

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/11

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, although a significant minority answered all five questions.

The performance of the candidates was average, with some candidates writing very short and sketchy answers.

It is important that candidates read and understand the question. This session **Question 2** was the one that was most misunderstood.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was not very well answered mainly because there was a lot of paraphrasing of the suras and many candidates wrote the same in part **(b)** as they did in **(a)**.

- (a)** Most candidates were able to pick out the theme of *tawhid* from the first passage but passage two tended to be paraphrased, without many of the candidates mentioning God's power to allow things to happen or that He helps His chosen people.

For the third sura most candidates wrote about helping orphans or those in need, rather than God helping His chosen people, or that humans should be grateful for what God gives them.

- (b)** This part was not very well answered with many candidates repeating what had been said in the previous answer. Candidates could have written that seeing the signs in nature could help Muslims to believe in the power and might of God and helps to reaffirm faith as it did for Ibrahim. Or they could have written that the story of Isa showing Muslims that God has the power to change things and He is able to help those who have complete faith in Him.

Question 2

- (a)** It was important for candidates to write about the different ways in which the Prophet received revelation.

Most candidates wrote about the first revelation in the cave of Hira, and some were able to write about the Prophet receiving revelation in different circumstances, e.g. at the battle of Badr. Many candidates did not write about the Angel Jibra'il coming to the Prophet as an angel and sometimes as a man, or that the Prophet received the revelation as the ringing of a bell, and that it weighed down heavily on him. Candidates could also have written about the difference between the Makkan and Madinan revelations.

Most of the candidates who did write about these details, wrote briefly about them. There were a few higher scoring candidates who were able to mention these events amongst others, and gave good examples and quotations of when the revelations came, e.g. that the Prophet's leg was on another companion's leg and when revelation came the companion thought his leg would get crushed.

- (b) In part (b) many candidates gave a thoughtful answer to the reason the Qur'an was revealed over a period of time, from easing the burden on the Prophet's heart, to allowing the new Muslims time to implement the new teachings. There were a number of candidates though who focused on the importance of the Qur'an and the teachings that it contains.

Question 3

- (a) This was a popular question with the candidates and most were able to answer it to a satisfactory or good level. Many candidates were able to pick out three qualities and write about them. The amount of detail in the answer varied considerably and most answers mentioned the quality with a brief description of what the Prophet said or did.

Some candidates wrote about the Prophet's 'purification' as a quality which is not a quality as such, especially as candidates were writing about the fact that he performed ablution before prayer and kept himself neat and tidy.

The best answers were able to choose three qualities and write detailed narratives that showed how the Prophet behaved, e.g. choosing the quality of forgiveness and giving details of what happened at the Conquest of Makka when the Prophet forgave everyone including those who had killed his uncle at the battle of Uhud.

- (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 and they did this with varying degrees of success. The majority of candidates successfully identified what should be admired about the behaviour of the Prophet but did not complete the second half of the answer about how these lessons might be applied. So candidates may have written that they could be forgiving in their lives but did not give a clear application of how they could be forgiving, e.g. if someone has stolen from them, or hurt a member of their family, it would be better to forgive than seek revenge.

Question 4

- (a) This was the least answered of the optional questions. The answers given were brief, so even where a candidate knew about the events in these individual's lives, they did not narrate them in any considerable detail for them to gain high levels.

A few candidates wrote about his mother Aminah and the journey they took to Yathrib to meet family, and that she died on the way back; for Halimah a few candidates wrote about the experiences she had after taking the Prophet for feeding, that she was shaken by the story of the angels coming to clean the Prophet's heart, and that the Prophet often referred to her as 'my mother'; Abu Talib was written about in the most detail but still few candidates wrote about the trade journeys the Prophet went on with him.

A number of candidates did not seem to know who Aminah was and referred to her as the Prophet's wife, and some thought Halimah and Sa'adiyah were two different people, one being the wet nurse and another his wife.

- (b) Candidates rarely gave evaluative answers here, most answers saying generally that family ties should be kept and looking after your mother was important.

Candidates could have said that the importance of a mother can be seen by the fact the Prophet had an emotional attachment to her despite not having lived with her for long; that even though Halimah was not his biological mother he gave her the same respect as his mother; and that despite him not being Muslim the Prophet loved and respected Abu Talib.

Question 5

- (a) This question was generally well answered with candidates being able to give relevant detail to the lives of Bilal and Abu Sufyan. To get the higher levels candidates needed to give details of both people's lives, some candidates wrote about Bilal with little or no information about Abu Sufyan.
- (b) Most candidates wrote about Bilal's perseverance under torture and his unshaken faith. The better candidates were able to give thoughtful answers about racial equality being practiced by Muslims, and that all people should be treated equally.

Key messages

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

Candidates should, in **Question 1**, avoid paraphrasing and try to pick out key themes with a description of that theme.

Candidates should not only mention a point but try to expand on that point or event to give detail and depth to the answer.

For part (b) candidates should try to think of current examples from their own lives or the world around that relate to the question or situation.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/12

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.

The performance of the candidates was average, with candidates giving the main points in most of the answers but not enough details to score highly. This was especially true for the optional questions.

It is important that candidates read and understand the question. This session **Question 3b** and **Question 4b** were the ones that were most misunderstood.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates were able to distinguish between part **(a)** and part **(b)** answers and were able to write about the main themes and then go on to identify ways in which those themes are relevant to Muslims today. There were some candidates who wrote about the themes in both parts.

- (a)** This part was generally well answered. The most able candidates here were able to pick out themes of *tawhid* and God's power over all things, as well as His justice and uniqueness. To achieve the top levels more details about the themes were required. They may have written that 'the main theme of this sura is *tawhid*,' but many did not elaborate on it by, e.g., saying that by being the one in control of all creation, He is unlike other beings, making Him the only one worthy of worship. Most candidates gave a brief mention of the themes.

There were a few candidates who answered this part by paraphrasing the suras, and there were others who wrote general answers that could be applied to all suras.

- (b)** The performance on this part **(b)** was not as good as most candidates gave general answers without any details relating to the themes mentioned.

The most common answer was that these suras remind Muslims of God's oneness or that they prevent Muslims from committing *shirk*. Few candidates mentioned that sura zilzaal creates an awareness of accountability which leads to good conduct in this life, or that ayat al-kursi helps Muslims understand how their Creator is different to them, as He is in control of everything but does not get weary nor sleeps.

Question 2

- (a)** This part of the question was generally answered well with candidates who recognised that the primary sources were the Qur'an and Hadith. Again details were lacking and so few candidates reached a Level 4. Most answers wrote in depth about the Qur'an and what is contained in it, and then went on to say that the Hadith expand on the Qur'an and gave some examples of this. The most popular references were to *zakat*, prayer and *riba*, and the better candidates gave quotations from Qur'an and Hadith to illustrate their answer.

Better responses would have been able to say that the Qur'an is consulted first, as it is the authority for Islamic law and is unchangeable; that details that are not available here can be sought

from the Hadith as the Qur'an guides Muslims to follow the Prophet's example, and as he was the best interpreter of the Qur'an these two sources never disagree but complement each other.

There were a significant number of candidates who thought that the primary sources were *ijma'* and *qiyas*, and gave an answer relating to them.

- (b) In part (b) there were a variety of answers where some candidates wrote about *ijma'*, some confused it with *qiyas* (giving the example of flour on nails being akin to nail varnish) and some wrote about *shura*, giving the example of the Prophet consulting his companions at the battle of Uhud.

Most candidates were able to say what *ijma'* is and many of the better candidates gave real examples of it being used in modern times, giving examples such as the ruling on test-tube babies or its use in moon sighting at religious festivals.

Question 3

- (a) This part was generally well answered by most candidates, but few candidates managed to get to a level four answer.

Most candidates were able to mention some of the key points about the pledges, the number of people who came to 'Aqaba, and the subsequent migration. Few candidates were able to give details as to what was pledged (not taking partners with God, not killing their children, protecting the Prophet, etc.).

Most answers focused on the events at Ta'if beforehand and the subsequent migration, with a short paragraph in between about the pledges, and a significant minority of candidates wrote about the Prophet's attempts to spread Islam from the moment he received revelation. This was not only unnecessary but led to a shift away from what the actual question was about.

- (b) For part (b) most candidates were able to give some reasons as to why the pledges were important to the future Muslim community, saying that they allowed them religious freedom which they never had in Makkah, that they allowed Islam to be established and some candidates were able to relate it to Muslims now, saying that these pledges allowed Islam to have a base and spread to other places.

