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# **GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME**

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**AUTUMN 2020**

**A LEVEL  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 1  
OPTION B: AN INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM**

**A120UB0-1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2020 examination. It was finalised after detailed discussion at examiners' conferences by all the examiners involved in the assessment. The conference was held shortly after the paper was taken so that reference could be made to the full range of candidates' responses, with photocopied scripts forming the basis of discussion. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners.

It is hoped that this information will be of assistance to centres but it is recognised at the same time that, without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation.

WJEC regrets that it cannot enter into any discussion or correspondence about this marking scheme.

## **Marking guidance for examiners, please apply carefully and consistently:**

### **Positive marking**

It should be remembered that candidates are writing under examination conditions and credit should be given for what the candidate writes, rather than adopting the approach of penalising him/her for any omissions. It should be possible for a very good response to achieve full marks and a very poor one to achieve zero marks. Marks should not be deducted for a less than perfect answer if it satisfies the criteria of the mark scheme.

Exemplars in the mark scheme are only meant as helpful guides. Therefore, any other acceptable or suitable answers should be credited even though they are not actually stated in the mark scheme.

Two main phrases are deliberately placed throughout each mark scheme to remind examiners of this philosophy. They are:

- “Candidates could include some or all of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.”
- “This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.”

### **Rules for Marking**

1. Differentiation will be achieved on the basis of candidates' response.
2. No mark scheme can ever anticipate or include every possible detail or interpretation; examiners should use their professional judgement to decide whether a candidate's particular response answers the question in relation to the particular assessment objective.
3. Candidates will often express their ideas in language different from that given in any mark scheme or outline. Positive marking therefore, on the part of examiners, will recognise and credit correct statements of ideas, valid points and reasoned arguments irrespective of the language employed.

### **Banded mark schemes**

Banded mark schemes are divided so that each band has a relevant descriptor. The descriptor provides a description of the performance level for that band. Each band contains marks. Examiners should first read and annotate a candidate's answer to pick out the evidence that is being assessed in that question. Once the annotation is complete, the mark scheme can be applied. This is done as a two stage process.

#### **Banded mark schemes stage 1 – deciding on the band**

When deciding on a band, the answer should be viewed holistically. Beginning at the lowest band, examiners should look at the candidate's answer and check whether it matches the descriptor for that band. Examiners should look at the descriptor for that band and see if it matches the qualities shown in the candidate's answer. If the descriptor at the lowest band is satisfied, examiners should move up to the next band and repeat this process for each band until the descriptor matches the answer.

If an answer covers different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band and then the candidate's response should be used to decide on the mark within the band. For instance if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content. Examiners should not seek to mark candidates down as a result of small omissions in minor areas of an answer.

### **Banded mark schemes stage 2 – deciding on the mark**

Once the band has been decided, examiners can then assign a mark. During standardising (at the Examiners' marking conference), detailed advice from the Principal Examiner on the qualities of each mark band will be given. Examiners will then receive examples of answers in each mark band that have been awarded a mark by the Principal Examiner. Examiners should mark the examples and compare their marks with those of the Principal Examiner.

When marking, examiners can use these examples to decide whether a candidate's response is of a superior, inferior or comparable standard to the example. Examiners are reminded of the need to revisit the answer as they apply the mark scheme in order to confirm that the band and the mark allocated is appropriate to the response provided. Indicative content is also provided for banded mark schemes. Indicative content is not exhaustive, and any other valid points must be credited. In order to reach the highest bands of the mark scheme a learner need not cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content, but must meet the requirements of the highest mark band.

### **Awarding no marks to a response**

Where a response is not creditworthy, that is it contains nothing of any relevance to the question, or where no response has been provided, no marks should be awarded.

## A Level Generic Band Descriptors

Band	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions</b>    20 marks</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i></li> <li>- <i>influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</i></li> <li>- <i>cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</i></li> <li>- <i>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i></li> </ul>
5	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>17-20 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• An extensive and relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates extensive depth and/or breadth. Excellent use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Insightful connections are made between the various approaches studied.</li> <li>• An extensive range of views of scholars/schools of thought used accurately and effectively.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
4	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>13-16 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A detailed, relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Purposeful connections are made between the various approaches studied.</li> <li>• A range of scholarly views/schools of thought used largely accurately and effectively.</li> <li>• Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
3	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>9-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A satisfactory response, which generally answers the main demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth in some areas. Satisfactory use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Sensible connections made between the various approaches studied.</li> <li>• A basic range of scholarly views/schools of thought used.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
2	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>5-8 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Basic level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A basic response, addressing some of the demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates limited depth and/or breadth, including limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Some accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Makes some basic connections between the various approaches studied.</li> <li>• A limited range of scholarly views/schools of thought used.</li> <li>• Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
1	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1-4 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Low level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A very limited response, with little attempt to address the question.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates very limited depth and/or breadth. Very limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Little or no reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Little or no use of scholarly views/schools of thought.</li> <li>• Very few or no connections made between the various approaches studied.</li> <li>• Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary.</li> </ul> <p><b>N.B.    A maximum of 2 marks should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'</b></p>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant information.</li> </ul>

