

Examiners' Report

June 2018

GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 4D

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Introduction

In this first series of 9RS0 4D candidates achieved across the whole mark range and it was good to see a substantial number of questions attracting full marks.

Candidates achieving marks in the higher levels produced work reflecting a close focus upon the demands of the question and good knowledge of the topics. There was no choice within the examination paper and it was therefore necessary for candidates to study all areas of the syllabus and have a good knowledge of the anthology.

Marks awarded for questions varied:

Question 1 = 8 marks AO1; Question 2 = 4 marks AO1 and 8 marks AO2; Question 3a = 10 marks AO1; Question 3b = 5 marks AO1 and 15 marks AO2; Question 4 = 5 marks AO1 and 25 AO2.

Question 1

This question asked candidates to 'Explore the importance of the practice of fasting (sawm)' for 8 marks and required AO1 material only.

It was good to see a large proportion of candidates gaining full marks for this question which was competently answered by most students who had a good understanding of sawm. Many were able to write about the importance of sawm; exploring the wide range of areas of significance. Weaker answers tended to be descriptive and simplistic, focusing upon what a Muslim needed to do, rather than exploring its importance. Some responses lost close focus and gave a general response based upon the 5 pillars. The better responses were comparative with other pillars, incorporating sources of wisdom and the opinion of scholars rather than presenting a narrative account of the topic.

1 Explore the importance of the practice of fasting (sawm).

Many muslims would agree that Sawm is a very importance practice in Islam as it is one of the five pillars. There are also Quranic verses that express its necessity "Refrain like those commanded before you", this is in reference to the forefathers of Islam, Ibrahim A.S and Nuh A.S who also observed sawm. It is also a sunnah as it is reported that the prophet (pbuh) would fast every monday and thursday. These three things alone express the importance of sunnah as the Quran and Sunnah set the guidelines for a muslims behaviour whilst the five pillars are the foundation of Islam itself.

Sawm is important as it teaches self control. By not eating or drinking for the sake of Allah a persons Imaan is strengthened and it is hoped that this will continue and self restraint will manifest itself in a persons daily life allowing them to distance themselves from things that are Makruh (disliked by Allah) e.g Zina and Shirk. It is also important as it allows muslims to become grateful for all that they have, through experiencing poverty of food for 30 consecutive days.

This is so that they will increase in Dhikr (remembrance of Allah). Also, Zakat is often observed whilst one is fasting. This means Sawm is important as it purges ones wealth thus reducing the levels of ones greed and desperate unnecessary need of materialistic items. It could also be argued that the month of ramadhan is "better than a thousand nights" as through the trials and tribulations of fasting, the rewards of a muslim are increased.

(Total for Question 1 = 8 marks)



Both answers reflect work in Level 3 and demonstrate:

- close focus upon the question reflecting excellent knowledge and understanding
- excellent use of specialist language and vocabulary
- reference to early practice
- significance for relationship with Allah
- importance for the unity of Muslims.

1 Explore the importance of the practice of fasting (sawm).

Fasting (Saum) is one of the 5 pillars of the Islamic religion and is often heralded as the most important 'practical' pillar. Saum has its origins in Muhammad's journeys between Mecca and Medina throughout his earlier life.

Saum-taking place during the month of Ramadan is central to the Islamic religion.

It teaches self-discipline and teaches people to live free from greed as well as teaching people to be thankful for what they have.

Through fasting (abstaining from food, drink, smoking, sex and other actions) Muslims are reminded of the necessity to live a modest life and ^{through} that are reminded of Allah's glory and superiority. It is a chance for Muslims to symbolise their submission to him - this allows them to live a fulfilling life in accordance to Allah's will and testament.

A final idea related to Saum is that it enables people to identify and sympathise with the poor and disadvantaged who perhaps do not have these things to begin with. Through this identification and empathy with poorer Muslims - the ummah is strengthened and charitable notions increase - particularly the Zakahs paid. And again - this highlights the strengths of unity within the religion.

(Total for Question 1 = 8 marks)

Question 2

This question asked candidates to 'Assess the significance of Shari'a law for Muslims' for 12 marks and required AO1 and AO2 material.

It was pleasing to note that a substantial number of candidates were awarded full marks, whilst a large number of other candidates gained marks in Level 3. Overall, responses were very varied from those reflecting a limited understanding of the Shari'a law to those who were able to discuss the differing attitudes of scholars in relation to Sunni, Shia and Sufi perspectives. Most candidates were able to highlight key aspects of the law and discuss, with varying degrees of success, the significance for Muslims. Some responses looked at key issues for those living in a secular state with those living in a country governed by Shari'a and others assessed the differing attitudes from when the Shari'a law came into existence to the present day.

