practice in Muslim countries. Some did acknowledge that punishments were given out as a consequence of infringing Shariah but some idea of the suggested benefits of following it is welcome.
- (b) This question was answered well with some comprehensive responses being produced. Candidates are well versed on the concept of ummah and the benefits that belonging to a strong ummah can bring. This can include help and support for the vulnerable as well as providing a sense of brotherhood which helps with prayer and fasting for example.
- (c) Following on from the previous question candidates were able to scrutinise the notion of ummah even further. The majority concluded that helping both the local and international community were of equal importance as this consolidates the idea of brotherhood. However, some did discuss that helping the local community might be more immediate and has a tangible result.

### Section C Judaism

#### Question 7

- (a) Most candidates answered this in an extremely general fashion, simply using the word 'festivals' rather than mentioning the procedures of specific festivals which may keep alive the memory of the Temple. This question would have been able to attract higher level responses and thus higher marks if candidates had taken that opportunity. For example, the festival of Shavuot keeps the memory of the Temple alive as it reminds Jews of the time when the first fruits were taken to the Temple to celebrate the wheat harvest.

- (b) Many were able to write about Yad Vashem including some of the memorials that are there. Answers featured a number of significant elements such as it being a fitting memorial to those who were killed and also as a reminder to never let such an atrocity happen again. Candidates should remember that this is not a question where pure description is sufficient.
- (c) This was well debated overall with the majority of candidates arguing that remembering the past does make Judaism stronger. Many referred to the Holocaust and some delved into Jewish history to point out that this rich heritage serves to promote religious identity. Some suggested that remembering the past can also be a source of great discomfort for some Jews and this could actually result in the questioning of faith.

#### Question 8

- (a) The main Jewish funeral rites identified were the facts that burial is as soon as possible and that a plain wooden coffin is used. A smaller number of responses referred to the tearing of a part of the clothing of a mourner. In order to broaden answers candidates could describe the prayers said, the ritual washing of hands and the ritual of removing one fringe of the deceased's prayer shawl before burial in it.
- (b) This question did not generate a large number of high marks. Some responses showed unfamiliarity with the phrase 'chevra kaddisha'. Consequently those who attempted this question often misunderstood the chevra kaddisha for a prayer. Those that were familiar with the role of the chevra kaddisha knew that this holy society essentially bears as much of the burden of the organisation of all proceedings post-mortem.
- (c) Most candidates argued that it is important to allow people to mourn the dead in their own way. It should be remembered that the response should refer to Judaism. Therefore those that referred to Shiva and other prescribed acts of mourning within Judaism were able to access the higher levels.

#### Question 9

- (a) This question was interpreted in a variety of ways. Some responses were from the perspective of Jews keeping themselves separate from non-Jews. Others kept the response within Judaism and described how some Jews, for example Ultra-Orthodox maintained a 'separate' code of dress and interpretation of the Torah from other Jews. Both were valid and suitably credited.
- (b) The majority of responses described the helping of the disadvantaged in the Jewish community. Tzedakah was referred to extensively. As this is an 'explain' question the response needed more than just description. Answers could include such things as: it is a command of God that the needy are helped so it is an act of obedience to God. Also, kind actions are a fundamental obligation upon all Jews with a rich history of examples from the past to highlight this fact.
- (c) Overall this was well debated. Some responses commented that nothing can be perfect but God. Others said that the mitzvot contained all that was good and so a perfect world could result from the obeying of the mitzvot. The majority concluded that obeying the mitzvot may not bring about a perfect world but obeying the mitzvot would bring the world closer to perfection. It could be pointed out that the Ten Commandments are the basis of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and so the mitzvot are already being obeyed by millions of people worldwide.