<b>Band</b>	<b>Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions</b> 30 marks <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
<b>5</b>	<b>25-30 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set.</li> <li>Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>The views of scholars/schools of thought are used extensively, appropriately and in context.</li> <li>Confident and perceptive analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied.</li> <li>Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>19-24 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed.</li> <li>The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>Views of scholars/schools of thought are used appropriately and in context.</li> <li>Purposeful analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied.</li> <li>Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>13-18 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed.</li> <li>Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>Views of scholars/schools of thought are generally used appropriately and in context.</li> <li>Sensible analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied.</li> <li>Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>7-12 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed.</li> <li>A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence.</li> <li>Basic use of the views of scholars/schools of thought appropriately and in context.</li> <li>Makes some analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied.</li> <li>Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>1-6 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>An attempt has been made to identify and address the issues raised by the question set.</li> <li>Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence.</li> <li>Little or no use of the views of scholars/schools of thought.</li> <li>Limited analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied.</li> <li>Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary.</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No relevant analysis or evaluation.</li> </ul>

**A Level Component 1**  
**Option B: An Introduction to Islam**

**Mark Scheme**

To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

**Section A**

1. (a) **Examine Sufi devotional practices.** [AO1 20]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Sufis are Muslims who might be said to take a spiritual path towards God. It is emphasised that God is everywhere, so can be found in all things, including through a Muslim's own experiences.
- Like other Muslims, Sufis emphasise the oneness of God and focus on God's qualities. Unlike other Muslims, they go beyond the five daily prayers and prefer spiritual actions to find God.
- Ibn Arabi, who lived in Muslim Spain in the Medieval period, referred to the self-realisation of God: that Muslims can find and understand God through their own thinking and meditation. Other Sufis have also followed this approach.
- Sufi Muslims are organised into Tariqas in which a Mureed, a follower, takes advice from a Murshid, a teacher and guide, whom they believe it is necessary to guide them on their spiritual path to find God. The Murshid is given authority through the Sufi order and knows how to advise the Mureed on the best practices to develop their awareness of God at the stage which they are at.
- Religious experience may include reading parables and stories from Islamic traditions which have deeper meanings through which a Sufi may understand God better. Some Sufis also practice periods of asceticism in which they aim to detach from worldly matters in order to focus more closely on God.
- The most well-known Sufi practice is dhikr/zikr. This is an act of worship to remember God and may include reciting the 99 names of Allah, singing Qasida songs, whirling around in performance of Sufi dances and using drums or other simple accompanying instruments.
- Through performing dhikr/zikr, Sufis may rise through the arc of ascent towards God. In their acts of worship, some may experience a kind of ecstasy in which they feel a nearness to God.
- Other Sufi practices include muraqaba (Sufi meditation) and sama (spiritual listening, specifically whirling).
- Not all Sufis follow the same practices or have the same religious experiences. Some are not very different from orthodox Sunni or Shi'a Islam, and may follow the traditional acts of worship in obedience to God; others may dispense with some traditional acts as their spiritual awareness grows and they feel they can get closer to God without worldly routines.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