Shariah law is arguably extremely significant for many Muslims for example Sunnis as it sets guidelines for how to live an Islamic life in a contemporary society. For example, in the time of the prophet people would often be banished from Medina for example for leaving Islam. However through Shariah law, the creation of restorative justice has emerged in which it is aimed that the criminal be reintroduced to the community so that they are able to remain part of the ummah. The prophet himself once said "Do not break the ropes of the Ummah, hold onto them". This signifies the importance of modern day Shariah as it is able to mould and adapt to an always evolving society. This is with the help of Scholars who issue up to date fatwas on matters that affect the 21st century Muslim community e.g. Marriage + Divorce. However, Sunni Muslims would disagree as they believe that Shariah law distances us from Allah and weakens our relationship with him. In the modern day, the scholars whom issue fatwas are untrustworthy and have been revealed to give teachings that give them superiority over people and even land in monetary gain in some instances e.g. Scholars often give misleading teachings of marriage that are patriarchal but they portray to be the word of Allah. This is wrong. Instead, society should remove all materialistic items and become more traditional and crime rates will drop. Sunni Muslims believe it is not significant as it is no longer based on the direct word of God, rather the word of man who is unequipped in comparison to an omnipotent God.

However, Sunni muslims would argue that a traditional life does not reduce crime as many middle eastern countries that adopt Shariah, have lavish lifestyles with very low crime rates. This is proof that Shariah works. Also, Shariah law is based directly on the Quran, Hadith and Sunnah, all three of which are believed to be very significant guidelines of Islam thus deeming Shariah important also. As muslims we should strive to live like the prophet Muhammad who was argued to be the greatest man to ever live. The fact that he too implemented Shariah means it is perfect with no faults. Shariah translates into "straight path" and this is exactly what it aims to do. Shariah is important as it is a fair and just punishment meaning the poor and wealthy are both viewed as equals and one is not favoured over the other. Arguably, Shariah will also be carried out by God on judgement day (Al-Hisab) where he will decide our fate based on our worldly actions, making it even more important. However, secular critics would argue that Shariah is not appropriate as it is inhumane. For example under Shariah law if a young boy were to steal it is permissible to cut off the hand that he stole with in order to teach him a lesson. This is not a practical method of law enforcement as all children make mistakes. Also, Allah is originally an omniscient being, therefore why would he predestine people to commit sin to be harshly punished under Shariah law? Therefore it could be concluded that Shariah law is not significant and secular state law is better as it is not barbaric in nature.

Both examples reflect work from Level 3 and include:

- close focus upon the question
- excellent use of specialist language and vocabulary
- the basis of Shari'a Law is from a number of sources
- providing guidelines for an Islamic life
- moulds and adapts to evolving society
- importance of restorative justice
- Sufis disagree and believe it distances Muslims from Allah
- open to abuse by certain scholars who may gain superiority and power, land or money
- problems of traditional ideas by older scholars.

'Shariah' ~~law~~ is translated to be the 'clear straight path,' meaning it highlights the way in which Muslims should live their life to please God (Allah). The Shariah comes from a number of sources; the Quran, the Sunnah, ijma and Qiyas. This is significant as it means ~~information~~ ~~that~~ the laws which are given are derived from a number of sources and give a clear guideline on how to follow Islam. For example, Qiyas is analogically deriving information from the Quran and Sunnah where there is no ruling given. This method was particularly important to find out whether drug use is prohibited in Islam. Scholars gathered information from the Quran in order to decide the ~~Sharia's verdict~~ ~~in the~~ verdict of the sharia^{law}. ~~This is significant as it~~ ~~derives the best course of action for Muslims to live a life~~ ~~pleasing Allah.~~

On the other hand, the Shariah law may not ~~be~~ be seen as important as, by deriving this information ~~analogically~~ through analogy, one is assuming the ~~word~~ word of Allah. This could be seen as distasteful to many Muslims as Allah is seen as the 'Mask' ~~and to~~ ~~no one~~ ~~is~~ ~~above~~ ~~his~~ ~~knowledge~~ ~~and~~ ~~we~~ ~~should~~ ~~not~~ ~~try~~ ~~to~~ ~~conclude~~ ~~ourselves~~ ~~what~~ ~~his~~ ~~thoughts~~ ~~may~~ ~~be.~~

Futhermore, the Shariah law is also significant for Muslims as it ~~helps us~~ gives us guidelines on topics not addressed by the Quran or Sunnah. This is because many modern-day issues are not found present in the Quran. Thus, scholars use *ijtihad* (reason and judgement) and *ijma* (the consensus of scholars) to make decisions. By bringing together a council of people who have studied Islam, they are able to reach a conclusion which seems fitting of Islam. This method is ~~seen highly~~ regarded highly in Islam as it brings together the Ummah and Prophet Muhammad said, "my ummah will never be combined in error." This is significant as the fatwa (laws) released within Shariah will therefore ~~the~~ reflect the views of the majority and will help the Muslims when making decisions on the right course of action. For example, questions such as, "should Euthanasia be allowed," which is not approached by the Quran.

However, it could be argued that this is not the right way to decide the right course of action as many scholars tend to be 'elder' and may hold traditional views. For example, when approaching topics such as homosexuality, ~~their~~ ^{their} views ignore the minority - such as the LGBT community.

Question 3 (a)

This question required candidates to 'Clarify the interpretations of jihad illustrated in the passage' from the Anthology by T.Ramadan for 10 AO1 marks.

