

Examiners' Report
June 2015

GCE Religious Studies 6RS04 1F

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Introduction

Important information about mark schemes:

Detailed mark schemes are available on the Religious Studies web site. Examiners at standardisation are reminded that the mark scheme contains:

(i) General Marking Guidance: This consists of eight bullet points including, 'Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.'

(ii) Generic mark scheme: This divides each level across both AO1 and AO2 into three sub-levels – low, mid and high. Each concludes with a statement about quality of written communication.

(iii) Indicative level descriptors: These are meant to be indicative rather than definitional of content at each level. The introduction to the indicative level descriptors states:

'Examiners should be reminded that any legitimate approach to the clarification and discussion of the passage must be rewarded and there is no need for candidates to cover every idea mentioned in the extract.'

(iv) In addition, on pages 120-121 of the Spec there is an abbreviated guide of the level descriptors.

Introduction to the paper: Most answers were competent. Some were very good indeed and a few gained full marks. Candidates at this level of success made the best use of the synoptic opportunities from related anthologies in 6RS04 and relevant material in 6RS03, plus, where appropriate, the two AS units: 6RS01 and 6RS02.

Lower levels of work had a more basic understanding of the passage with limited scholarship to support the claims being made. There were instances of unsatisfactory time management relating to the respective demands of the two assessment objectives. A few spent too long on AO1 with too little attention to AO2 and vice versa.

Question 1

Good practice and areas for improvement

AO1 characteristics of good quality:

- comprehensive explanation of the passage
- well-managed and coherent answers
- competent analysis of complex issues and problems such the value of remaining open to the possibilities and challenges of new ethical and moral discoveries
- analysis of terms including jihad.

AO1 work that requires improvement:

- answers were not systematically focused on the passage in an explicit manner
- a simple comprehension task and typically short
- ageneric account of the whole source from the anthology.

AO2 characteristics of good quality:

- impressive presentations with confident evaluations
- effective selection and management of arguments and implications of stereotypical perceptions about Muslims
- an ability to discuss key ideas such as the claim that Muslims do not accept a theoretical separation between religious and secular activity.

AO2 work that requires improvement:

- basic points of view with limited use of argument and evidence
- some discussions that lacked focus on the passage
- generalised and subjective views lacking academic rigour.

The following scripts are examples of good practice.

A. Islamic Ethics written by Nany is a piece of literature detailing the Ethical Statute that Muslims abide by, but yet how also there are major differences in how the Ethical laws - Sharia - are formulated. Most famously, the Mutalites indicated human Reason to detail law while modern day ~~Wahabi~~ ~~Wahabi~~ Wahabi's detail that only the Quran and Sunnah ~~could~~ should be consulted.

Nany begins by saying that the opinion of the Muslim community by the west is often one view point that is shrouded by misunderstanding leading to the conclusion that the community is backwards. In this he specifies the nature of Ethics being not separate from State with religion which many within the west would find abhorrent. An example of where the State and faith are not separate is in Saudi Arabia where Sharia is enacted under a Wahabi

pretext. Another example of a state that is without faith is England/Britain that enacts its laws through a largely secular standard and mandate.

Aburij, Naji then goes on to say that the ethical codes of the Sharia are often perceived by the west as radical, ~~violence~~ violent which only makes the stereo type that emerged deeper within everyone's mind. It is the likes of Isis (Islamic state of Syria and Iraq) and Al Quaida that furnish the name of Islam by presenting something that isn't at all Islamic under that title. It isn't however only Muslims who face this issue but Christians with the KKK and Westboro Baptist Church, and ~~and~~ Buddhists who find that there are those using Buddha's name to kill Muslims within Malaysia and Philippines; which goes against the 8 sacred virtues of Islam its

-Self means and translates to 'peaceful submission to Allah' and yet here are those who use the title of muslim to cause war and murder which isn't at all peaceful.

Nanji then goes on to detail that the events of the last quarter of a century have demonstrated that the norms of the muslim community are not so normal as the name of the group or ummah is that it is split into many splinter groups such as sunni and shia but also wahabi and sufi ~~and~~ doctrines. The difference between the wahabi and sufi is far too great as the emphasis of their practices differ. Wahabi emphasize the importance of ritual and ensuring that the rituals are done which leads wahabis to call the sufi's practices of shirk or sin. This is primarily based upon the emphasis that sufis have upon what

Iranian scholar calls the 'Experiential dimension of Religion'. In this the Sufis base themselves upon the ideal that the ritual one all good but they become 'hollow' and 'empty' without the acknowledgment of why those rituals are being practiced. This comes from the origin of Sufism as a reaction to the Exaggerance of the Caliphates when they believed had lost the true meaning of what Islam is about. So as demonstrated the ideal and emphasise that one placed within the faith of Islam detail exactly to what nature that a normality doesn't exist.

Nawaji then goes on to say that the future pursuit of moral and Ethical choices will not be challenged by trying to create a continuous and universal Shari'a

based law but the difficulties in being open to new ideas and thoughts as they had once done during the European dark ages. In this he hints at the emphasis upon gaining knowledge that was applicable from the 10 century AD to the formulation of the Sharia. In these years multiple establishments were set up to collect and interpret new knowledge most notably the house of wisdom. Within these establishments Christian and Jewish scholars were employed to translate and help interpret the major works of Aristotle, Plato, Socrates and many other classical philosophers. Many Islamic philosophers and theologians such as Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd and Al Gazzali adapted these ideas and found ways of applying them to Islamic Revelation and law.

Nanjji, Homener tries to indicate this ~~emph~~ ~~an~~ desire to seek knowledge from 'cradle to grave' and as far as away as chena (Mohammed, Surah) had been lost for some reason. Modern Muslims and their scholars seem unable to accept new knowledge and to seek it but rather rely heavily upon the scriptures and what they say.

B) The ideas that are presented within Nanjji's piece of work are agreeable. ~~He~~ He raises lots of points ~~to~~ but it all seems to link to the perception and the image of Islam. Islam as of late (2015) is often seen as a faith of terrorists who enact Jihad. Jihad itself was a protection law that enabled Muslims to fight but even then it has lots of legislation and laws that forbid certain actions such as

destroying crops, infrastructure, holy buildings and civilians. That is the lesser Jihad. Mohammed said that the struggle to be a good muslim has more important and more 'holy' than fighting. The perception of Jihad and the image that is presented by terror groups such as ~~ISIS~~ ISIS and Al Qaida impact modern ~~the~~ peaceful muslims. The impact is that they're misunderstood as those who claim to be from their faith do nothing and have nothing in common with the peaceful muslim. This leads to hatred, which then turns to Islamophobia and even institutionalized hatred.

Misunderstanding is a major theme within Nanji's text also on the idea of secular state and religious state. Nanji raises the points that the west seems to think those

Faith and government together as backward but even with this judgement they lack the understanding of what the Sharia is. Sharia is the holy law that is set by the Quran. There is no separation between holy law or state law. What is a sin or ~~Shirk~~ Shirk is not only that but also a crime. Muslims see no issue with this due to the nature of Greater Jihad and most will agree that it is the right thing to have. However the west idolise Democracy and Secular Society and pass judgement on other forms of Government as lesser to what they have themselves. Even democracy has its issues as seen in the call for proportional representation following the 2015 the election of David Cameron as prime minister

within the UK. The implication of this is that the stereotyped muslim is said to want sharia and will fight for it and most who think muslims are that hot up about changing the legal system take part of the islamic rally outside of parliament in the mid 2000's. However, reality is that most muslims within the UK just want to live peaceful lives and get on with them but the stereotype amongst those who are not educated says that that type of muslim doesn't exist and thus can some times lead to the inhumane treatment of the islamic ummah. a prime example is that of the instance when the manchester metro link were a islamic couple with their child were verbally attacked with islamophobic remarks within the year 2011

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Nanji also details that a major complication is the multi faceted nature of Islam and how one kind of Islam doesn't exist. The norms are found within Sunni Islam are not translated into that of Shia. An example ~~the~~ being the celebration of the death of Mohammed's grandsons where self flagellation takes place. This practice is not found within the Sunni tradition. Its not only Islamic sect that differ but also ideology. A example of this is between Wahabi Muslims and Sufi Muslims. Wahabis emphasize the ritual and the importance of it with no leeway for interpretation or alteration in practices such as Salat or fasting. In stark contrast Sufi Muslims

Emphasise the experience and the 'Experiential dimension' as detailed by Amin Smart in his 7 dimensions of Religions. In this they practice rituals such as Dikhr and follow a newer set of rules called the tariqua on top of the Shari'ah. Because of the differences found between Sunni and Shia Islam but also ideological differences of Sufism and Wahabism it is hard to call the muslim community an ummah. Not only this but it also make the white wash insults and statements less applicable to everyone. This in its self has implications as no one muslim is the same.

Finally the last Idea of Implication discussed by naji is the idea that muslims should be more open to ideas as they had once been during the

Early 1000's where the establishment of institutions were founded in an attempt to find more knowledge; most notably the House of Wisdom. Here Greek and Persian manuscripts were translated by Christian and Jewish citizens who lived in these towns. The works of Aristotle and Plato and even Socrates was preserved through the translations and interpretations. Naji however seems to indicate that modern Muslims are cut off from the ideas of searching for knowledge and attempting to find answers. The ~~prop~~ prophet Mohammed himself detailed that Muslims should 'search for knowledge from cradle to grave and as far as away as China'. Even with this most Muslims seem to rely on revelation

and deny the use of any other forms of source work including scientific news research. Examples include a Turkish Imam denying the existence of the Sun in 2014.

Overall Nancy points that he raises one very agreeable and fair judgement. There one issue that the ummah faces both in terms of their internal divides but also the perception of Islam that is portrayed across the west. They also face issue and implications with the openness to knowledge that the Islamic community lack on a/or an understanding of other faiths or even an acceptance of other faiths. Saudi Arabia has laws against shirk and not being muslim is committing shirk.

However, These issues and complications although large in nature can be solved with a little bit of Education.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

The candidate examined this passage by selecting key themes. This method enabled the candidate to investigate a range of debates across Islam, including inter-faith issues. There was evidence that the candidate made useful links with other anthologies such as Smart and the material on Islamic Philosophy. Particular attention was given to the relationship between religious and secular activities and issues when such a divide is rejected.

In AO2 the candidate evaluated various claims about jihad and related misunderstandings. Considerable attention was given to Nanji's view about being open to the possibilities and challenges of new ethical discoveries.

Narji ~~is~~ Ismail ~~is~~ is from a Shia background and adopts a Shia approach to religion, particularly in the West. This paragraph is primarily discussing the influence of religion in the modern world and how this has shaped views regarding social and ethical matters.

~~Narji Suggests~~ According to Narji, religious language has been used as an expression of ~~religious~~ violence in the ~~name~~ ^{name} of religion. It has deepened stereotypical perceptions about Muslims as ~~is~~ ~~the~~ use of such religious language breeds ~~the~~ ~~st~~ stereotypical views of what Islam is and the beliefs it may have about society. For example, religious language has been used in the modern world ~~of~~ such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda. This has led to stereotypical views about Islam as a whole, thus leading to cultural and moral differences between different cultures and religions. This demonstrates the dangers of using religious language in a radical way as it ~~promote~~ may promote violence leading to negative consequences for individuals of a religion.

as a whole. Furthermore, many more examples of such violence arise in historical contexts relating to Jihad and Warfare using religion as a basis to attack innocent civilians and infrastructure. Here, Nanji portrays the dangers of using such language as it has led to many people questioning the morals of Islam and questioning the background of such these doctrines.

Moreover, the text goes on to indicate that as events continue to unfold in the last century, no Muslim societies can consider this to be normal behaviour for all Muslims. This suggests that the writer is condemning such acts as they refute Islamic moral values. Similarly, it goes against the basic teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, ~~the~~ his Sunnah and the Hadith. The practices of the Prophet (Sunnah) and Sayings (Hadith) are against ~~the~~ violence which breed hatred and differences with among different groups, as Islam is predominantly a religion of 'peace' and 'submission' which many events which have unfolded seemed to go against, therefore contradicting

important historic feelings of Islam. According to traditionalist Muslims, the importance of these events are clear in order to preserve the sunnah of the Prophet and protect religion from attack. In Saudi Arabia for example enforce strict Wahabi laws whereas Iran (mainly a Shia country) enforce strict Shia laws. This may not be seen as suitable for all Muslims but in that population due to the oppression this may bring however it is seen as a form of power for the dominant sect/religion, therefore this leads to cultural and ethical differences amongst different backgrounds.

In addition, Islamisation laws in Pakistan convey the need for Sharia law and the importance of ensuring religion is used as a strong basis for day everyday behavior. Pakistan (being ~~a~~ ~~to~~ ~~a~~ ~~long~~ made up of mainly a Sunni ~~populatio~~ population) has Islamised the rules and regulations of Pakistan by determining the ethical behavior according to Sharia law. However, Nanji state this links to the text as Nanji suggests this is a force to ~~see~~ reckon with due to the negative stereotypes

it has created and potential violence due to the use of religious language.

Adding on to this, the text conveys the need to search for ethical values elsewhere in order to determine moral behaviour. The ethical values of the past are determined in light of their own existing doctrines and myths (N. Smart) therefore Nanji Esmail is suggesting looking back on the past in order to find sources of ethical and social behaviour. In the modern world, ethical behaviour is determined by the Quran and Sunnah therefore it is made clear by the Prophet due to its eternal value. ~~the~~ Nanji is suggesting that this has been misinterpreted by many different schools of thought leading to the violence and radical change, therefore it looking towards the past about how scholars dealt with such matters is crucial in order to ensure Muslims are guided in the correct way through ~~no~~ other means such as Ijtihad.

Ijtihad refers to ~~the~~ discussing the Quran/Sunnah with other key thinkers and reaching a

Conclusion based on the issue ~~fa~~ faced by society. However, ~~the~~ after the death of the Prophet the gates of Uthud were declared 'closed', therefore Waj' is ~~a~~ implying that Muslims should approach religion and decisions with an open mind by remaining open to the possibilities of ~~de~~ new discoveries and ethical behaviour in the hope that it will reduce stereotypical differences and radical behaviour caused by religious language and misinterpretations.

The text states that 'Continuity' and 'dialogue' is important in the modern world today, ~~as~~ alongside its own 'past ethical underpinning'. This ~~can~~ illustrates the importance of the ethical dimension of religion as it underpins a community. ~~8~~ In Islam, ~~it is the social and aspect which~~ this is crucial in the formation of a strong foundational faith as ethics determine behaviour. ~~The past~~ During pre-Islamic Arabia, many values were replaced due to contradicting ~~teachings~~ the teachings of Islam however the Prophet also decided to keep many different traditions due to the benefits this may bring to society. Examples of these include

and introducing Zakaat to ~~the~~ be paid to the state and ~~to~~ making Hajj obligatory only once a year. Furthermore, ~~ensuring~~ the increasing the daily prayers from three to five is also another aspect which the Prophet maintained during pre-Islamic Arabia and an act which is still ~~pre~~ to universally accepted today. In addition, the five pillars (Shahadah, Zakaat, fasting, Hajj, Praying) demonstrate ~~the~~ the ethical behavior of Muslims as they illustrate the importance of carrying out such acts in order to ~~enforce~~ moral behavior in a morally acceptable way. Other Islamic beliefs and values which support the above view is demonstrated in the teaching of the Prophet (Sunnah) through his behavior towards the poor and non-Muslims (Compassion and love). Therefore, Nasji is illustrating the need and importance of continuing ~~the~~ these past ethical behaviors by as they underpin the Muslim Community. He adds to this by including the need need to also remain open to any possibilities (ie. Ijtihad) in order to ensure ~~the~~ full benefit is obtained from Islamic beliefs and values.

The text indicates that there is a separation between 'religious and perceived secular activity'. It goes on to suggest that some Muslims do not accept such a separation (traditionalists) therefore this contributes to the violence and stereotypical differences caused by the more orthodox and traditional Muslims.

Overall, it is clear to see that there is a strong argument presented by Nanji in terms of the use of religious language in the promotion of violence and extreme stereotypical differences between different cultures. However, it is important to acknowledge that not all Muslims appear strange in this way and the reason for such difference in behaviour may be due to different interpretations of the Quran and sunnah amongst many different religious groups. Therefore, as suggested by Nanji, remaining open to ^{future} possibilities and whilst maintaining existing beliefs is crucial in order to maintain moral and ethical behaviour.

b) Nanji uses religion in this text as an interesting way. However, there are many indications

of such views which may have an overall effect on the Muslim Community.

Not many people would agree with the idea that religious language has been used and is linked to radical change and violence. There are instances where religious language has been used in conversion and promoting Islam in a positive way therefore it could be argued that these negative assumptions are due to individual experiences and the views of a society have about Islam. Furthermore, stereotypical differences only occur due to a lack of knowledge about a particular event and these only occur in main host places where there are a minority group of Muslims, therefore it could be argued that it is wrong to universally accept and challenge the view that this religious language is the 'root of evil' and has deepened stereotypes creating cultural and moral differences.

Moreover, many traditionalist Muslims would disagree with the fact that these responses ^{by Muslim societies} are not regarded as normative for all Muslims. As mentioned earlier, these views vary amongst different Muslims; ~~and~~ many would

agree with the use of religious language in violence due to societal changes this may bring in the long-term ~~and~~ and Islamising a country based on sharia law. (traditionalist argument) However, more liberal Muslims would disagree with the above as they believe ~~in~~ accept a separation between religious and secular activity therefore do not place as much emphasis on implementing the sharia law in a state (modernist argument). The implications this has on Islam ~~and~~ and Muslims in general is that it ~~be~~ will lead to differences of opinion and ~~oppressive~~ ^{oppression} ruling on minority liberal groups. This can be illustrated in the 21st Century by the oppression in ~~Syria~~ ^{Iran} ~~Syria~~ where a majority shia population (who enforce the sharia law) are against the separation of western secular activity, therefore leading to oppression of minority sunni groups.

Furthermore, Nasir explains that as well as continuing the ethical matters of the past, it is also vital to remain ~~open~~ ^{open} to the possibilities, ~~the~~ which is suggesting that Muslims ~~re~~ scholars return to ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~lit~~ ^{lit} ~~had~~ ^{had} rather than ~~consen~~ (consensus). However, many ~~orthodox~~ ^{orthodox}

Muslims would disagree as the Prophet clearly closed the gates of *Ijtihad* therefore returning to this world mean abandoning the Quran and sunnah. Therefore this has negative implications for Muslims as the teachings of the Prophet and the Words of the Quran are important in shaping and uniting the ethical and moral behavior of the Muslim Community. However, remaining open to other possibilities is crucial in order to ensure ~~the~~ Islam is maintained through time and throughout different centuries and to avoid the problem of stereotypical differences.

In addition, many of the traditionalist Muslims argue that the presence of scholars guide Muslims and help them to make choices about ethical matters therefore ~~the~~ need for *Ijtihad* is not required and by doing so, it will refute the words of the Prophet and the teaching of the Quran. Particularly amongst the sunni population, Muslims receive their guidance from a 'peer' or shaykh therefore this helps them to receive enlightenment and make choices about present and future ethical matters, thus helping

then to formulate word behaviour.

In Conclusion, there are many traditionalist Muslims who are against the text presented by Nanji regarding the ethics of religion due to the belief that the historical context of religion should not be changed nor adapted. Therefore this has many implications for Muslims living in a Western Society, thus it is important to remain open to other different ethical matters within Islam in order to uphold word behaviour in the future.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The candidate paid careful attention to the passage itself. In addition, there was an ability to amplify key issues in order to show a good level of understanding of the passage. There was an informed analysis of a range of views across Islam. Particular attention was given to specific detail such as Pakistan. The candidate displayed a good level of understanding of Islamic ethics including debates about jihad. AO2 was characterised by views for and against a range of views. Attention was given to Nanji's claim that like Muslims of the past, an important challenge was to remain open to the possibilities and challenges of new ethical and moral discoveries.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are encouraged to develop important study skills. This unit opens up the possibility of developing a range of study skills applicable to a number of career and HE routes. There are many excellent sources available. One noteworthy edition is:

- The Arts Good Study Guide 2nd Edition 2008 Open University Worldwide
- Chambers, Ellie and Northedge, Andrew.

This includes a scrutiny of:

- a range of reading and note making techniques
- the craft and process of writing good essays
- significance of analysis and evaluation
- preparing for examinations.

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