Question 4

- (a) This was a satisfactorily answered question, with candidates being able to write about some points in the lives of the wives they chose to write about, but few candidates gave detailed descriptions or highlighted a number of events in their lives. Only a few candidates wrote about Umm Salama. Aisha was the most popular choice to write about, but there was a lack of information in the answers about her life. Many candidates did not write about her knowledge or that she was a great narrator of Hadith, and many who did write about this lacked such details as the number of Hadith that she narrated or that leading companions would come to consult her. Most candidates did not mention that Qur'anic verses were revealed about her, and few gave details of her life after the Prophet's death.

Answers relating to Sawdah and Hafsa were mostly quite general.

Candidates who answered this question well gave a detailed and accurate narrative about the wives they chose to write about, mentioning most of the key events in the mark scheme, and gave relevant quotations about them.

- (b) Candidates seemed to have misunderstood this question to mean what lessons Muslims can learn about marriage in general. The majority of answers wrote generally that wives should be good to their husbands and look after them, be considerate of their needs, or that women can get married at any age. Few candidates wrote that these women were active Muslims (being pious and steadfast in their faith, memorising the Qur'an), each of them playing a role in society (taking part in expeditions, being educated and teaching others) whilst still taking care of their husband at home.

Question 5

- (a) This was the most popular of the optional questions.

Most answers were a little above average but few were excellent or very good. The main reason was that candidates seemed to focus their answer on the persecution faced by the Prophet, with some mention of Bilal, without focusing on the early Muslim converts who faced harsh persecutions from the non-Muslims.

Candidates could have talked about 'Uthman, Ammar bin Yasser, his mother and father, Harith bin Hala (amongst others), the need for migration to Abyssinia, and the boycott to Shib Abi-Talib.

Candidates who answered this question well answered it very well and gave details of many converts who were tortured as well as mentioning the migration and boycott.

- (b) Most answers here wrote about being patient and steadfast in difficult times like Bilal, which is a general answer, and so most answers were satisfactory. Better answers could have elaborated by saying that Muslims need to be patient and keep their faith in times of difficulty like in Burma or Palestine, or that Muslims should not get angry when people make films of the Prophet which insult him.

Reference to current issues and relating them to the question are a good way to gain high levels in part (b) questions.

Key messages

Candidates should, in **Question 1**, avoid paraphrasing and try to pick out key themes with a description of that theme.

Candidates should not only mention a point but try to expand on that point or event to give detail and depth to the answer.

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ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/13

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It is important that candidates read and understand the question. This session **Question 3b** and **Question 4b** were the ones that were most misunderstood.

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ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/21

Paper 2

General Comments

The overall response in this session was a fairly good one. It is important for all candidates to take the time to read the questions carefully and understand what they were asking. Answers prepared for a particular topic need to be adjusted to the requirement of the question.

In **Question 1(a)** the tendency was to reword the Hadith and put it forth as its teaching or to give a narrow explanation without understanding the wider meaning of the Hadiths. In some scripts long answers were given which were quite well written but did not answer the question e.g. in **Question 4** candidates were asked to write about the election of Abu Bakr and how he dealt with the false prophets, some candidates wrote a biographical account of his life and went on to speak of the expedition he sent to Syria and his fight against those who refused *zakat* payments with only a passing mention of his election/campaign against the false prophets. It should be stressed to the candidates that the key to answering a paper well is to spend a few minutes in reading and understanding the requirements of the question before launching into an answer.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

The majority achieved a satisfactory level in this question. In Part **(a)** the Hadith was either reworded or the candidates stuck to the wordings closely when describing the teachings. In this part of the question candidates need to write about the broader teaching of the Hadiths as well. For example, Hadith **(iii)** says 'One who manages the affairs of the widow and the poor man...' but it does not necessarily mean that the needs of only the widows or the poor should be met. Candidates could say that Islam is a religion with a strong focus on social justice and care for others, especially those in most need, and that this is an expression of true faith. The term 'widow and the poor man' is given as an example.

In Part **(b)** some candidates gave thoughtful answers which showed a clear understanding of the Hadiths and how their teaching could be applied in everyday life. Other candidates repeated the teachings from Part **(a)** or repeated the Hadith e.g. for Part **(b)** of Hadith **(i)** some used the examples from the Hadith, they could have given examples from their own lives or the lives of Muslims.

Question 2

Quite a wide range of responses were given for this answer. Many candidates achieved level 3 in Part **(a)** with the majority giving the examples of how the Qur'an tells Muslims to offer prayers and pay *zakat* and the Prophet's Hadiths give an explanation of how this is done. Candidates who achieved the high end of level 3 or level 4 went on to give other examples dealing with usury, theft, and adultery, for example, to show how the Hadiths were used in establishing Islamic law. Some candidates described what Hadith and Sunnah were, which was not what the question was asking for. Detail and development is important in answers and helps candidates achieve the higher levels.