It was pleasing to note the substantial number of candidates being awarded full marks for this question and the large number gaining marks in level 3. All responses had a quite clear understanding of jihad, but weaker answers made limited reference to the passage or wrote out Ramadan's words. Those with a clear focus upon the question examined the passage systematically, taking key quotes and exploring them which resulted in detailed clarification of the concept of jihad. Some responses emphasised the greater and lesser jihad, using appropriate examples, sources of wisdom and scholastic opinion.

SECTION B

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

Read the following passage before answering the questions.

'Coming back from an expedition against the Muslims' enemies, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have described it as "a lesser jihad" in comparison to "the greater jihad" which is the effort of inward purification and of a human being's spiritualisation before his Creator. More than the simple comparison, what should be retained here is the association of faith with the experience of effort in order to attain harmony and serenity. Life consists of this trial, as spiritual force is signified by the choice of good as well as good action.

... [He] who created death and life, that He might try you which of you is fairest in works. (Qur'an, 67:2)'

(Source: Extract adapted from 'Islam, The West and the Challenges of Modernity' - Part Two, Chapter 1.6, Ramadan, T., Kube publishing, 2001, Edexcel Anthology)

- 3 (a) Clarify the interpretations of jihad illustrated in this passage.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

Ramadan begins to talk of an encounter the Prophet Muhammad had with his enemies, which refers to the Meccans who tried to persecute the Prophet and the Muslims as well as attempt to kill them, mainly the Quraysh, who previously attempted to kill the Prophet in his own home. During this encounter or expedition, Ramadan ~~or~~ quotes the Prophet as describing his experience as the "lesser jihad" ~~rather than~~ rather than "the greater jihad". Jihad is defined as struggle and is split into the two categories of lesser and greater. The ~~greater~~ greater jihad refers to non-violent struggle^{and} often, like Ramadan puts it ~~in~~ in the passage 'is the effort

of inward purification and of a human being's spiritualisation before his creator'. ~~He~~^{later} jihad looks at violent struggle which can be seen through holy war, examples including the Battle of Badr or the battle at Karbala. In this particular case, the Prophet describes his struggle with the Muslims' enemies as ~~not~~ violent struggle. Ramadan attempts to point out from this scenario that faith and effort go hand in hand to reach a conclusion resulting in peace. Ramadan states that the 'association of faith with the experience of effort in order to attain harmony and serenity'. Using the Prophet's example, Ramadan shows that although violence is inevitable we should always attain 'harmony and serenity' through faith and effort. Ramadan ends the passage by stating that 'spiritual force is signified by the choice of good as well as good action'. Ramadan again highlights his previous point by emphasising faith as a choice of good and good action. Throughout the passage we can see Ramadan's personal view on Jihad as one which should ~~be~~ involve non-violent struggle through faith and effort linking to a greater jihad. This can also be seen in the quote Ramadan chose from the Quran which states, "He who created death and life, that He might try you which of you is fairest

in work." (Qur'an, 67:2) Using this particular quote, Ramadan ~~shows~~ shows that the 'fairest' of us is one who struggles towards Allah in non-violence, using faith and effort to attain 'harmony and serenity'. We can also see Ramadan's views as a reflection to ~~the~~ his context. Ramadan wrote this book as a response to 9/11 and the misconceptions the public had of Islam and therefore Ramadan defends this by encouraging and supporting the greater jihad which he believes is the better form of jihad when dealing with hardship.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Both answers gained marks in Level 3 and demonstrated:

- excellent knowledge and specialist terminology and vocabulary
- background knowledge of Muhammad's statement concerning jihad
- background knowledge of Ramadan's writing
- understanding of Ramadan's argument and the implications of this
- good analysis and knowledge of a broad range of ideas of beliefs linked to the extract references.

SECTION B

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

Read the following passage before answering the questions.

'Coming back from an expedition against the Muslims' enemies, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have described it as "a lesser *jihad*" in comparison to "the greater *jihad*" which is the effort of inward purification and of a human being's spiritualisation before his Creator. More than the simple comparison, what should be retained here is the association of faith with the experience of effort in order to attain harmony and serenity. Life consists of this trial, as spiritual force is signified by the choice of good as well as good action.

... [He] who created death and life, that He might try you which of you is fairest in works. (Qur'an, 67:2).

(Source: Extract adapted from 'Islam, The West and the Challenges of Modernity' - Part Two, Chapter 1.6, Ramadan, T., Kube publishing, 2001, Edexcel Anthology)

3 (a) Clarify the interpretations of jihad illustrated in this passage.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

In the passage, Ramadan makes some key points. To begin, he makes the distinction between the "lesser" and "greater" jihad. He writes that the prophet (pbuh) described an expedition against an enemy as a lesser jihad - i.e. the fighting or working towards a peaceful community through means of violence or war etc. He goes on to explain that this is in comparison to a 'greater jihad' which involves the inward bettering of a person's 'spiritualisation' in the eyes of Allah. This jihad is much more significant as it is a

personal and subjective journey which one must go on in order to reach the same end of purification and Al-Tamam in the afterlife (akira).

