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# A-LEVEL Religious Studies

7062/2D - Paper 2D: Study of religion and dialogues: Islam  
Mark scheme

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June 2018

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Version/Stage: 1.0 Final

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Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Assessment Writer.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

## Methods of Marking

It is essential that, in fairness to students, all examiners use the same methods of marking. The advice given here may seem very obvious, but it is important that all examiners follow it as exactly as possible.

1. If you have any doubts about the mark to award, consult your Team Leader.
2. Refer constantly to the mark scheme throughout marking. It is extremely important that it is strictly adhered to.
3. Remember, you must **always** credit **accurate, relevant and appropriate** answers which are not given in the mark scheme.
4. Do **not** credit material that is irrelevant to the question or to the stated target, however impressive that material might be.
5. If a one-word answer is required and a list is given, take the first answer (unless this has been crossed out).
6. If you are wavering as to whether or not to award a mark, the criterion should be, 'Is the student nearer those who have given a correct answer or those who have little idea?'
7. Read the information on the following page about using Levels of Response mark schemes.
8. Be prepared to award the full range of marks. Do not hesitate to give full marks when the answer merits full marks or to give no marks where there is nothing creditable in an answer.
9. No half marks or bonus marks are to be used under any circumstances.
10. Remember, the key to good and fair marking is **consistency**. Do **not** change the standard of your marking once you have started.

## Levels of Response Marking

In AS Religious Studies, differentiation is largely achieved by outcome on the basis of students' responses. To facilitate this, levels of response marking has been devised for many questions.

Levels of response marking requires a quite different approach from the examiner than the traditional 'point for point' marking. It is essential that the **whole response is read** and then **allocated to the level** it best fits.

If a student demonstrates knowledge, understanding and/or evaluation at a certain level, he/she must be credited at that level. **Length** of response or **literary ability** should **not be confused with genuine religious studies skills**. For example, a short answer which shows a high level of conceptual ability must be credited at that level. (If there is a band of marks allocated to a level, discrimination should be made with reference to the development of the answer.)

Levels are tied to specific skills. Examiners should **refer to the stated assessment target** objective of a question (see mark scheme) when there is any doubt as to the relevance of a student's response.

Levels of response mark schemes include either **examples** of possible students' responses or **material** which they might use. These are intended as a **guide** only. It is anticipated that students will produce a wide range of responses to each question.

It is a feature of levels of response mark schemes that examiners are prepared to reward fully, responses which are obviously valid and of high ability but do not conform exactly to the requirements of a particular level. This should only be necessary occasionally and where this occurs examiners must indicate, by a brief written explanation, why their assessment does not conform to the levels of response laid down in the mark scheme. Such scripts should be referred to the Principal Examiner.

## Assessment of Quality of Written Communication

Quality of written communication will be assessed in all components and in relation to all assessment objectives. Where students are required to produce extended written material in English, they will be assessed on the quality of written communication. The quality of written communication skills of the student will be one of the factors influencing the actual mark awarded within the level of response. In reading an extended response, the examiner will therefore consider if it is cogently and coherently written, ie decide whether the answer:

- presents relevant information in a form that suits its purposes;
- is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate, so that meaning is clear;
- is suitably structured and that the style of writing is appropriate.

<b>Levels of Response: 10 marks A-Level – AO1</b>	
<b>Level 5 9-10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate, relevant and fully developed in breadth and depth with very good use of detailed and relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate</li> <li>• Where appropriate, good knowledge and understanding of the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion is demonstrated</li> <li>• Clear and coherent presentation of ideas with precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4 7-8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate and mostly relevant with good development in breadth and depth shown through good use of relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate</li> <li>• Where appropriate, alternative views and/or scholarly opinion are explained</li> <li>• Mostly clear and coherent presentation of ideas with good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3 5-6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and critical understanding is generally accurate and relevant with development in breadth and/or depth shown through some use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual /scriptural references where appropriate</li> <li>• Where appropriate, there is some familiarity with the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion</li> <li>• Some organisation of ideas and coherence with reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2 3-4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and critical understanding is limited, with limited development in breadth and/or depth shown through limited use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate</li> <li>• Where appropriate, limited reference may be made to alternative views and/or scholarly opinion</li> <li>• Limited organisation of ideas and coherence and use of subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Level 1 1-2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and critical understanding is basic with little or no development</li> <li>• There may be a basic awareness of alternative views and/or scholarly opinion</li> <li>• Isolated elements of accurate and relevant information and basic use of appropriate subject vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No accurate or relevant material to credit</li> </ul>

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

**Section A**

**Question 1**

**0 1 . 1**

**Examine Muslim beliefs about the personal aspects of God.**

**[10 marks]**

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

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

Muslims believe that God is personal not impersonal. Muslims also believe that God is a 'person who' acts rather than a 'power' or impersonal force. Descriptions in the Qur'an do adopt an anthropomorphic style for example the names of God as 'The Merciful' or the 'Compassionate'. This is not to suggest that God is a limited finite person. Quranic description of God as the source / perfection of the qualities found in humanity such as mercy, compassion or justice can be understood as God having perfectly and infinitely what humanity has imperfectly and finitely.

The most repeated description of God in the Qur'an is the Bismillah stating that God is the most Merciful and Compassionate emphasising the primary importance of these aspects of God. Merciful and compassionate both imply a personal basis for the relationship between humanity and God: mercy incorporates forgiveness, understanding and empathy and compassionate entails loving humanity, supporting them and forgiving them. 7:156 states that God's mercy encompasses all things, some may argue that compassionate suggests that God embraces all humanity whilst mercy is only for believers; however this is disputed by others.

Muslims believe that God is personal and therefore immanent and knowable – 'closer to Man than his jugular vein' 50:16, God is knowable through the Prophets and revelation of the Qur'an. This however is held simultaneously with the belief that God is entirely transcendent and unknowable – 'the transcendent, superior. Exalted above all that is associated with Him' 59:23, 'So coin not similitudes for Allah. Lo Allah knows; you know not.' 16:74. Muslims believe that God is not limited by logic and can transcend while remaining immanent.

**[10 marks] AO1**

0	1	.	2
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**‘There is little agreement in Islam about the nature of life after death.’**

**Evaluate this claim.**

**[15 marks]**

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

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

Note that answers may, but need not be, limited to consideration of the following specification content: Akhirah (afterlife); the concept of soul; beliefs about Barzakh, judgement, heaven and hell, including different understandings of resurrection and of the descriptions of heaven and hell in the Qur’an.

Some would point to the fact that there are two key interpretations of teachings about the nature of life after death in Islam: one interpretation takes a literal approach to the teachings so, for example, would interpret Barzakh to be waiting in a literal grave; another interpretation takes a symbolic approach to the teachings so, for example, would interpret Barzakh to be a symbolic description of the terror felt awaiting judgement. However, others would argue that these differences in interpretation are irrelevant as both interpretations amount to the same thing.

Some would argue that disagreement about whether al-Jannah and Jahannam are places which are spatially located or whether they are states of mind indicates little agreement on the nature of life after death. However, others would argue that as the real experience of al-Jannah and Jahannam is beyond our understanding and experience, both approaches are attempts to understand such essentially unknowable information.

Some would point to the interpretations of al-Jannah as disagreement on the nature of life after death as some Muslims would argue that punishment is everlasting and that the tortures of hell should be understood this way. Others argue that a stay in al-Jannah is a temporary one until all sins have been paid for, more like a hospital where the sick will eventually be cured. However, all agree that sins will be punished in the afterlife and that God will show justice and compassion to the sinner, so hell could be permanent for some and temporary for others.

**[15 marks] AO2**

**Question 2**

0	2	.	1
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**Examine why there are different Muslim views about the role and status of women in Islam.**

**[10 marks]**

**Target:** AO1:3 Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief including cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice.

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

Answers may treat the 'role and status of women' as a single demand.

The role and status of women in Islam can be seen as different as a result of the exercise of ijtiḥād in formulating Shari'ah in early medieval Muslim communities. Different schools / traditions evolved incorporating their own views on what was to be considered a legal rule. Over the many years, Muslim societies followed different schools of Shari'ah. As a result there is no one superior school of Shari'ah so Muslim families can work differently across the world dependent upon which school has influenced their lives.

Culture creates different views about the role and status of women in Islam. Religion and culture can be inextricably linked, for example the practice of Purdah was a pre-existing belief that was adopted by Muslim women in the name of modesty, but was nevertheless practised before Islam. An example of cultural difference could be to compare the Salafi tradition in Saudi Arabia with, for example, the Iranian Chador or the Hijab traditionally worn in many cultures. Muslim women born and brought up in liberal secular societies may also live and work in more diverse ways.

There are radically different interpretations of some passages in the Qu'ran including 4:34. This is taken by some to prove male dominance over women, and to sanction domestic violence against women. Others take it as a guide to male responsibility and to require a couple to divorce if the woman does not follow Islam. Muslim feminists, such as Wadud, and traditional interpreters disagree about how such verses should be interpreted.

Maximum Level 2 for answers that only explain different views.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that only explain the reason(s) for one point of view.

**[10 marks] AO1**

0 2 . 2

**'Islam has a negative attitude to homosexuals and transgender people.'****Evaluate this claim.****[15 marks]****Target:** AO2 Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

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

Note that answers may, but need not be, limited to consideration of the following specification content: different Muslim views about homosexuality and transgender issues.

Some Muslims argue that homosexual acts should not be accepted and refer to the story of the people of Lot in the Qur'an who were punished for their lustful acts between men as precedence for the Qur'anic approach to the issue. However, others argue that there are other interpretations of this story, such as the view that the punishment issued was for male rape specifically rather than sexual acts between men, or for their rejection of Lot who was a prophet.

Some Muslims see homosexuality as part of God's creation, so accept that people are born homosexual. It is forbidden to hate what God has created. However, others see homosexuality as a lifestyle choice that goes against God's intention. Different views are reflected in different understandings of the punishment for homosexual activity. In some Muslim countries it carries the death penalty, in others it is legal. In a few Muslim dominated countries there have been discussions about legalising same-sex marriages.

On the basis of 42.49-50, being transgender is seen as an innate condition to which no blame is attached in some Muslim thinking. It is seen as God's will and the Shari'ah law on equality applies to such people. This is distinguished from those who choose to live as the other gender for profit or other motives – that is not accepted as in the teaching of Mukhannathun. However, some argue that rejection of the gender with which one was born is an attempt to change what God has created and therefore sinful. The role of the Muslim is to submit to the will of God and that includes accepting the body you have been given.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not cover both aspects.

**[15 marks] AO2**

**Section B**

**Question 3**

0	3	.	1
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**‘Philosophical understandings of religious experience undermine Muslim beliefs about the authority of the Qur’an.’**

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

**[25 marks]**

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

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

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

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

**AO1  
Islam**

The Qur’an is believed to be the Word of God, given to Muhammad in a series of revelatory experiences. Some of these experiences were visions, others might be considered mystical. The absolute authority of the Qur’an rests on that belief. There are accounts of some of the experiences in the Qur’an and the Hadith. There are different Muslim beliefs about the mechanism of revelation, and the authority of reason is used to defend the Qur’an against accusations that it is of human origin – for example, there are verses said to provide scientific information centuries before it was discovered.

**Philosophy**

Some of the experiences may be classified as vision or mystical and some are private. The authority of any such experience relies in part on the integrity of the person claiming to have it and the likelihood that their interpretation of the experience is correct. The principles of credulity and testimony state that the onus is on those who consider the claims to be false to prove their case, otherwise the experience should be accepted at face value.

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

**AO2**

It may be argued that there are no good reasons to believe that there is a God, so no good reasons to believe that God is the source of revelations, visions or mystical experiences. Many of the experiences were private / subjective. Philosophers might argue that there can never be sufficient evidence to make it reasonable to believe that these experiences happened as described. The possibility that Muhammad was lying or mistaken about them (eg some could have been a dream)

is greater than the possibility that they were as described. Islam may counter this with reference to the integrity of Muhammad. The Qur'an recognises that some considered him 'mad' but his achievements counter this charge.

The validity of religious experiences can be challenged by alternative natural explanations, which would show that it is reasonable to believe that individuals are mistaken about the nature of their experiences. Drugs, intoxicants and temporal lobe epilepsy have all been offered as alternative explanations. The involvement of stimuli such as drugs is compatible with the claim that the experiences are genuine, eg if the drugs make the experience possible by removing barriers rather than causing them. The temporal lobe could also be involved in the experience in a similar way in which the eye is involved in seeing and not as its cause. Muslims may also respond with the argument that a religious experience is one with religious significance for the person having it and its cause is irrelevant.

It may be argued that it is impossible to examine or verify a personal experience and so impossible to provide any reason to believe that it, and the teachings it led to, are genuine. It is, however, impossible to examine or verify the subjective dimension of any experience, but that does not make it unreasonable to believe it.

There is no possibility of examining the experiences themselves, only descriptions of those experiences. Since descriptions can be wholly inadequate, that makes it very difficult to make a reasoned judgement about the experiences either way. It may be argued that 'The Holy' is experienced only by the believer and is self-authenticating. Others do not experience or understand this and have no grounds for dismissing it as illusory. Some believers compare this to the blind rejecting the experience of the sighted.

**[25 marks] AO1/AO2**

**Question 4**

0 4 . 1

**‘Miracles do not happen.’****Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Islam and philosophy.****[25 marks]****Target:** AO1:4 Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)**Target:** AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

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

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

**AO1****Miracles in Muslim thought**

The greatest miracle of Islam is the revelation of the Qur’an. Miracles reported in the Hadith include God splitting the moon, and Muhammad creating water, and multiplying bread dough. Modern miracles include signs of God appearing in natural phenomena (clouds, fruit etc), and unborn babies responding to the Qur’an in the womb. The Qur’an attributes miracles to Jesus and miracles are also attributed to Muslim saints.

**Philosophy**

There are realist and anti-realist views of miracles. Hume defined a miracle as a transgression of a law of nature by a deity or an invisible agent. He argues that the laws of science are based on the firmest evidence from experience possible and that it is not reasonable to believe reports that something that contradicts them has happened since such reports are always less reliable. The reasons for the unreliability of the reports include: the ‘love of wonder’ of the witnesses, the possibility of error and ignorance, and the possibility of deceit.

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

**AO2**

Hume is right in saying that witnesses may be lying or mistaken, but arguably a point may be reached where dismissing the evidence of expert witnesses, who have no self interest in supporting the claim that a miracle has happened, is less reasonable than accepting the claim. However, accepting the claim that the event has happened is not the same as accepting that it is miraculous.

Hume is right in saying that a natural explanation may be found for an event explained as ‘supernatural’ or miraculous: this has happened many times in the past. The absence of a natural explanation is not proof that the explanation must be the operation of a natural spiritual power or a supernatural power; it is only

evidence that there are unexplained events. The argument that an event must have been caused by spiritual or supernatural force because it is 'impossible', ie something that nature cannot do on its own, is not valid because the laws of nature are descriptive of the regularities observed to this point: they do not define the possible and so do not define events that contradict them as impossible. However, the inability to identify 'supernatural' events does not mean that they do not happen, nor that the religious explanation for such events is not more complete than a scientific one.

The Qur'an is seen as the work of God, but the existence of God is unproven. Scientific knowledge unknown to humanity is offered as evidence for the miraculous origin of the Qur'an, however the interpretation of the verses is disputed. Other evidence comes from the effect of the Qur'an on those who hear it, who become aware of the presence of God. The 'miracle' is the sense of the presence of God, the medium that inspires it may have a purely natural explanation.

Reports of miracles attributed to Muhammad in the Hadith are challenged by some Muslims because they imply Muhammad had divine powers and God is not the only creator. However, God could have acted through Muhammad in these events as he acted through Muhammad in revealing the Qur'an.

**[25 marks] AO1/AO2**

**Section C**

**Question 5**

0	5	.	1
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**‘Muslim attitudes to animals are consistent with the views of natural moral law.’**

**Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Islam and natural moral law.**

**[25 marks]**

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

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

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

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

**AO1  
Islam**

Muslim thinking is based around the teaching of the Qur’an and Hadith. God gave humanity free use of the animals he created. Specifically they may be used for food, in sacrifice and to ride. Humanity has been given rationality and is superior to animals, but rationality also brings responsibilities. The role of Khalifah requires compassionate care for animals in accordance with divine law. This includes using the prescribed method of slaughter which is intended to minimise animal suffering. Animal cruelty is regarded as barbaric. Some believe that although meat-eating is permitted it is not recommended, and that minimising animal suffering should lead to vegetarianism. Animals are Muslim in the sense that they obey God’s command for them and they live in ‘communities like you’. The earth has been given to all living creatures. They may be used in scientific procedures if the experiment is necessary and suffering minimised. Blood sports are forbidden, but necessary hunting for food is permitted.

**Natural moral law**

Humans are superior to animals in the hierarchy of being. Animals are provided for the benefit of human beings – that is their purpose. They may be used in any way that benefits humanity. Biblical teaching can be offered in support of this, particularly the idea of human dominion over animals. Using animals for food is explicitly permitted; saving human life by using animals in scientific procedures fulfils the first primary precept. Cruelty to an animal is wrong, because of the effects that this has on the cruel person and those they may go on to harm. This is not using animals to benefit humans.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Islam and natural moral law.

**AO2**

Islam teaches that God has ‘preferred’ humanity above the animals and provided animals so that humanity can fulfil its desires. This is consistent with the view of natural moral law which places humanity above animals in the hierarchy of being. It also justifies the use of animals in scientific procedures when the experiment is necessary and pain is minimised, which Aquinas would also support. However, animals clearly have God-given rights in Islam, and it is the duty of Muslims to protect those rights. Some Muslims interpret that very proactively. Meat-eating is assumed in Islam, and the slaughter of animals is regulated to minimise pain. Some, however, argue that while meat-eating is permitted, it is not recommended, and that the desire to minimise the suffering of animals should lead to vegetarianism. The more the role of Khalifah is stressed, the further away from natural moral law Islam moves.

Cruelty to animals is rejected by both Islam and natural moral law. In the case of natural moral law because of its effects on the human character, in the case of Islam by divine command. Neither value system rejects the hunting of animals for food, but Islam explicitly rejects causing pain to animals for human pleasure. Aquinas does not do so, but the development of natural moral law in the teaching of the Catholic Church includes the view that it goes against human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly, and some Catholics take this as outlawing blood sports.

**[25 marks] AO1/AO2**

**Question 6**

0	6	.	1
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**‘There should be no limits on freedom of religious expression.’**

**Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Islam and Bentham’s approach to moral decision making.**

**[25 marks]**

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

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

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

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

**AO1****Islam**

In Islam, religious expression takes many forms. These include: worship, moral conduct and criticism of the moral conduct or beliefs of others. Teaching about the sanctity of life may limit their freedom of expression and / or affect their response to the way others express themselves. Muslim attitudes to other faiths, and to minority groups within Islam, eg exclusivism and inclusivism, also have implications for this issue. Examples of Muslim responses to freedom of religious expression may be used.

**Ethics**

Bentham’s utilitarianism makes happiness the highest goal. A good action is one that leads to happiness, which may be immediate or longer term. The ‘right’ action may vary depending on circumstances, so the consequences of allowing freedom of religious expression will have to be determined in each situation, using the hedonic calculus.

Examples of the consequences of freedom of religious expression may be used.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Islam and Bentham’s approach to moral decision-making.

**AO2**

Islam defends its right to freedom of religious expression, for example with regard to the veil, provision for prayer and provision of halal food. However, Islam forbids what it regards as blasphemy and spreading lies against Islam. There are hadith that report Muhammad as saying ‘whoever curses a prophet, kill him’. The authenticity of the hadith is debated. This attitude to freedom of religious expression reflects the belief that Islam is the only true religion, but is countered with positive references to the other Abrahamic faiths: Christianity and Judaism. In a modern secular context where different faiths live side by side, Islam generally

accepts that the freedom of religious expression it enjoys should, in natural justice, be shared by other faiths and that any restrictions placed on that freedom are related to the public good. There may, but need not be, reference to France here. Bentham's consequential ethics may use the same arguments.

Bentham makes decisions about individual situations rather than general laws, so there would not be a rule either against or for freedom of expression. Bentham is interested in long term consequences as well as immediate effects. Various arguments may be offered about whether the consequences of actions can be determined, and whether freedom of religious expression is 'good' in the long run. There may be reference to the sanctity of life principle and the modern context here as well as to specific practices.

The consequences of limiting freedom of religious expression could lead to unacceptable limits on other forms of expression because many forms of religious expression are cultural, eg related to food, dress and lifestyle. This is a form of the 'slippery slope' argument, which both Islam and teleological / consequential ethics may use to support unlimited freedom of religious expression.

**[25 marks] AO1/AO2**