3.1 The Six Beliefs and Five Roots: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8062 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Explain two contrasting features of the Sunni Six Beliefs and the Shi'a Five Roots. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority in your answer.

(Total for Question 1 is 5 marks)

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2 This question is about the Six Beliefs and Five Roots of Islam. It is the AQA-style 24-mark, five-part question: parts (a) to (d) are worth 12 marks; part (e) is the 12-mark evaluation.

(a) State what is meant by Usul al-Din. **(1)**

(b) Give two beliefs included in the Shi'a Five Roots that are not listed separately among the Sunni Six Beliefs. **(2)**

(c) Explain two reasons why the Six Beliefs and Five Roots are considered important foundations of Muslim faith. Refer to the Qur'an in your answer. **(4)**

(d) Explain two contrasting Sunni and Shi'a beliefs about the Imamate (religious leadership after the death of Muhammad). Refer to a source of wisdom and authority in your answer. **(5)**

(e) Evaluate this statement: 'The differences between Sunni and Shi'a beliefs about religious leadership are more important than what they have in common.' In your answer you should: refer to Muslim teaching, refer to different points of view, reach a justified conclusion. **(12)**

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(Total for Question 2 is 24 marks)

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Mark scheme · 3.1 The Six Beliefs and Five Roots: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

belief 1: Sunni Muslims summarise the foundations of faith as Six Beliefs, based on the Hadith of Jibril, in which belief in Allah, his angels, his books, his messengers, the Last Day and divine decree (Qadar) are named, oe **B1**

development: this hadith, recorded in Sahih Muslim, is treated as the primary source for the Sunni list, oe **B1**

belief 2: Shi'a Muslims instead summarise the foundations of faith as Five Roots (Usul al-Din): Tawhid, Adalah, Nubuwwah, Imamah and Qiyamah, oe **B1**

development: this list adds Adalah (the justice of Allah) and Imamah (leadership) as beliefs in their own right, reflecting the distinct emphasis Shi'a theology places on divine justice and rightful spiritual leadership, oe **B1**

reference to a source of wisdom and authority made accurately, oe **B1**

Answer: Contrast: Sunni Six Beliefs (from the Hadith of Jibril) vs Shi'a Five Roots, which add Adalah and Imamah as distinct beliefs.

Question 2

(a) the roots/foundations of religion, the term used by Shi'a Muslims for the five fundamental beliefs of Islam, oe **B1**

(a) Answer: The roots/foundations of religion, the term for the Shi'a Five Roots.

(b) Adalah (the justice of Allah), oe **B1**

(b) Imamah (belief in a line of appointed Imams), oe **B1**

(b) Answer: Adalah (the justice of Allah) and Imamah (belief in the Imams).

(c) point 1: they summarise the core content of Muslim belief (aqidah), giving a clear foundation for worship and practice, oe **B1**

(c) development: the Qur'an itself describes the believer accepting Allah and his angels and his books and his messengers (Qur'an 2:285), showing these beliefs are rooted directly in scripture, oe **B1**

(c) point 2: they connect belief to action, since belief in Allah's justice and the Day of Judgement is understood to motivate good behaviour, oe **B1**

(c) development: the Qur'an teaches that Allah does not wrong anyone even by an atom's weight (Qur'an 4:40), linking belief in divine justice directly to moral accountability, oe **B1**

(c) Answer: E.g. they summarise the core content of faith (Qur'an 2:285); they connect belief to moral accountability (Qur'an 4:40).

(d) belief 1: many Sunni Muslims believe leadership of the Muslim community passed to a caliph chosen or agreed upon by the community, not requiring divine appointment, oe **B1**

(d) development: the first four caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali) are honoured by Sunni Muslims as 'the rightly-guided caliphs'; some Sunni scholars link the general duty of obedience to legitimate leaders to Qur'an 4:59's instruction to 'obey those in authority among you', oe **B1**

(d) belief 2: many Shi'a Muslims believe Muhammad divinely appointed Ali ibn Abi Talib as his successor (Imam), with leadership continuing through a line of appointed Imams from Muhammad's family, oe **B1**

(d) development: some Shi'a Muslims read Qur'an 4:59's 'those in authority' as referring specifically to these divinely appointed Imams, and many connect this belief to the event of Ghadir Khumm, when they believe Muhammad publicly designated Ali as his successor, oe **B1**

(d) reference to a source of wisdom and authority made accurately, oe **B1**

(d) Answer: Contrast: Sunni caliphate chosen/agreed by the community vs Shi'a Imamate divinely appointed through Muhammad's family, beginning with Ali.

(e) **L4** A well-argued, balanced answer that considers more than one point of view in a developed way, using accurate and detailed references to Muslim teaching and/or the Qur'an to support each point, and reaches a clear, justified conclusion. **10-12**

(e) **L3** A clear and reasoned answer that considers more than one point of view, supported by relevant references to Muslim teaching and/or the Qur'an, though the justification of the conclusion may be less developed. **7-9**

(e) **L2** A reasoned answer that considers at least one point of view, with some relevant supporting evidence, but with limited or no consideration of an alternative view. **4-6**

(e) **L1** One or more relevant points are made, but with little or no supporting evidence and no reasoned conclusion. **1-3**

(e) **L0** No relevant content. **0**

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(e) Indicative content:

- Agree: the historical split over the Imamate, beginning with the succession dispute after Muhammad's death in 632 CE, is the single event from which the Sunni/Shi'a distinction itself grew, so it could be seen as the defining difference.
- Agree: for many Shi'a Muslims, Imamah is one of the Five Roots, a core doctrinal belief, whereas Sunni Muslims do not treat leadership as a matter of faith (aqidah) at all, showing this is not a minor disagreement but a difference in what counts as essential belief.
- Agree: beliefs about the Imamate connect to wider theological differences, such as how each tradition understands religious authority and the interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah.
- Disagree: both traditions share the same foundational beliefs in Tawhid, Nubuwwah (prophethood) and Qiyamah (the Day of Judgement), which are far more central to daily worship and moral life than beliefs about historic leadership.
- Disagree: Sunni and Shi'a Muslims share the same Qur'an, the same Five Pillars of practice, and the same belief that Muhammad is the final prophet, showing substantial common ground.
- Disagree: many Muslims argue that shared belief in the One God (Tawhid) and the Prophet Muhammad matters more to a believer's daily faith and worship than a historical dispute about leadership after his death.
- A balanced answer might conclude that the Imamate is a genuine and significant point of difference, particularly for Shi'a Muslims for whom it is an article of faith, but that it sits alongside a much larger shared foundation of belief and practice common to all Muslims.

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