A second point Ramadan makes is that the greater Jihad involves much effort and perseverance through adversity in order to attain 'harmony and serenity'. In that the journey to spiritual enlightenment and religious fulfilment is one which requires the muslim to be devoted to the cause and willing to work hard to fulfil all that a Jihad would require.

He goes on to make his third point that in order to reach the fulfilled greater Jihad, one must work hard through their choices and actions not merely in their beliefs and values.

He describes life as a 'trial' in which this test takes place and specifies that the "intention" ^{or "choice"} to do good is just as important as the exterior act of performing good.

Ramadan's final point is expressed through the word of the qu'ran which states "He who created death and life, ^{that} he might try you which of you is foremost in works". This highlights the idea that Allah favours those who work fairly to create an equal and just society through the fulfilment of the greater Jihad. It also gives way to the view that Allah is the source of such integral and prevalent concepts capable of defining and deciding the fate of a muslim's life. This can be linked to the idea that Allah favours those who uphold the concepts of justice and morality in their search for the ~~best~~ greater jihad and will lead these people to Al Jannah accordingly.

Question 3 (b)

This question required candidates to 'Analyse Khaddhuri's views and compare them to those of Ramadan' for 20 marks using AO1 and AO2 material.

In spite of a significantly high number of candidates gaining full marks, this was the weakest response on the paper with a large number of candidates gaining no marks. It appears that some candidates had not completed an analysis of Khaddhuri and this limited their response. A number failed to draw on the previous question to help with a comparison of the views of both scholars. Some candidates failed to make any answer to this question. Many who had studied both scholars struggled to analyse their views and rather, stated what they had said. However, some excellent answers demonstrated a clear understanding and a high level of analysis between the two differing views and some candidates introduced the views of other scholars to show further diversity relating to these ideas.

Some candidates failed to answer the question because they muddled Ramadan the scholar with Ramadan the month.

(b) Analyse Khaddhuri's views and compare them to those of Ramadan.

(20)

Khaddhuri and Ramadan while both focus on jihad they approach it completely differently. as Khaddhuri mainly focuses on the lesser jihad and places upmost importance on that while Ramadan acknowledges it to a lesser extent and predominantly focuses on the greater jihad - the struggle against yourself.

Ramadan defines jihad with a more spiritual lense and defines it as a type of purification of some sorts that has great a dynamic spiritual scope and is about a struggle as a Muslim. ~~while~~ Khaddhuri on the other hand looks at it through a politico-religious lense and believes that it is the spreading of Allah's message throughout the world and ~~farang~~ aiming to make people Muslim. The differing definitions illuminate how both men take different stances and approaches to jihad as Ramadan focuses heavily on the mental jihad while Khaddhuri focuses on the physical jihad.

Khaddhuri focuses on how jihad is something for all Muslims to both independently and collectively as a community act upon. Spreading the word of Allah is vital and to Khajiri's they view it as the 6th pillar. Khaddhuri elaborates on the different types of jihad that Muslims ~~act~~ must act upon such as the jihad against polytheists. Polytheists must be forced to convert otherwise they are allowed to be killed and Khaddhuri uses the Quranic passage of 'remove all polytheists' and argues that the same way the

Prophet fought against the polytheists in Makkah/Mecca, Muslims today must do the same. However, that being said Muslim jurists find it hard to define what a polytheist actually is as while some people believe it is anyone who is non-Muslim, many argue against that and say that it is just idol worshippers. Khadduri also mentions jihad against discussion which is Muslims themselves who are adopting and changing their views and a key example of this is the Khajiri group that gained a bit more 'fame' against the Caliph Ali who accepted their terms and allowed them to live peacefully as long as they abided by the laws he set. Once they broke it he went into battle with them and that signifies how there is an element of violence within jihad, that it is just unavoidable. However, Khajiri's themselves adopt a more violent view on jihad and ignore the rules of allowing women and children to be kept safe as they are famous for murdering them. Khadduri views that as unacceptable which highlights how he isn't completely embracing the violent elements, but also has limits.

Khadduri is not completely focused on the fighting aspect as through the jihad against apostasy and scripturaries he highlights that the first steps are more focused on discussion and debate rather than actual fighting. The imam has great importance in the jihad against apostasy as they aim to talk and persuade the Muslims trying to turn away to come back to Islam. However, if they refuse then one has no choice but to fight them. Scripturaries are People of the Book, so Jewish and Christians and they are given three different options, either

convert, pay poll tax and if they refuse those then they must fight. While poll tax may seem an attractive option they are treated like second class citizens so it isn't completely the best option. Therefore this highlights Khadduri's more physical approach to jihad and how the Imam is to convert people through any means necessary.

Ramadan on the other hand is entirely focused on the 'greater jihad' - the struggle against oneself in the time of chaos and differences. While he does acknowledge the lesser jihad he reduces the importance of it claiming what is greater is not fighting others for Allah but fighting yourself first ~~to~~ for Allah. Jihad to him transcends all boundaries and is completely focused on the relationship one has with themselves and how they are striving against their 'nafs' to be a good Muslim.

