

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/11

Paper 1

Key messages

Responses can be improved with more focus on detailed and accurate knowledge, developing the main points in the answer, rather than providing a general outline with no development.

For **Question 1**, candidates should learn to differentiate between themes and the importance/practical application of the themes for Muslims today.

For **Question 1**, candidates should be careful that they are writing about themes relating to the passages in the exam paper, rather than writing answers with one or two general themes that can be related to various passages.

Candidates should read the questions carefully to avoid misinterpreting what is required of them.

Candidates should ensure that their handwriting is clear.

General comments

Generally speaking, candidates were well prepared for this examination with most answering all the questions required. Only a small number did not finish their answers or missed out a complete question. Overall the performance of the candidates was good for this session, with some improvement in the evaluation of material (AO2). However, a significant proportion of the candidature still misunderstands the purpose of AO2 and provides descriptions rather than evaluation.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was satisfactorily answered. Where it was not well answered, candidates paraphrased the translation and wrote similar answers for both parts. It was also noted that some of the answers were very general in nature, and did not apply specifically to the specified verses. Where it was well answered, candidates used their own words to describe the themes, offered a variety of themes from both suras, and gave good examples of the relevance of the themes to Muslims.

- (a) Sura 2.21-22 was not very well answered, with candidates not bringing out many themes, such as God giving sustenance, or that humans should be grateful. Most gave general comments relating to the Oneness of God that could be applied to many suras.

Sura 1 was well answered, where candidates presented a number of themes, God being the Lord of creation, that He gives guidance especially in the form of the Qur'an and sunna, that He will preside over the Day of Judgement.

Sura 114 was answered reasonably well, with candidates writing about God giving protection and that there are evils from the men and jinn/Satan, which are determined to attack the faith of a believer.

- (b) Although there has been an improvement in evaluating material, this part ranged from some very good answers to mostly satisfactory answers.

Satisfactory answers tended to focus on reiterating what they had mentioned in part (a). The better answers gave examples of the practical uses of the themes for Muslims, e.g. saying that sura Fatiha is a prayer that Muslims recite to ask for guidance, and also they recite it every day in their prayers so is a communication with God; that God has provided humans with food and shelter so they should not abuse it; that Muslims have no need to fear evil as God has provided them means for protection.

Question 2

- (a) This part was generally answered well; however, it often seemed that candidates knew the subject matter well, but failed to expand or develop the points they were making. So, for example, they mentioned that the Qur'an was the primary source and that the sunna explains Qur'anic teachings, but did not give examples, such as the details the sunna gives about prayer, or say that they complemented each other. Often candidates wrote less detail about Qur'an and sunna and wrote more about *ijma* and *qiyas*.
- (b) Responses to this part varied from satisfactory to really good. Satisfactory answers would say that it was important in establishing new laws, without giving details. Those that expanded on this and gave details would give examples of new issues that have arisen, how new rulings have been made and the relevance of those rulings for Muslims now. Most gave examples using *ijma*.

Question 3

- (a) This was a popular question from the optional questions. Most of the candidates gave good, detailed accounts of the events at Ta'if. There were some candidates who wrote very briefly about this event.
- (b) Most of the candidates wrote general comments about being forgiving and patient. Those who gave good answers wrote about how Muslims can forgive those who have wronged them and gave examples from their lives, or wrote that this example of mercy is a good way to attract people to Islam and so Muslims should think about this when they interact with others.

Question 4

- (a) The answers to this question varied from satisfactory to very good. Those who gave satisfactory answers wrote about a few events in the Prophet's life, such as him being left an orphan, his trade journeys and his marriage to Khadija. Those who answered it well gave detailed and relevant information about the Prophet's life from his childhood to when he attained prophethood.
- (b) Most answers to this question were poor, suggesting that candidates misunderstood the question. Candidates often focused on the ignorance of the Quraysh and the fact that the Prophet had to deal with lots of abuse, which he dealt with patiently.

There were some good, thoughtful answers that said that Muslims face many distractions and problems today but they should not succumb to them; rather, they should be good examples of Islam, and also use modern tools such as the Internet for good, such as teaching or spreading Islam.

