

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/01

Paper 1

General comments

Generally speaking, candidates were well prepared for this examination in that they were able to answer the four required questions in the time allocated. Only a small number did not finish their answers or missed out a complete question.

Overall Examiners noted that the performance of the candidates was good for this session with candidates giving the main points and details about the events they were writing about. This was especially true for the optional questions.

Candidates need to read and understand the question properly.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

In part **(a)** candidates should always look to link the themes specifically to the suras they have chosen to write about, and not to list general themes that could apply to any sura. The information provided for part **(a)** should be applied in part **(b)**, not repeated. To achieve the higher levels candidates need to avoid paraphrasing the suras. Most candidates were able to attempt to define the significance of the themes in a Muslim's life, and many were able to give good answers.

- (a)** Many candidates were able to give some themes for the two suras they chose to write about. To reach the top level candidates need to concentrate totally on explaining the text of the sura, and not include general comments about the attributes of God.

Most answers focused on *tawhid* as a theme for all three of the suras. Candidates need to relate how a particular sura speaks about *tawhid* as well as writing about other themes. Candidates were able to mention themes of power, forgiveness and that God is the only one to be asked for help. To achieve the highest levels candidates needed to give details, e.g. saying that the angels praying for forgiveness for beings on earth was a good example of how God was showing how forgiving He is.

- (b)** The performance on this part **(b)** was quite high. Many showed good understanding of the application of the teaching in a Muslim's life today.

Good examples of application in part **(b)** were, for Sura 42, how Muslims could forgive others who had wronged them, with examples including family members who had said hurtful words, so that God could forgive them; for Sura 1, examples included how Muslims could make *du'a* for God to guide them on to the straight path in their daily lives and keep them away from temptations; for Sura 108, how Muslims facing injustice in troubled spots in the world should put their trust in God for justice.

Question 2

- (a)** This part of the question was answered satisfactorily with candidates being able to mention some suras relating to God and His relationship with humankind. More detail of or reference to the suras they were talking about, would have enabled the answers to reach the higher levels.

It is important to know what is required by the question and not to mix part **(b)** up with part **(a)**. Some answers were very general about the relevance/significance of the Qur'an or about God's relationship with his messengers. Candidates were expected to reference specific suras and

explain their teaching about God's relationship with humankind. Some candidates made a good effort to reference and explain the teachings about what God has given to humans but did not then develop the answer to explain what God expects in return. When candidates use quotations and comments they need to identify the suras.

The best responses quoted a selection of passages and explained in detail what humankind can learn from them about God's relationship with humankind. This might include the role of God as creator and humans as vicegerent in the world; the role of prophets as messengers; and personal relations with God in a Muslim's daily life through guidance in the Qur'an, supplications after prayer and thoughts about the afterlife. Candidates were strongest on this final area.

- (b) In part (b) many candidates gave a thoughtful answer to the significance of the Qur'an being revealed to humankind. The best answers included the role of the Qur'an in providing guidance for societies including the role in producing Shari'a together with *Sunna* and consensus of scholars, as well as the role of the Qur'an in giving personal and family guidance from specific passages. The majority gave thoughtful answers which showed insight into the significance of the Qur'an as a universal guide for all generations. To gain the higher levels candidates needed to do more than just describe what the Qur'an teaches. The part (b) of questions requires evaluation, not just description.

Question 3

- (a) This part was generally well answered by most candidates, and was a popular choice from the optional questions. Candidates gave many accurate facts about the battles and the best answers addressed both battles in equal proportion. Accounts of Khandaq tended to be more accurate. It was important for candidates to know the details about each battle and not confuse details.

Good answers went into considerable detail about Khandaq and were able to illustrate the antecedents of the conflicts and why a new tactic of warfare had to be tried and the role of Salman al-Farsi in suggesting the idea of a trench. Some mention of the hardships the Muslims endured was noted, the betrayal of Jewish tribes and the behaviour of the hypocrites, with some candidates being able to give Qur'anic references. Khaybar tended to be not so explicitly treated, however most made mention of Qamus and 'Ali killing the Jewish warrior.