Ramadan argues that God willed this tension and that this truly is the greatest battle one will have. Purification of the soul is hard and a long process but all worthwhile. While he does remind people there is a social jihad it should begin at home and begin with transforming the Muslim community before wanting to fight in places like Palestine. Inward purification is more important than trying to convert people as really Islam is about one's private relationship with God. Therefore they should work on that rather than what Khadduri advocates. Ramadan's views are

a lot more attractive in today's society especially with growing secularism and pluralism, Muslims are struggling with their identity. By struggling against yourself one becomes sure about who they are and can stand firm in the face of adversity.

Ultimately this essay has demonstrated the stark contrast between Khadduri and Ramadan and how Khadduri focuses on the lesser jihad while Ramadan wholeheartedly embraces the greater jihad and views that as more important.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Both answers achieve marks in Level 5 and demonstrate:

- a close focus upon the question
- excellent knowledge and a wide range of specialist language and vocabulary
- a thorough and accurate knowledge of the views of Ramadan and Khaddhuri
- comments based upon coherent, logical and balanced reasoning.

Khaddhuri ->

Khajiri's -> violence
4 Sunni/Shia differences.

(b) Analyse Khaddhuri's views and compare them to those of Ramadan.

(20)

While Khaddhuri and Ramadan both write about jihad, they take different stances on it. Khaddhuri writes about a variety of views e.g. the Khajiri, Sunni and Shia view, whereas Ramadan doesn't go as in depth.

Khaddhuri's views seem highly centred on the violent aspects of jihad. He speaks of the Khajiri's who's views are very violence and seem to always take the stance that the lesser jihad is necessary. In their view, non-believers should either be proselytised or killed. They didn't believe in a pluralist society and felt the only way to live in society would be to convert all to Islam. Throughout Khaddhuri's anthology, there is a great emphasis on converting people to Islam or taking up jihad against them. In one section, he has the subtitle 'Jihad against non-believers' in which ~~the~~ people are forced to convert. Such a view is extremely harsh and gives too much focus on the lesser jihad, which the prophet Muhammad himself said wasn't as

important as the greater jihad.

This is in opposition to Ramadan's ~~less~~ seemingly liberal stance on jihad. Ramadan's views are more focused on living in the West where there ~~are~~ ^{are} pluralist societies which accept all and discriminate none. It is for this reason, Ramadan's focus isn't on proselytising people or taking out a jihad against them. In a society like the UK or USA, proselytisation isn't possible, nor is taking out jihad against all non-Muslims. Therefore, Ramadan's views seem to differ quite significantly from the ones put forward by Khaddhuri due to the fact one emphasises the Jihad of the sword and giving views against non-believers, while the other is accepting of non-believers and doesn't place such a high emphasis on jihad of the sword.

An area where Khaddhuri and Ramadan do agree is the idea of jihad leading to reward in Jannah. Khaddhuri, again seems too harsh in his portrayal of jihad but does nonetheless imply that if individuals can fight in the name of Allah, or even be a martyr, so die in the name of Allah, they will receive great rewards in the hereafter.

Khadduri focuses on martyrdom as a symbol / sign to show Muslims that taking up the lesser jihad / jihad of the sword is desirable and not only this but God would judge you favourably for it. Protecting Allah's name is always given great precedence within Islam, so Khadduri's view seems to appeal to this.

While Khadduri's view seems appealing to Muslim soldiers etc the extreme nature could be criticised for inciting extremism or terrorism. Terrorist attacks in the West have been targeting non-Muslims. This leaves Khadduri's views open to a damning criticism that it appeals to terrorism.

Ramadan agrees with Khadduri to a point, while he does believe that jihad ~~he~~ can lead to Jannah and that life is a test for how well we carry out our duty of jihad, he differs with what type of jihad is praise-worthy. Ramadan believes it is the self-mastery that the ~~greater~~ ^{greater} jihad requires which leads to God judging us favourably on judgement day. In Ramadan's anthology, he identifies this "life consists of this trial,

as spiritual force is signified by the choice of good." This demonstrates that while life is a trial, it is our spirituality and faith which should be at the forefront of our minds, not a physical battle. ~~But~~ Though, once we are able to achieve our greater jihad, we are able to enter paradise. Here, while Khaddhūn and Ramadan have the same views regarding the fact the practise of jihad leads to paradise, which jihad they believe leads there is different.

Finally, Khaddhūn mentions the differences between sunni and shia muslims in terms of taking up jihad. Again, his focus is on jihad of the sword (lesser jihad). Khaddhūn lays out that shia muslims believe the lesser jihad can only be taken up if ~~there~~ an imam approves of it. He has to be a ^{superior} ~~senior~~ imam and it is only once his permission has been granted can the lesser jihad be waged. He also speaks though of similarities between the two. Both sunnis and shias believe that jihad is in a dormant stage but differ with their views on the revival of jihad. For sunni muslims, jihad's revival will come once muslims have regained power. However, for

Shias, they believe when the 12th Imam, Mahdi, reappears from his absence, this is when jihad will be revived. They are both opposing views, however, do make logical sense. ~~It seems right that if jihad is~~
~~Ramadan doesn't mention any other views~~
~~such as~~

~~Ramadan doesn't~~ Ramadan, however, doesn't mention a revival of jihad because the jihad he felt was important, the greater jihad was not in a dormant stage and in fact carried out by all Muslims daily. This is different compared to the view of Khaddhuri as ~~the best~~ ^{it shows the} difference between the lesser and greater jihad. By ~~identifying~~ Khaddhuri identifying that lesser jihad is dormant while Ramadan identifies the lesser as something which is very much prominent and active helps to show which should be given most significance.

