



General Certificate of Education

Religious Studies (5061/6061)

**Unit RS01 An Introduction to Religion and
Human Resources**

Report on the Examination

June examination - 2007 series

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RS01 *An Introduction to Religion and Human Experience*

General comments

There were some excellent scripts which offered well-informed and relevant answers. In contrast, others were seen where candidates did not focus on the questions asked and made little or no use of examples. The great majority of candidates seemed to manage their time well, and only a very few wasted time by attempting all three questions.

Question 1

There were many good answers to part (a) that showed the breadth required. Candidates generally made good use of contrasting examples of visions, for example the vision at Knock seen by a group of people, visions of angels and visions of heaven and hell. Where answers were less effective it appeared to be the case that candidates could not separate out 'visions' from other forms of religious experience and so wrote general answers. This was also seen in part (b).

In part (b), better answers focused on different types of revelatory religious experience and made very good use of examples, for example the receiving of the Qur'an by Prophet Muhammad as an example of a communication of a truth by supernatural means, or someone seeing a victory in battle as an example of a non-verbal message from God. Weaker answers tended to confuse the experience with the message and referred, for example, to the Bible as revelation experience.

Question 2

Many good answers were seen to part (a), which focused on the two demands of this question and explained both how and why scriptures are important. Weaker answers tended to deal only with a few of the ways in which they were important and made little or no use of examples.

There was generally very good understanding of the statement in part (b), and good examples of passages that have been interpreted symbolically. Some candidates, however, wrote about conservative and liberal understandings of the nature and origin of the scripture rather than the meaning of the passages. The reasons why passages may be interpreted in that way were less well understood but many offered, for example, the idea that they may be taken symbolically to avoid conflict with science (for example Genesis 1); because they were meant to be taken that way (for example parables), or in order to support a particular moral stance. There was a tendency in the latter case for candidates to confuse interpreting a passage symbolically with the view that the passage is out-dated, or is not actually the word of God, and so is no longer relevant. On the whole, it was the selection and use of examples that differentiated good and poor answers. However, a number of candidates offered purely one-sided arguments, not least because they made no use of the idea that some passages of scripture could have been intended to be symbolic.

Question 3

Many good answers were seen in response to part (a) which focused on the two parts of this question and dealt with both scriptures and religious experience. Many weaker answers did not show a clear understanding of 'inspire'. For example, candidates wrote about how the scriptures guide or instruct people. Good use was made of conversion experiences as

examples of how religious experience can be inspiring, and some candidates gave very good examples of people whose lives had been inspired or motivated by reading scripture.

Good answers to the first part of part (b) drew on clear examples of experiences that have proved to be difficult to describe, for example experiences of the 'wholly other' and a range of different mystical experiences. Some candidates only stated that such experiences were 'ineffable' and did not explain why they may be so. Good answers to the 'assess' part of the question largely focused on the importance of scripture as a guide to life alongside religious experiences, or on the need for religious leaders to validate and interpret religious experience. Some offered a purely one-sided argument, making no use of the ideas, for example, that scripture may be seen as originating in religious experience (and hence further evidence of the importance of religious experience), or that sources of guidance other than religious experience may be flawed, or that interpreting scripture correctly may depend on divine guidance through religious experience.