It was important to write about the main events of the battles, and to go into detail. It was also important not to confuse these battles with others, e.g. Uhud and the conquest of Makka.

- (b) For part (b) most candidates recognised that the skill was to evaluate the lessons to be learned and interpret how they might be applied in life. The majority of candidates successfully identified what should be admired about the behaviour of the Muslims or the Prophet but did not complete the second half of the answer about how these lessons might be applied. Some good answers mentioned the importance of Shura. Others mentioned the *ijma'* and taking the opinion of others. The majority of candidates discussed the importance of faith and patience. A few candidates mentioned the allowance made by the Prophet to eat non-halal food. The best answers for part (b) went beyond simple conclusions about the battles and expanded on these in detail applied to modern situations.

Question 4

- (a) This was generally a well answered question. There were some very good, developed answers to this question. The main events of the migration were well known and some candidates described or highlighted the importance of Ja'far's speech and recitation of Sura Maryam. Many candidates who answered this question were very good with quoting the Qur'anic instruction to migrate, gave the names and number of emigrants, names of Quraysh who pursued them, were able to report the speech of Ja'far, quoted the name of the sura (some even quoted the verse) and the king's response.

Occasionally candidates were confused about who went to Abyssinia (some thought the Prophet had) and whether Abu Talib and the Prophet's wife Khadija had died by this time. Most understood that it was a Christian land the emigrants had gone to.

- (b) This question was answered quite well. Candidates needed to do more than repeat elements from part (a). Good answers mentioned the fact that the immigrants were considered to be in Jihad, that they were able to practice their religion freely, they founded a society without the presence of the Prophet and that it paved the way to a bigger migration to Madina.

Question 5

- (a) Where this question was well answered, candidates were able to illustrate the love and close bond of the Prophet and his grandsons and their role during the time of the four caliphs. Some excellent answers went into great historical detail. All candidates appeared to know that al-Hasan had been poisoned. Some answers about al-Husayn were excellent in detail (including his stance on Yazid and the role of the people of Kufa). It was important to understand the circumstances around al-Husayn (all understood about the martyrdom). Most answers mentioned that he had his head cut off.

The question required more than general points about al-Hasan and al-Husayn being caliphs and their subsequent battles, and it was important to avoid confusion. There tended to be little or no detail about their lives before al-Hasan's caliphate started and this would have helped to achieve the higher levels.

- (b) Many candidates noted that al-Husayn was a martyr for the sake of Islam. Some of the better answers were able to mention that he stood up for what he believed to be right and was steadfast in his opposition therefore modern day Muslims should be if they are facing tyrants. Some noted that he also sacrificed his family to support his belief.

As with 3(b) the answer to this question should include evaluation of how this might be important to Muslims today. More was needed than a superficial comment such as 'they should be ready to lay down their lives for their religion.'

Key messages

Candidates should, in **Question 1**, give specific themes/teachings relating to the suras they have chosen.

Specific references from the Qur'an, that are relevant and enhance the answer, should be given, especially in questions such as **Question 2**.

Candidates should refer back to the question after writing an answer to ensure they have linked the question with the answer.

Part (b) answers test a candidate's ability to understand the importance or significance of the knowledge they have given, evaluation is always required. One good way of doing this is by giving specific examples of current events, where applicable.

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Paper 2

General Comments

Candidates as in the previous years had to answer the first two compulsory questions and from the remaining three questions they had to answer any two. From the three optional questions there was not one that was more or less popular. Having said that it must be said that candidates sometimes did not read the key words in the questions and went on to answer questions extensively yet gaining very little credit as the answer was not in tune with what was being asked. An example of this would be **Question 5(b)** which asked about the advantages the Ramadan fast brings to the Muslim **community**. A large number of the candidates wrote comprehensive answers but these were about how the fast benefits the individual which was not being asked. Candidates must spend a few minutes in reading and understanding the question before launching into writing an answer.

Question 1

When answering this question it is important that candidates do more than paraphrase the Hadiths. Candidates also need to make the distinction between part **(a)** and part **(b)** answers and not repeat the teachings of the Hadiths in both parts. It was also found that in some cases they took a key word from the Hadith and repeated it e.g. in the Hadith 'Religion is sincerity ...' answers read 'We should be sincere to Allah and sincere to the Qur'an and we should read it.' This is a superficial understanding of the Hadith. Good or very good answers should be able to discuss that sincerity to Allah refers to the belief in His Oneness and Him being all powerful. Sincerity to the Qur'an refers to reading it, understanding its teachings and implementing those teachings. Examples from the Prophet's time could have been given.

In part **(b)** answers there was repetition from part **(a)** and many candidates wrote about the teachings by rewording them. For the fourth Hadith on the question paper the majority focused on *halal* and *haram* earnings. Candidates could have written about the dignity of labour and living within ones means and that a simple honest living should not be looked down upon. Candidates could then have talked about how the Prophet earned his livelihood by being a shepherd or how he participated in the digging of the trench during the battle of Khandiq or in the construction of the mosque in Madina and that he did not consider any job beneath his dignity. Action is the key word to bear in mind when writing part **(b)** answers.

Question 2

For this question the rubric asked candidates to include material from the fifteen set Hadiths. A considerable number of answers referred to an alternative selection which was sometimes quite extensive and well remembered and considered, but candidates needed to make reference to the set ones. These references were what were needed to answer the question set. Reference to the Hadiths given in **Question 1** needed to be expanded upon.

For part **(b)**, whilst the question was asking about the different categories of Hadiths, candidates wrote about the different topics/chapters under which Hadiths are divided. Many responses were dedicated to *musnad* and *musannaf* Hadiths. There were candidates who mentioned the different categories *sahih*, *hasan*, *da'eef* and *maudoo* and went on to give a good response on why it is important to follow the *sahih* or *hasan* Hadiths and the dangers of following the weak or fabricated Hadiths.

Question 3

This question was generally well answered with some candidates giving very detailed responses with dates of events and names of the major people involved. Of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs the most popular ones were Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat 'Ali. Many candidates knew Islamic history well. Very few wrote on the caliphate of 'Umar and when they did the focus was primarily on the battles fought and won during his period. Not much was written about the administrative reforms brought about during his reign which were

required by the question. When writing on Abu Bakr many candidates wrote about the speech he made after the Prophet's passing away. That speech was before him becoming caliph so candidates simply lost time. It is very important to read the question carefully and answer what is being asked.

Part **(b)** of this question had some interesting answers with candidates giving valid reasons for their choice of event they considered most important. A few candidates made references to events that were not raised in part **(a)** even though the question specifically demanded that. Some discussed more than the one event and hence made it difficult to go beyond a satisfactory level as the question only asked for one. The most popular caliph was Abu Bakr and the event candidates mostly wrote about was the compilation of the Qur'an.

Question 4

Candidates who attempted this question showed an understanding of what the question required, many however gave detailed accounts of one aspect of prayer preparations e.g. *wudu*. Detailed accounts of how this is done were given and not enough attention was given to other aspects of preparation for prayer. Some candidates, after writing a long account of *wudu*, simply stated that *satar* is important as well and said nothing more on it. The imbalance of focus sometimes meant that a high level could not be achieved.

For part **(b)** a lot of candidates showed insight into the place of the mosque in the life of a Muslim with some very intelligent and interesting answers. It was important to go beyond it being a place of congregational prayers which results in promoting brotherhood or the uses of the mosque in the Prophet's time.

Question 5

This was a popular question. The good answers gave ample coverage to the features outlined in the mark scheme and also included details about the need to make up for fasts missed for no good reason, together with fine details about those exempted from fasting. It was important for candidates to focus on the features of Ramadan rather than its advantages.

In part **(b)** it was important that candidates focused on the community. The question was not about the personal spiritual benefits of Ramadan. One way of answering the question could have been to move on from the individual to the community but the link was rarely made. Those who did read and understand the question answered this part very well often getting to the top level.

Conclusion

Candidates need to be encouraged to read the questions carefully and to distinguish between the knowledge based and evaluative questions.