Question 5

- (a) Again, responses to this question ranged from poor to good. Some candidates gave a few general comments such as Abu Bakr being with the Prophet when he migrated, or that he believed the Prophet at the time of the night journey, but lacked the detail required. Some candidates wrote mainly about Abu Bakr at the time of the persecutions of the Muslims and how he set free slaves and was hurt himself, while a few wrote about his life as Caliph.

Those that gave good answers wrote about a range of events from Abu Bakr's life, expanding on them with relevant details.

- (b) This was answered satisfactorily, with most candidates giving general answers about maintaining a strong faith, being steadfast, spreading Islam and helping others.

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There were some good answers where candidates gave thoughtful examples, such as saying that Muslims should never hesitate to spend money to help the cause of Islam, therefore they can donate money to the education and support of Muslim scholars.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/12

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General Comments

Generally speaking, candidates were well prepared for this examination, with most answering all the questions required. Only a small number did not finish their answers or missed out a complete question. Overall, it was noted that the performance of the candidates was good for this session, with some improvement in the evaluation of material (AO2). However, a significant proportion of the candidature still misunderstands the purpose of AO2 and provides descriptions rather than evaluation.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was generally well answered. Where it was not well answered, candidates paraphrased the translation and wrote similar answers for both parts. It was also noted that some of the answers were very general in nature and did not apply specifically to the specified verses. Where it was well answered, candidates used their own words to describe the themes, offered a variety of themes from both suras, and gave good examples of the relevance of the themes to Muslims.

- (a) Sura 41.37 was reasonably well answered with candidates writing about the themes of *tawhid*, and, more importantly, elaborated on this, saying that it meant that God was the only one to create the sun and the moon, and that no-one else should be worshipped. Good candidates also wrote about the creation being signs of God for mankind, so that they get to know Him and so that they can form a link with Him.

Sura 1 was well answered, where candidates presented a number of themes: God being the Lord of creation, that He gives guidance especially in the form of the Qur'an and sunna, that He will preside over the Day of Judgement.

Sura 99 was sometimes well answered, but often general statements were given, which discussed the Day of Judgement with a lot of paraphrasing of the translation. Good answers addressed the responsibility humans have in looking after the earth or the justice that God will give when He gives people their accounts on the Last Day.

- (b) Although there has been an improvement in evaluating material, the answers to this part ranged from very good to mostly satisfactory.

Satisfactory answers tended to focus on reiterating what they had mentioned in part (a). The better answers gave examples of the practical uses of the themes for Muslims, e.g. saying that sura

Fatiha is a prayer that Muslims recite to ask for guidance; that they recite it every day in their prayers, so it is a communication with God; that the sun and the moon are created to guide and communicate with humankind and so Muslims should remember this and not worship anything else like money or jobs; that it shows humans the temporary nature of life and so they should spend more time praying and helping others, and less time being distracted by worldly things.

Question 2

- (a) This part was answered well. The majority of the candidates gave an account of the different stages, but many focused more on the first stage of compilation and less on the latter stages such as during the time of 'Uthman. Weaker candidates did not generally give in-depth description of the various stages.
- (b) Candidates' answers were satisfactory with some good ones. They mainly wrote in general terms about the Qur'an guiding Muslims to live a good life and giving them all the information they need. Some candidates misunderstood the question and wrote about the importance of the Qur'an, rather than the reasons for understanding it, e.g. that it is a source of law, therefore it has to be studied in detail to know how to apply the rulings correctly.

Question 3

- (a) This was a popular question from the optional questions. Most of the candidates gave good, detailed accounts of the events at Ta'if but fewer gave detailed accounts of the pledges of Aqaba. On occasion, the details of the pledges were lacking and the names of the figures involved were wrong. Some did not make a clear distinction that there were in fact two pledges. There was a general confusion on the number of people who made the pledges, or details and conditions of the actual pledges themselves.

There seemed to be great focus on the Muslims seeking refuge in Abyssinia and using this as a means to spread Islam. However, the question asks about the Prophet's activities in spreading Islam outside Makka - the Prophet did not migrate to Abyssinia.

- (b) Most of the candidates wrote about the Prophet's remarkable magnanimity towards the people of Ta'if after the treatment he received from them.

A few also mentioned his perseverance in giving *dawah*, even though the outcomes were meagre and how Muslims should persevere in doing *dawah*, despite the negative outcomes.