**(b) 'There must always be a separation between Muslims and God.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 30]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Islam teaches monotheism and rejects idolatry. Any suggestion that a person can be worshipped or associated on the same level as God is rejected as shirk, the greatest sin. This suggests that Muslims would always ensure there is a separation between people and God.
- However, Sufi spiritual practices of remembrance may encourage a follower to rise through the arc of ascent towards God, and to gain some experience of God.
- Some Sufis may quote the Qur'an which states that God is nearer to a Muslim than their jugular vein (Qur'an 50:16) and that the Creator God is to be found everywhere in the Creation. Therefore Muslims should not create barriers between themselves and their Creator.
- Others might argue that this is a weakening of monotheism and suggests a form of pantheism which should be guarded against.
- During the Night Journey, Muhammad ascended into the seven heavens towards God and went higher than any other human. He reached a brilliant white light in the presence of God, but did not claim oneness with God.
- The Sufi al-Hallaj claimed to reach a state of such ecstasy in his acts of Sufi meditation and worship that all barriers between him and God were removed and he even said: 'I am God.' To him, he had succeeded in reaching the highest state of his spiritual journey. To most orthodox Muslims, he had uttered a heretical statement and was condemned.
- Whilst al-Hallaj was exceptional, many other Sufi poets and writers describe the possibility of a mystical union with God. Rumi, one of the world's best-selling poets, addresses God in his poetry as the 'one in all.' Others such as Rabia of Basra and Ibn Arabi have written similar verses, suggesting their aim is to remove all barriers between themselves and God to reach a higher state of spiritual awareness.
- Some Muslims visit tombs of holy people to pay their respects and read du'a prayers. They may recognise them as 'friends' of God or saints who had reached a higher state of spiritual awareness and so may be a good example – in the presence of their tombs Muslims might feel their prayers may have better chance of being passed forward to God.
- Other Muslims denounce such practices as beyond the bounds of Islamic monotheism and teach that there should always be a clear separation between people and God.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**



**2. (a) Examine the distinctive practices of Shi'a Islam.**

**[AO1 20]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Whilst Shi'a Muslims share many practices with Sunni Muslims, they have distinctive ways of applying some. For example, the five daily prayers are the same but Shi'a Muslims combine these into three daily occasions.
- Whilst praying, Shi'a Muslims perform sajdah, when their forehead touches the ground, onto a clay tablet which is made from the earth at Karbala. This is a place in Iraq where Shi'a Muslims believe the blood of their leaders Hassan and Hussein was shed in pursuit of their righteous claim.
- Within prayers, Shi'a Muslims add a few words about Ali at the end of the shahadah (bearing witness), to reflect his special position as a guide and the first legitimate Caliph in Shi'a belief.
- Shi'a prayers are led by Imams who are given authority to preach from a line of Imams stretching back to the Prophet and Ali. They believe these Imams do not err and therefore their guidance must be followed.
- In addition to Zakat, Shi'a Muslims pay a 20% tax to their Imams to distribute to the poor. This is known as khums.
- A major feature of Shi'a Islam is pilgrimage to special sites including the tomb of Imam Ali in Najaf. The Imam Hussein shrine in Karbala is also visited. A special pilgrimage called Arba'een takes place here each year and a special Ziyarah prayer may be said whilst visiting the tomb. The prayer includes words from Imam Jafar, the sixth Shi'a, about how Hussein was just and fair despite the danger he faced.
- Other pilgrimages may take place to the Imam Reza Mosque, Mashhad, Qom and Madinah.
- The most distinctive of Shi'a practices is the marking of Ashura with the remembrance of Hussein's death at Karbala with display of sorrow and suffering, often portrayed by symbolic or actual self-flagellation.
- This occasion may also be marked with passion plays acting out the events of Karbala to explain them to younger generations and evoke a sense of the suffering and injustice at the time.
- Some Shi'a Muslims practise muta, temporary marriage, in preference to dating.
- Shi'a Muslims who are persecuted or face difficult situations due to their faith are permitted to perform taqiyya, to deny or conceal their faith, for their own protection.
- Not all Shi'a follow the same practices and there are different sects within Shi'a Islam.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