To conclude, Khaddhuri's views are very extreme and seem to only represent a small proportion of Muslim people's beliefs, whereas Ramadan's views seem more liberal and accepting which would make them more appealing.

Question 4

This question asked candidates to 'Evaluate the significance of the life and work of the Prophet Muhammad for Muslims today' for 30 marks using AO1 and AO2 material.

This was the question that offered the highest mark of 30 and candidates could not attain marks in Level 5 unless the answer contained a link with either Philosophy of Religion; Religion and Ethics or New Testament. It is therefore very pleasing to note the substantial number of candidates who gained full marks and also the large number gaining marks in Level 5.

Most answers demonstrated a good understanding of the key elements of the life and work of Muhammad, though some candidates failed to evaluate the impact of his life on Muslims today. Stronger responses took key events in Muhammad's life and explored them carefully in relation to scholarship and the varying degrees of influence today. Some excellent links were made with ethics and equality, religious language and verification, as well as the kalam argument in Philosophy, and Jesus in the New Testament.

devotion /
submission

SECTION C

Write your answer in the space provided.

just war
↓
war and peace

- 4 Evaluate the significance of the life and work of the Prophet Muhammad for Muslims today.

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Islam have been influenced by **one** of the following:

- Philosophy of Religion
- Religion and Ethics
- New Testament Studies.

uniting
the
ummah

women
↓
equality

(30)

The prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was and remains one of the most influential religious figures in the world. Through his life - he worked hard to spread the word of Allah through the Islamic religion and inspired others to do the same - leading to a worldwide Islamic population of about 1.7 billion - soon to overtake Christianity as the largest and most widespread world religion. Muhammad's work remains integral to many Muslims and remains the foundations for their religious beliefs.

To begin, Muhammad's life embodies all that a good Muslim should strive to be. He lived a life of modesty despite being born into an influential family and was always entirely dedicated to Allah and the religion as an entity in itself. He accepted others - whether they were Muslim or not and laid the foundations for a perfect Islamic life - encouraging but never forcing others to join him on his journey to Al Jannah.

These ideas remain central to Islam today and still stand as a muslim's goal in life. If one can live a life of modesty and acceptance whilst remaining ever devoted to Allah and the Islamic community then they are leading a good life and shall be rewarded as such in the afterlife.

In addition to his life as a concept, the work carried out by Muhammad throughout his time is also highly prevalent in modern society also.

To begin, Muhammad worked tirelessly within his years as prophet to unite the ummah and bring peace to Arabia.

At the time, there was much tribal warfare engulfing the area, making it hard for any coexistence to occur.

Through his sermons, prayers and participation in war (Jihad) Muhammad was able to limit this violence and reduce the tone of unacceptance.

Translated into the modern era of today, tribal warfare is not so relevant but the concepts of union and acceptance are becoming ever more integral to the region.

People today can use Muhammad's example of working towards the acceptance of others as a strong model for the way they should act in working towards acceptance and the peaceful co-existence alongside differing communities. This can link nicely to ethical concepts of equality and agape love in that we should

Strive to do what is right and accepting and that equality is a central motive of any successful community.

Linking to this, is the ideas of Muhammad on war and peace which can be used today by the people of Islam to conduct an ethical and moral life. The prophet said "we are done with the lesser Jihad" referring to the idea of fighting for communal peace etc and argued in favour of the greater Jihad - a muslims inner struggle to better themselves. Muhammad's ideas lay very much in line with the view that muslims should strive to fulfil the greater Jihad before embarking on the lesser as ^a the focus on the greater Jihad could eliminate any problems potentially brought about which would require a lesser Jihad.

Put simply, if all muslims have worked hard enough on themselves, they should be capable of abstaining from violence or disagreement as they will be better capable of accepting, understanding and valuing other people's opinions.

In essence, success in fulfilling the greater Jihad could result in less conflict and war - a clear and beneficial aim for society.

Today, people can take Muhammad's words on war and just war and can use them as a guide towards acceptance, morality and pacifism unless there is good reason for war. In practice however, this is not always successful ~~as it is~~ with some "Islamic" extremist groups going to wrongly perceive both Muhammad's word and scripture in the Quran as justification for violence in the name of Allah. Whilst this is a minority, it has a huge impact on the face of the religion as well as the international perception of it. This shows one way in which Muhammad's work can be misused and exploited in the world today.

Another idea which Muhammad upheld throughout his life was the idea that women should be treated with respect and justice. Despite preconceived perceptions, Islam as a religion is one which values women extremely highly. Throughout Muhammad's life he demonstrated this.

For example, his marriage to Kadijah remained monogamous for nearly 25 years until her death - very unusual at the time and together, they had 4 daughters. With this in mind, the prophet had to work to ensure that his girls were brought up in a loving and caring environment.

Alongside this, Kadijah was permitted to continue her work in the trading and business industries which

allowed her to retain much of her independence and the sense that she was living her life for her own benefit and not for the benefit of her husband.

Muhammad remained respectful of this and never expected his wife to stop her hard work.

These ideas remain important in Islam today and it can be argued that Muhammad sets an example to Muslim men on how their women (wives, mothers, daughters etc) should be treated.

This notion is becoming more prevalent, particularly in nations where gender equality is lacking such as Saudi Arabia and is being used to challenge the traditional theocratic ideals in the search of increased human rights and equality.

These ideas link again to concepts of agape love as well as minority rights and equality in ethics in that many people believe that equality is a human right and that we should be worked towards - Muhammad's work stands as an embodiment for the pursuit of human rights in the face of adversity and is ~~also~~ an example which people today still value and appreciate.

Despite Muhammad's influence in contemporary society many Muslims may find it hard to

identify in a direct sense with the prophet due to the changing circumstances faced in the modern day as opposed to many years ago. People may feel closer to the ideas expressed through their community at mosque or through revealed scripture which stands as universal guidance bound not by time or circumstance.

In addition, Muslims may feel obliged to prevent themselves from relating too closely to Muhammad's life and work in fear they will stray too far from Allah's message or will and commit the ultimate sin of shirk.

In conclusion, I believe that Muhammad's life and indeed the work he did throughout it remains highly significant to the lives of millions of Muslims across the world today and continues to act as an example of a well conducted, moral Islamic life which indeed would guide the Muslim to reach Al Jannah in the afterlife.



Both answers achieve marks in Level 5 and demonstrate:

- an excellent range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology throughout
- careful selection of appraisal details of Muhammad and reference to events from his life to underpin judgements and conclusions made
- comment and examples are finely balanced throughout
- raises contentious issues of debate
- subtle links are carefully made.

4 Evaluate the significance of the life and work of the Prophet Muhammad for Muslims today.

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Islam have been influenced by **one** of the following:

- Philosophy of Religion
- Religion and Ethics
- New Testament Studies.

(30)

Pre Islam

Post Islam

- brought up by Bedouins ✓
- Al Amia - honesty
- Re tribe
- did not ~~become~~ follow blind
- trader
- Marked him seen by a Nomad
sign of a prophet
- "did we not settle there"

- leader ✓
- honest ✓
- kind hearted ✓
- chosen as a leader ✓
- Surah gives many details
for today - Hijab ✓
- Kaaba rebuild ✓
- Lailatul Qadr
- Night Journey ✓
- died a normal man
- seal of the prophets
sunni shia

PLAN

conclusion

- Islam still to this day
- Surah 96 f "his story" !!! ✓
- Some muslims celebrate his
birthday
- final sermon

The prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him ~~gave~~) has had a huge impact on muslims lives from the first muslim to muslims of today. He has huge significance in their lives and influences how a muslim would live their day to day lives as muslims as the sunnah - written down actions of what the prophet did.

From birth Muhammad had a poor upen bringing in his early life. he was looked after by Bedouin Hakeema after his mother was unwell and father died, later he became an orphan. In the Quran it says 'did we not find thee an orphan and shelter thee' It shows to muslim Muhammad was destined to be a prophet from the start and not to any fabrication of the truth. It gives muslim significance in knowledge that Muhammad's life was written in The Quran, the Quran is the word we should follow it. As well as this what was significant about Muhammad's character was his honesty. As a tradesman Meccan to age 40, Muhammad was very honest with dealings in ~~an~~ a time where alot of cheating and gambling was apparent. He gained the nickname Al-Amin from this and this was key to Islam being accepted and passed down through and people accepting Islam purely based on Muhammad's character and that he never lied, so he would not lie to this day. It remains true for muslims as they all follow Muhammad's word as it is just Muhammad's word for what happened in Cave Hira. His status made it easier to preach a message as his grandfather was well known and part of a Hashimite clan and Quraysh tribe, the msg of proven vital

In the succession of Islam: coming from a known family rather than poor person whom nobody know of.

Muhammad reason for being in cave taur was in meditation and wanting to find something other than the idols^{*} worshipping. The perseverance from Muhammad ~~may be~~ could be the most important event and significance to a muslims life today as it is what began Islam and started the muslim journey. When angel Jibril visited Muhammad and said read. A uneducated illiterate man read words, it shows the power of Allah, it shows muslims today of Allahs power. Also muslims still read this surah 96 being Iqrah - read, still impacts of a muslim life. ~~today muslims still read~~

However it could be argued none of these events can be significant to Islam as Muhammad may of been hallucinating or saw or heard things untrue or unreal, given no significance to that night also the hot sun of arabia may of affected Muhammads thinking in which he meditated. There is also the argument that Muhammad may of liked to gain status power, he was an orphan when had no family, his wife was of low status. If these were to be true then Muhammads life would have no significance on muslims today apart from he may of led them to hell for a belief ^{in a} of untrue God.