Many candidates wrote general comments about being forgiving and patient.

Question 4

- (a) This was also a popular question, and was well attempted by the candidates. However, many candidates focused on the events of Hira and less so those at Thawr. For those who mentioned Thawr, the information was not always wholly accurate. Many answers wrote more in detail about the events leading up to the incident in Thawr, and less about the actual incidence in the cave, the latter information being more relevant than the former for this question.
- (b) Most of the answers were good, and candidates understood that this experience increased the Prophet's faith in God and the confidence in his mission, and how it could have resulted in the end of his own life and the end of Islam consequently.

There were a few candidates who wrote about the importance of Abu Bakr's enduring support towards the Prophet. A few mistakenly wrote about the experience in Hira.

Weaker candidates merely mentioned that the incident of Thawr ensured that he was not killed and was able to continue with his mission.

Question 5

- (a) This was the least popular of the questions and proved to be quite challenging for the candidates, particularly in their knowledge of Abu Sufyan's life. However, there were a few candidates who managed to extract important events related to Abu Sufyan's life from their knowledge of *seerah*,

such as Heraclius interrogating him about the Prophet's character, his being conferred honour at the conquest of Makka by the Prophet or his encounter with his daughter, Umm Habiba, when he visited her in Madina.

The part on Khalid elicited either very good or quite poor responses. Those who gave good answers wrote about his role in the battle of Uhud, and his conversion and participation in Mu'ta were well brought out.

- (b)** On the whole, this part was generally not well answered, as little evaluation was given. Better candidates said that, since Abu Sufyan, who was one of the bitterest enemies of Islam, can have a change of heart, non-Muslims should be treated well.

Of those who answered less well, many were very unforgiving towards Abu Sufyan saying that he will go to hell, he is an enemy of Islam etc., hence missing the fundamental messages of forgiveness and mercy as prescribed by Islam.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/13

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Sura 114 was answered reasonably well, with candidates writing about God giving protection and that there are evils from the men and jinn/Satan, which are determined to attack the faith of a believer.

- (b) Although there has been an improvement in evaluating material, this part ranged from some very good answers to mostly satisfactory answers.

Satisfactory answers tended to focus on reiterating what they had mentioned in part (a). The better answers gave examples of the practical uses of the themes for Muslims, e.g. saying that sura Fatiha is a prayer that Muslims recite to ask for guidance, and also they recite it every day in their prayers so is a communication with God; that God has provided humans with food and shelter so they should not abuse it; that Muslims have no need to fear evil as God has provided them means for protection.

Question 2

- (a) This part was generally answered well; however, it often seemed that candidates knew the subject matter well, but failed to expand or develop the points they were making. So, for example, they mentioned that the Qur'an was the primary source and that the sunna explains Qur'anic teachings, but did not give examples, such as the details the sunna gives about prayer, or say that they complemented each other. Often candidates wrote less detail about Qur'an and sunna and wrote more about *ijma* and *qiyas*.
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- (b) Most of the candidates wrote general comments about being forgiving and patient. Those who gave good answers wrote about how Muslims can forgive those who have wronged them and gave examples from their lives, or wrote that this example of mercy is a good way to attract people to Islam and so Muslims should think about this when they interact with others.

Question 4

- (a) The answers to this question varied from satisfactory to very good. Those who gave satisfactory answers wrote about a few events in the Prophet's life, such as him being left an orphan, his trade journeys and his marriage to Khadija. Those who answered it well gave detailed and relevant information about the Prophet's life from his childhood to when he attained prophethood.
- (b) Most answers to this question were poor, suggesting that candidates misunderstood the question. Candidates often focused on the ignorance of the Quraysh and the fact that the Prophet had to deal with lots of abuse, which he dealt with patiently.

There were some good, thoughtful answers that said that Muslims face many distractions and problems today but they should not succumb to them; rather, they should be good examples of Islam, and also use modern tools such as the Internet for good, such as teaching or spreading Islam.

Question 5

- (a) Again, responses to this question ranged from poor to good. Some candidates gave a few general comments such as Abu Bakr being with the Prophet when he migrated, or that he believed the Prophet at the time of the night journey, but lacked the detail required. Some candidates wrote mainly about Abu Bakr at the time of the persecutions of the Muslims and how he set free slaves and was hurt himself, while a few wrote about his life as Caliph.

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ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/21

Paper 2

General Comments

On the whole, candidates who took this paper performed well. Candidates were well prepared, demonstrating their knowledge in Part (a) questions, and showing that they could evaluate and reach independent conclusions in Part (b). **Question 2** was perhaps most poorly done. The three optional questions all evenly attempted.

Question 1

In Part (a), when the candidates write about the teachings of the hadith, they should discuss the wider meaning as well to be able to reach the higher levels, e.g. in hadith 1, the wider meaning is to earn a lawful living. The achievement of honest earnings is encouraged in Islam through one's own efforts and the dignity of labour. Many answers were restricted by mentioning only earning one's living by manual labour alone. Likewise, for hadith 3, though the hadith is addressed to two individuals, the message it contains is a universal one and is for all those in positions of power and authority; this was brought out in very few answers. On the whole, well presented answers were seen, though mere repetition in Part (b) of the teaching of the hadith needs to be avoided.

Question 2

Confident responses were seen, especially for explaining the *isnad* and *matn* of hadiths. Some did not know what the terms *musnad* and *musannaf* were. As **Question 2** is a compulsory one, and always related to hadiths, candidates should be able to demonstrate familiarity with the subject matter. Those who knew the four terms were rewarded with high levels for their knowledge.

In Part (b), again, marks were lost by those who did not know what *musnad* and *musannaf* were; those who did, in the majority of responses, thought that the *musannaf* collections were most beneficial and gave good evaluative responses for their choice.

Question 3

Candidates clearly understood the question and went on to answer effectively the question, which was related to the causes of the revolt and the charges made against him. They wrote about his martyrdom as a conclusion, which was read as development in the answer. His appointment of relatives in the posts of governors and the burning of the copies of the Qur'an were points dealt with in more detail than the others.

For Part (b), different reasons were given for the lessons that Muslims could learn from his martyrdom, and many offered good evaluation and drew their own conclusions.

Question 4

This was a straightforward question, in which the candidates had to give the benefits of the daily *salat*. Most candidates did well in this part of the answer; the few who did less well chose only one or two benefits to write about. *Salat* has countless blessings; punctuality, perseverance, patience, *taqwa*, piety, humility, obedience, cleanliness, etc. Some candidates linked the benefits of praying five times a day in congregation and thus offered development to their point of promoting brotherhood; they got good levels even if they had not referred to too many other benefits of *salat*.

In Part (b) of this question, what was really being looked for was that God is all merciful and hence has given Muslims the option of *qada* prayers; as the fulfilment of the obligation to perform the five daily prayers is compulsory for all Muslims, God has given Muslims the opportunity to fulfil their obligation towards Him, rather than punish them for missing a prayer.

Question 5

The question asked for the benefits of fasting in the month of Ramadan; moral and spiritual benefits were specifically mentioned, but it was an open ended question, which asked candidates for benefits other than these two aspects. Candidates could have included the social and physical benefits in their answer as well, and many did.

In Part **(b)**, a variety of responses was seen, from sins being forgiven, to empathy with the poor, to physical fitness. All valid responses were duly credited.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/22

Paper 2

General Comments

Overall, candidates did not seem as well prepared as in some previous years, although they clearly understood the questions. This was especially the case in Part **(a)** questions, where a number seemed to lack the information required. Part **(b)** answers were noticeably better, and most managed to give creditable responses. Candidates, who were able to demonstrate evaluation skills, as well as subject knowledge, were able to score highly.

Question 1

All four hadiths were quite evenly attempted by the candidates, and there did not seem to be a favourite that was picked by a majority. In the first hadith, explanation of the teaching, a lot of paraphrasing was done, e.g. it was said 'we must be sincere to God, we must be sincere to his books...'; what is meant by sincerity was, largely, not brought out in the answers. When writing about the second hadith, a large majority said that for Muslims the world is a hell and, because unbelievers commit adultery and gamble, they are happy. That surely is not the teaching of the hadith, but rather that Muslims have to behave within the limits prescribed by Islam. They have to be mindful of their conduct. Adultery and gambling are frowned upon in other religions as well as Islam, so the understanding of the hadith has to reflect a broader scope. For the fourth hadith, a very literal understanding was shown; the broader meaning of the hadith is that all power lies with God and is a trust to all those in authority.

In Part **(b)**, many candidates repeated the teachings they had written about in Part **(a)**. However, the more able/better prepared candidates gave some good responses for which they were credited.

Question 2

Mixed responses were seen for Part **(a)** of this question. The question was asking the candidates to refer to the set hadiths in the syllabus and say what their teachings were about the conduct of Muslims in the community. Some candidates wrote about the *isnad* and *matn* of hadiths, some about the types of hadiths which was not what the question was asking. Better candidates referred to the set hadiths, and discussed and developed them in their answers. There were also some candidates who took the hadiths from **Question 1** only and used them in their answers; such responses were treated as relevant when they discussed it relevantly, and due marks were awarded. It should be emphasised that the question asked specifically about the teaching of the set hadiths, and candidates in the higher levels bracket restricted their answers to these.

Part **(b)** of this question was relatively well answered, with the majority reaching at least L2.

Question 3

This was a popular question, but again many candidates wrote a lot about what led to the battles and provided very few details of the two battles. Questions that could have been addressed include: who were the commanders in the battle of Yamama? Why did the first two fail, and who was then sent to bring victory to the Muslims? Who killed Musaylimah? What were the prominent dates? For the battle of Camel, we saw responses that said that 'Ali fought with non Muslims, or that it was Muawiya who fought 'Ali and of course the Kharijites. Salient points included: the number of soldiers on each side, 'Ali's effort to reach a negotiated settlement with Ayesha, the mischief of the rebels in starting the fight; Talha's and Zubayr's martyrdom; how the battle ended. Those who covered these points were credited appropriately. Part **(a)** answers are knowledge based, descriptive, where detail and development gets the mark. Personal viewpoints should be kept for Part **(b)** answers where, even if the answer is completely different from what is suggested in the Mark Scheme, marks can be earned if it is relevant.

In Part **(b)** answers, the vast majority wrote that the battle of Yamama was more significant as it established Islam firmly and led to the compilation of the Qur'an. Even candidates who did poorly in Part **(a)** managed to gain marks with the Part **(b)** answer.

Question 4

A good majority of candidates answered this question. Most wrote about how *hajj* was incumbent on those who could afford the journey and were in good health, but some struggled to add detail and development to the answer. It could have been said that *hajj* is compulsory for those Muslims who can afford the journey and their expenses whilst at *hajj* and also have enough funds to leave behind for their dependants and household until the pilgrim returns. It was rarely mentioned that danger to life owing to war in certain areas in or around the Holy land, or in one's own country, may free the person from the obligation of *hajj*. For the second part of the answer, restrictions in *ihram*, the candidates did better and managed a respectable total mark for Part **(a)**.

The Part **(b)** of this question was asking why some people are exempted by God, rather than who those people might be. Some very thoughtful answers were given, saying God does not want to over burden His creation with what is out of their scope of fulfilling; God's compassion and mercy was written about. The candidates who approached the answer from this point of view were the ones who got the higher levels. Some wrote about reasons for why people could not perform *hajj* and explained them, and got marks depending on how well they linked their answer to the question.

Question 5

This question asked the candidates to do two things, namely, to give the names of the messengers and the books they received, and to write about the message the books contained. For the first part, the majority knew the names of the books but, on occasion, mixed up the names of the prophets they were revealed to. As for the message they contained, the majority of candidates wrote that the message contained was that of *tawhid* and elaborated on that theme. A small minority went on to say that the message was also about the Day of Judgement and resurrection, accountability before God on the Last Day, and that the revealed books contained a code of morality and justice. For top levels, the candidates needed to have accuracy and detail and development in the answer.

What makes the Qur'an unique in the Part **(b)** question was something that brought out strong, good answers and the candidates wrote confidently about the reasons they felt the Qur'an was unique.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/23

Paper 2

General Comments

On the whole, candidates who took this paper performed well. Candidates were well prepared, demonstrating their knowledge in Part (a) questions, and showing that they could evaluate and reach independent conclusions in Part (b). **Question 2** was perhaps most poorly done. The three optional questions all evenly attempted.

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In Part **(b)**, a variety of responses was seen, from sins being forgiven, to empathy with the poor, to physical fitness. All valid responses were duly credited.