**(b) 'Shi'a Islam is completely different from other forms of Islam.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 30]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Shi'a Islam is based on the same beliefs in One God, Judgement and life after death, prophethood and the major beliefs in common with Sunni Islam. Under the time of Muhammad there was no division between different groups. All Muslims look back to this time and to the Qur'an and sunna as sources of authority, therefore it might be said that Shi'a Islam is not completely different at all.
- Nevertheless, there are differences. Shi'a Muslims regard Ali as the first legitimate Caliph and all Imams come from the family line of the Prophet. This is different from Sunni Islam which permits any pious person to be an Imam. Furthermore, Shi'a Imams are said to have the power to interpret the Qur'an without sin, whereas Sunni Imams make opinion, but are fallible humans.
- Whether these differences are significant and make Shi'a Islam unique is a matter of debate. Sufi leaders also trace authority from the Prophet and are expected to be obeyed without question, although they might not be from the family of Muhammad's line.
- Shi'a Muslims practice particular devotions at Ashura, emphasising sorrow and suffering in memory of the sacrifices made at Karbala and making symbolic or actual acts of self-flagellation as part of their devotion. It could be argued this is completely different from other forms of Islam.
- Shi'a Muslims may visit the tomb of Ali at Najaf or perform the Arba'een pilgrimage. Sunni Muslims do not usually practice these acts of devotion, although some Sunni Muslims, particularly Sufis, do visit the tombs of their saints whom they believe left good examples to follow. Other Muslims disagree with this practice.
- Shi'a Muslims have additional pillars apart from the Five Pillars of Sunni Islam. These include the principles of Amr bil Maroof (doing the right thing); Nahi Anil Munkar (forbidding wrong); Tawalla (showing love for goodness); and Tabarra (showing hatred and dissociating from evil). The fact that these are different pillars could be said to be unique; or it could be argued that the underlying principles are no different from the common beliefs of all Muslims.
- Whilst there are some differences between Shi'a and other Muslims, it is a matter of debate how significant these are and whether they are sufficient to justify calling them completely different. It might be argued that the common ground is such that a visitor might not notice much difference between a Sunni and Shi'a mosque.
- On the other hand, a committed Muslim might regard those differences as so significant as to justify the conclusion that they are very different.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

## Section B

3. (a) Explain how the use and treatment of the Qur'an reflects its status within Islam. [AO1 20]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- The Qur'an is the holy book of Islam. It is written in Arabic unchanged since the time of the Prophet. The words are considered sacred as they are believed to be from Allah.
- As such, the Qur'an is the most important book and kept on the highest shelves of the bookcases within the mosque. If there is a library, copies of the Qur'an will be kept high up. Care is taken to ensure it is kept clean out of respect for the word of Allah.
- When the Qur'an is read it is placed on a stand so that the word of Allah is not put on the floor. This is a mark of respect. Those reading it will perform wudu, ritual ablution, before touching the Qur'an, also out of respect.
- The Qur'an is recited out aloud during most of the daily prayer services by the Imam. Out of respect no one will talk or turn their back whilst it is being recited. The opening surah or chapter, Surah Fatiah, is always recited, and another surah after it, which will vary according to the choice of the reciter.
- On Friday's a sermon may be said at Friday prayers and an explanation given using part of the Qur'an. The community gather to hear it and learn from the wisdom of the Imam.
- Sometimes study circles or talks are organised so that Muslims can attend and learn more about the background to the stories and teachings in the Qur'an.
- In Shi'a mosques, worshippers additionally pay special attention to the Imam who they believe has power to interpret the Qur'an without error. They must follow his commands.
- During the week, Madrassah classes take place in the mosque. Students are taught to recite the Arabic words and learn them off by heart. Some are taught to memorise the whole Qur'an off by heart for whom it is believed Allah will grant seven generations paradise.
- Others may attend classes to study the Qur'an or to recite it in beautiful style. Some mosques even have competitions for the best Qur'an reciters.
- Selected verses from the Qur'an may adorn the walls of the mosque, often beautifully decorated in the form of calligraphy. This is because Muslims reject idols and recognise the Qur'an itself as the highest form of art because it is the word of God.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

**(b) 'The Qur'an is more useful for Muslims when it is translated.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 30]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Muslims believe the Qur'an is the word of Allah, revealed to Muhammad 1400 years ago in the Arabic of the time to Prophet Muhammad. It was collected and preserved, unchanged, since the time of Caliph Uthman. All Qur'an copies today are written in the same Arabic as the original.
- Muslims read and recite the Qur'an in its original Arabic for prayers, five times a day. They learn how to read the Arabic when they begin their education at home or in the mosque. It is essential for Muslims to read the five daily prayers as they are a pillar of Islam. Therefore, it could be said that it is most useful to read the Qur'an in its original, Arabic form.
- Furthermore, Muslims believe that there is no translation without interpretation, so any translations of the Qur'an are not regarded as the Qur'an itself but interpretations of it. Words can change meaning, and interpreters are human beings with their own thoughts and individual bias. Translating the Qur'an can introduce a layer of doubt about how accurate it is and from this division and argument can follow.
- However, most Muslims do not understand the Arabic of ancient Arabia. They may be able to recite it, but do so without knowing the meaning of the words. Whilst the beauty of the recitation may inspire, there is a need to know more about what it means.
- There are different ways of finding out what the Qur'an means. These including reading translations, commentaries, attending study groups at a local mosque, asking the Imam or looking up information online.
- Many people nowadays do not have time to find groups to attend and may prefer to read the translation themselves so that they can make their own minds up. There are many translations available with distinguished and trustworthy translators, whom Muslims are prepared to trust.
- The main beliefs of Islam are contained within the Qur'an. Some Muslims take the view that it is not only useful, but essential to understand these beliefs and so reading the Qur'an in translation is more useful to do so.
- Others urge caution that reading a book without a scholar to guide might lead an individual to make unauthorised interpretations. Shia Muslims follow the interpretations of their Imams and Sufis their Murshids, whom they might say are more useful than a translation.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