There seemed to be a degree of confusion between *qiyas* and *ijma* for some candidates in Part **(b)**, whereas other candidates explained what *ijma* was, at times an example was also given but not many connected this with specifically focusing on whether it was easy to use today or not. Some interesting answers were seen with candidates saying that due to sectarianism it was not easy whereas other said that modern technology namely the internet enabled scholars to be more in touch with each other and practise *ijma*. Part **(b)** is an evaluative question and the candidates should not be hesitant to express their point of view.

Question 3

This was a very popular question. It was a straight forward question which was well answered by most, especially Part (a).

In Part (b) many went on to describe the Day of Judgment in great detail but needed to offer evaluation to achieve the higher levels. Candidates could have written about the importance of the Day of Judgment in Muslim belief being that on this day Muslims will have to give an account of their worldly deeds to God and on the basis of how they have lived their life God will grant them paradise or hell. It is important that candidates understand the topic they are studying to a degree that they can confidently offer evaluation for Part (b) answers and not simply write descriptive answers.

Question 4

In Part (a) many candidates simply wrote that Umar took an oath of loyalty at the hand of Abu Bakr following which the *ansars* also pledged their loyalty to him. There were some excellent answers that gave an account of the gathering of the *ansar* at *Saqifah-e-Bani Sa'idah* to discuss the appointment of a caliph and all that followed. The second part of Part (a) of how Abu Bakr dealt with the false prophets produced a range of answers, from satisfactory to very good. Some candidates offered answers that were not relevant to the question.

In Part (b) many candidates offered evaluation and went on to say that he was a good choice because he did this, that and the other and managed to reach the higher levels depending on how much depth there was in the answer.

Question 5

This question asked candidates to describe the benefits of *zakat* for the Muslim community. Some candidates however went on to write about who *zakat* was given to and what the rate is which was not asked for by the question. For those who did focus their answer on the benefits of *zakat* to the Muslim community and included points about how it fosters brotherhood, equality and goodwill in society the higher levels were achieved. A few wrote about how *zakat* stimulates investment and discourages hoarding. On the whole, this was a well answered and popular question.

Part (b) posed a bit of a challenge to the candidates. Some simply gave responses of how fasting helps Muslims to realise the plight of the poor etc. and likewise for *zakat*. They needed to go on and say that it makes them also realise that God has given them many bounties and that they appreciate these and thank God for them and feel closer to Him or they could say by fasting and giving *zakat* they develop *taqwa*. What the question is asking must be kept in mind and answers must be linked to the question.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/22

Paper 2

General Comments

On the whole candidates seemed to have done well. There were some very good responses, thoughtful, well developed and comprehensive with good evaluation being offered for part (b) responses. On the other hand there were some that did not answer the question. Part (a) questions require a descriptive answer and here it is development and detail that achieve the higher levels. In part (b) questions answers should include evaluation. An example is **Question 5 (b)** why is *du'a* important to Muslims, candidates need to say **why** it is important not describe what it is.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

For part (a) of **Question 1** the candidates were restricting their answer to just the content of the Hadith and not understanding the wider meaning of what the Hadith was teaching. As an example, Hadith (ii), many candidates wrote that Muslims should care for the widows and the poor man and that there is a lot of reward for doing that etc. The wider teaching could be that Islam promotes social and economic welfare in society and Muslims should act like brothers to each other. Caring for those in dire need is an expression of genuine faith. To bring out the teachings candidates could have quoted from the Qur'an or other Hadiths. It is said in surah *Al-Nisa* 'And do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans and those in need'. The term widows and poor man are used in the Hadith as examples, they refer to the vulnerable in society.

For part (b) the teaching should not be reworded but candidates need to show how the teachings of the Hadiths can be put into action. Practical examples can be cited here.

Question 2

Some candidates wrote good answers, others were confident about the authentic Hadiths and how they were classified as such but got mixed up with the names and classifications of the *hasan*, *da'if* and *al-mau'do* Hadiths. Some candidates wrote about *musnad* and *musannaf* Hadiths and some wrote just about Hadith *Qudsi* and Hadith *Nabwi*. Many answers referred to Hadiths *Qudsi* and *Nabwi* and then went on to write about the sub-divisions in the latter. It is important that candidates read the question as these answers were not relevant to the question. Credit was given if there was some reference to, for example, the authentic Hadiths or any other kind even if the answer did not directly relate to the question.

For part (b) fairly good responses were given, though some did not give an example of how *sunna* is important in a Muslim's life today even though the question asked for it.

Question 3

In this question many candidates wrote about the individual achievements of each caliph during his reign and sometimes their biographies. The question was asking them how the four rightly guided caliphs were role models for leaders today and in answering the question candidates could have referred to a number of points that were common to the caliphate of all four, e.g. they did not think themselves to be above the common man; they consulted the *majlis-e-shura* in all affairs of the state; the caliphs were available to all at all times; the judiciary was independent and no one was above the law; the *bait ul maal* was public property and so treated by the caliphs. Examples for any of these points would have added to the development of the answer.

Some candidates wrote about the individual achievements of each caliph but then linked their response to how those achievements could be used as an example by present day leaders. This was a valid way to answer the question and so was credited.

In part **(b)** there were some good answers. Others did not evaluate Umar's conduct and a few did not attempt the question.

Question 4

This was a popular question, and was well answered by many. Reading and understanding the question is important as quite a few candidates wrote about the first part of the *shahada* and did not tackle the second part that confirms the *risala* of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

In part **(b)** there were some excellent responses. Some responses stopped after saying that the other pillars were based on the *shahada* and some candidates confused the pillars and the articles of faith. Some very good evaluative responses were seen to this question.

Question 5

Some candidates thought that only Friday prayers were congregational prayers, whilst others included Friday and Eid prayers in this category.

Part **(b)** had some interesting answers that ranged from satisfactory to excellent.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/23

Paper 2

General Comments

On the whole candidates seemed to have done well. There were some very good responses, thoughtful, well developed and comprehensive with good evaluation being offered for part (b) responses. On the other hand there were some that did not answer the question. Part (a) questions require a descriptive answer and here it is development and detail that achieve the higher levels. In part (b) questions answers should include evaluation. An example is **Question 5 (b)** why is *du'a* important to Muslims, candidates need to say **why** it is important not describe what it is.

Comments on Specific Questions

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For part (b) the teaching should not be reworded but candidates need to show how the teachings of the Hadiths can be put into action. Practical examples can be cited here.

Question 2

Some candidates wrote good answers, others were confident about the authentic Hadiths and how they were classified as such but got mixed up with the names and classifications of the *hasan*, *da'if* and *al-mau'do* Hadiths. Some candidates wrote about *musnad* and *musannaf* Hadiths and some wrote just about Hadith *Qudsi* and Hadith *Nabwi*. Many answers referred to Hadiths *Qudsi* and *Nabwi* and then went on to write about the sub-divisions in the latter. It is important that candidates read the question as these answers were not relevant to the question. Credit was given if there was some reference to, for example, the authentic Hadiths or any other kind even if the answer did not directly relate to the question.

For part (b) fairly good responses were given, though some did not give an example of how *sunna* is important in a Muslim's life today even though the question asked for it.

Question 3

In this question many candidates wrote about the individual achievements of each caliph during his reign and sometimes their biographies. The question was asking them how the four rightly guided caliphs were role models for leaders today and in answering the question candidates could have referred to a number of points that were common to the caliphate of all four, e.g. they did not think themselves to be above the common man; they consulted the *majlis-e-shura* in all affairs of the state; the caliphs were available to all at all times; the judiciary was independent and no one was above the law; the *bait ul maal* was public property and so treated by the caliphs. Examples for any of these points would have added to the development of the answer.

Some candidates wrote about the individual achievements of each caliph but then linked their response to how those achievements could be used as an example by present day leaders. This was a valid way to answer the question and so was credited.

In part **(b)** there were some good answers. Others did not evaluate Umar's conduct and a few did not attempt the question.

Question 4

This was a popular question, and was well answered by many. Reading and understanding the question is important as quite a few candidates wrote about the first part of the *shahada* and did not tackle the second part that confirms the *risala* of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

In part **(b)** there were some excellent responses. Some responses stopped after saying that the other pillars were based on the *shahada* and some candidates confused the pillars and the articles of faith. Some very good evaluative responses were seen to this question.

Question 5

Some candidates thought that only Friday prayers were congregational prayers, whilst others included Friday and Eid prayers in this category.

Part **(b)** had some interesting answers that ranged from satisfactory to excellent.