* such as paganism, zoroastrianism and animism at the time

A similar argument can be raised ~~about~~ in accordance to the Euthyphro dilemma. Did Allah love Muhammad because he was good or was Muhammad already good without God choosing him. Then God/Allah could of chosen anyone and Muhammad does not matter to Islam, just Islam teachings matter and therefore Muhammad has no significance as the message of Islam.

The prophet Muhammad has a large amount of significance to Muslims all around the world and daily affects their life. Muhammad is in the Shahadah, the declaration of faith, the first thing to become a Muslim said, when you are born and when you die. Muhammad is largely significant as his name is read at your birth and death showing how important he is as no other prophet are there.

Muhammad went against his own people; he fought against the Meccans, he could of been persecuted but perceived on as a leader and general. Qualities of which led him to success in war against Meccans. ~~He was~~ and invited to Yathrib, known as Medina to settle disputes. It gave Islam a new land to grow and spread freely and now Medina is visited by many Muslims daily (100's) to visit the prophet's masjid.

Muhammad's life is truly significant and immanent to Muslims as when issues arise in today's modern society which are not spoken of or are unclear in the Quran and Sunnah.* Muslims use the Sunnah of the prophet to help aid these problems. Issues within medical ethics of abortion, euthanasia can be commented on ~~and explained~~ by the Sunnah as well as inferred from the Quran. We should not commit suicide as said by Muhammad therefore technically euthanasia and abortion is wrong. Homosexuality is also condemned. However a lot of Muhammad's teachings are controversial and can be proven wrong or senseless. For example he said that "women would be unsuccessful leaders" however not only his wife but more recent Benazir Bhutto female president of Pakistan broke two ~~century~~ glass ceilings set by Muhammad. It shows his teachings are not as significant in a Muslim's life today as well as his Muhammad taught of having 4 wives, so not significant in Britain where polygamy is illegal as well as going against Kantian ethics treating people as means to your own pleasure (ends).

Muhammad lived in a situation where teaching of love thy neighbour he considered to Jews his brotherhood at first, he allowed for the freedom of people practicing their religion. Explanation shows to Muslims the need for tolerance, understanding and respect for religion.

* Sunnah and other analogies of inferring give us the ~~Quran~~ Quran another way of solving issues and debates.

Muhammad ~~life~~ work such as Kabah rebuild and revelation of the ~~q~~ Quran can have said to have the greatest significance of a muslim's life today. He rebuilt the Kabah in which many muslims wait for Hajj one of the five pillars in which every muslim should go. If he did not take the idola out and rebuild it, Allah would have no home, there would be no pilgrimage to Makkah and unity of the ummah. The Quran revelation is read through ~~a~~ all daily prayers. What the prophet there would be no daily prayers and we are unable to worship Allah. Muhammad helped reduce the ~~am~~ amount of prayer when he ~~climbed~~ rose into the heavens and ~~reduced~~ met Musa reducing prayers from 50 to 5 as the "nations cannot bear this", he helped muslims with the 5 pillars highlighting its significance. Salah is feared and what him we cannot complete it.

His death and final sermon showed that Muhammad was an ordinary man and he died an ordinary death. ~~They~~ ^{showing} not to worship him but instead to the almighty Allah. He was the seal of the prophets however the caliphs could be argued to have more significance as the Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali passed and spread Islam more than the prophet did to other countries. Therefore can be seen as Muhammad not being significant, as well as this there is uncertainty with Muhammad being the seal of the prophets. Sunni's believe he is that Muhammad was last and best.

will not be distorted. While Shias believe a hidden Imam is regularly passing messages through knowledgeable Shias close to him. Muhammad's significance less important as an updated Islam is coming through hidden Imams who close to reveal themselves to certain Shias called mujtahids.

I think Muhammad's life and work is still relevant to modern times as his message has withstood test of time and has remained constant throughout and gone unchanged unlike the bible. The Quran is used to this day daily and a lie cannot become so prominent in a person's everyday life without getting caught out. Too many signs and supposed omens and supporting Islam.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates and centres are offered the following advice:

- Centres must ensure that all content of the specification is covered.
- Candidates are encouraged to focus closely upon the question. It is important to note the number of marks awarded for each question and be aware of whether these are AO1 requiring relevant information, or AO2 which involves analysis and debate. Where questions are awarded a smaller number of marks, the answer should be succinct but full and must address a range of key religious ideas and beliefs to show a depth of understanding. Where questions require AO1 and AO2 material, specialist knowledge, language and terminology should be selected and used appropriately and in addition reasoned judgements should be made.
- Centres must ensure that relevant contents of the Anthology are covered. Where questions require textual analysis, close reference to the text is good but this needs to be selected carefully and explained rather than being simply repeated. Specific attention must be given to the question asked and reference to the text is important; general reference to the topic is not enough.
- Where a comparison of views is required these must be clear and coherent, with reasoned judgements being fully supported with evidence.
- For the longer final question which is awarded 30 marks, it is vital that candidates select material carefully to make an evaluation based upon a wide range of knowledge that is critically deconstructed to provide convincing and justifiable conclusions. Detailed narrative accounts may detract from the line of argument and focus of the question.
- Candidates must always include a good example of links with one other component in order to achieve marks in the highest level for this question.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