4. (a) **Explain how the belief in tawhid (oneness) is recognised through the practice of saying the shahadah (bearing witness).** [AO1 20]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- The belief in tawhid (oneness) is the belief in one God, Allah, without any partners. No other deity or special human being, not even a Prophet, can be associated or attain the same level as God.
- Furthermore, God cannot be drawn or represented as a statue or idol. To do so is seen as weakening tawhid (oneness) and to create an idol is a form of shirk, a sin which equates something else as equal to God.
- Tawhid (oneness) is a central belief in Islam. When Muhammad received the Qur'an and began preaching in Makkah, he asked the idol worshippers to turn away from their idols, accept tawhid (oneness) and worship the one, true, unseen God.
- The shahadah (bearing witness) is the statement of faith in Islam. It is a simple, short statement in Arabic which says that there is only one God, Allah, the basis of tawhid (oneness). It also states that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, by implication not a part of God in any way. This statement encompasses the basis of tawhid (oneness).
- Muslims say the shahadah (bearing witness) during prayer five times a day. This helps them remember and focus on the one God who they believe in and remember that their intentions are to worship God and put aside all other matters.
- Muslims recite the shahadah (bearing witness) in front of two or more witnesses when converting to the faith. This symbolises taking on the belief in the oneness of God and accepting Allah as their one true God.
- When questioned or in doubt about their faith, Muslims may recite the shahadah (bearing witness). They may also recite it under their breath, or simply think about it, when facing temptation. Praying five times a day or fasting during Ramadan can take some effort and it would be easy for Muslims to forget about it or weaken to temptation. The simplicity and memorability of the shahadah (bearing witness) helps Muslims focus on their main beliefs. They remember that the messenger, Muhammad, taught them how to pray and fast, and that their one God is watching over them. The fact that the shahadah (bearing witness) is short and easy to remember and recite at any time helps Muslims think often about it and remember that God is watching over them at all times.
- Muslims may recite the shahadah (bearing witness) before they die or when they fear they are reaching their last days, because they want God to know their beliefs when facing Judgement in the future. So, the statement of faith and the core belief behind it are closely linked together.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

**(b) 'For Muslims, God cannot be both transcendent and imminent.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 30]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Tawhid (oneness) helps Muslims understand the apparent unity in the world, because this may come from the one God who created everything. God is one and is beyond the creation and beyond time. God must be transcendent to have the power to be the first cause of the universe.
- God is also believed to have written the Qur'an, revealed it to Muhammad, and to have knowledge of all things that will happen in the world. God must be a transcendent being to know such things.
- At the same time, the Qur'an refers to God being closer to a believer than their own jugular vein, which suggests that God is imminent. It is also a tradition of Muhammad that Muslims should pray as if they could see God in front of them, for although they cannot see God, they are taught to believe that God sees them.
- There is a debate within Islam as to exactly what it means for Allah to be 'nearer to him than (his) jugular vein' and close to the created world.
- This teaching is often extended into the idea of immanence (inherent to, and operating within, creation): Colin Turner explains this as 'He is one who manifests Himself constantly through His creation.' (Turner)
- The notion of God's immanence is embraced by Islamic theology, but with both caution, and a clear distinction from, other understandings of immanence that appear in other faiths. Since God has absolute transcendence God cannot be known personally to humanity as this belief would be in danger the gravest of sins, shirk.
- Islam, therefore, has a very important belief about Allah, that, whilst maintaining all transcendent attributes, Allah is still very much involved with creation (immanent) and close at all times (imminent). Candidates may explore both or even conflate the two but this is acceptable.
- The 99 names of God in Islam reflect his qualities and these include names such as the all-powerful and the judge, suggesting God is transcendent, as well as names such as the all-compassionate and all-merciful, the carer, suggesting God is imminent.
- Some argue that it is contradictory for an all-powerful being to be present and close to Muslims in the world. The Mu'tazilah argued that God was transcendent, but not imminent and could not be at work in the world, because this would split the concept of divine unity. This would mean God was somehow divided between the realms of heaven and earth.
- A problem in the forefront of many minds is the presence of evil and suffering in the world. The One God of Islam is transcendent over everything and predestines all events in the world. So how can one God preside over evil and suffering and how can these be part of a caring deity's plan, if God is also immanent in the heart of Muslims who believe in God as all-compassionate?
- Others argue that everything is part of God's plan which will be balanced out at Judgement in the future; and that there is a reason from suffering which we can learn from and does not mean that God is not caring too.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

5. (a) **Explain the role of the shari'a (the way) for Muslims.** [AO1 20]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- The shari'a is the straight path or Islamic law, developed over centuries in law schools and based on the Qur'an, the word of God, and the actions of Prophet Muhammad, a perfect example to Muslims as the last and final messenger.
- There are many aspects of shari'a. The Five Pillars of Islam, including the requirement to pray five times a day, are part of a Muslims personal faith worked out by the scholars of Islam and the law schools in the first three centuries of the faith, based on the primary sources of the Qur'an and sunna. So, the shari'a covers aspects of personal faith.
- Muslims may have questions about certain aspects of prayer; or what they should do in moral situations nowadays. They might ask the opinion of a scholar who would consult the sources of shari'a before coming to an opinion, a fatwah. These opinions can be found online nowadays, but many Muslims prefer to find authoritative opinions which have been agreed between many scholars in consensus (ijma) or are based on analogy with similar situations from the Qur'an and sunna (qiyas).
- Shi'a Muslims follow the opinion of their Imams in matters of shari'a as they are said to interpret the Qur'an without error. At the same time they are able to use aql, reasoning, to arrive at new rulings in answer to questions for today.
- The role of the shari'a is perhaps most well-known for its importance in family law. Marriage is based on a Nikkah contract which contains terms for divorce. The terms may be agreed at a shari'a family court hearing, presided over by an Islamic judge. Some Muslims prefer to have their family cases adjudicated in these courts as they feel their judgements will be made in accordance with Islam.
- Some countries have used aspects of shari'a for criminal law. Those who support this believe that shari'a is a complete code of life for all aspects and believe it has authority as divinely inspired law from God. However, sometimes literal Qur'anic punishments have been applied without change from the time of the Prophet, including corporal and capital punishment. Some regard these as harsh deterrents; others as inappropriate for today.
- Some Muslims see the role of shari'a as a guide, but that it needs to be reinterpreted through ijtihad for the needs of today, and should be reformed, modernised and made relevant.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

**(b) 'Muslims should consider shari'a as opinion rather than law.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 30]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Shari'a is thought of as divine law from Allah and as such is not open to change by humans. It is the one perfect ideal for Muslim society which should be obeyed just as Muslims believe Islam is submission to the will of God. Under this opinion, shari'a is law and not open to change based on human thought.
- The sources of shari'a suggest that it should be unchanging and eternal. The primary source is the Qur'an, the word of God for all time and unchanging, after which no further message is to be sent. The second primary source of shari'a is the hadith, a source for the sunna or actions of the Prophet Muhammad, the last and final messenger who left a perfect example for Muslims to copy. This suggests that no further changes can be made and that no one can create new laws or changes based on personal opinion.
- Change in Islam is sometimes labelled as bidah, sinful innovation, if it is thought to be against what is taught in the Qur'an. This suggests that Muslims cannot make their own opinions and changes.
- However, the very basis of shari'a was put together by the four main Sunni schools of law and Shi'a equivalents around 200 years after the prophet's death. The founders made personal opinions about their teachings based on research, which also included relying on the opinions of the hadith collectors who defined which hadith were most reliable to use.
- The Qur'an itself provides general guidance for Muslims, but does not always give answers, particularly for modern moral issues such as abortion and genetic engineering. Muslims may want to consult the shari'a to find answers, but should remember that scholars issue opinions called fatwahs which are only binding on themselves and those who choose to follow them.
- Some Muslims have experienced unacceptable treatment, such as the experience of some women in divorce courts run by men, or those of alternative sexuality. They might argue there is a need to reform shari'a and that within modern, secular states shari'a should have no authority other than by personal choice.
- The existence of many different versions of shari'a suggests that the ideal of a single God-given law is not a reality. However, that does not stop some Muslims from believing that shari'a ought to be one all-embracing code of law for all aspects of life; and others from believing it is better understood as a matter of personal opinion.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised**