

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/11

Paper 1

General comments

Generally speaking, most candidates were able to answer all the questions required. Only a small number did not finish their answers or missed out a complete question. Overall the standard was good, although Examiners pointed out that whilst many of the general points were made in answers, quite often details were not there to develop the answer. Candidates also need to work on offering better evaluation for part (b) answers.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was reasonably well answered. Where it was weak, candidates paraphrased the translation and wrote similar answers for both parts, or wrote very little. Where it was good, candidates used their own words to describe the themes, offered a variety of themes from both suras, and showed good understanding of the knowledge they had presented.

- (a) Sura 6 was well answered with candidates writing about the themes of *tawhid*, and importantly elaborated on this saying that God has no family. Good candidates also wrote about God's power and that He knows everything and sees everything.

Sura 2 was not as well answered with most candidates retelling the story of Adam and Iblis. Good answers said that God gives knowledge where He wants and that He forgives people if they ask.

Sura 41 was similar in that many candidates paraphrased the translation provided and did not write about the themes in their own words. Better answers wrote about God creating signs for mankind and that it should only be Him who is obeyed and worshipped.

- (b) Although there were some good answers to this part, most candidates gave satisfactory answers.

Those that were able to offer evaluation wrote, e.g. that God knows and sees everything so they should remember this by being honest and treating others well.

Where candidates wrote about a theme they should try to apply their knowledge of it in today's context, e.g. if writing about *tawhid* they could say that it is important to remember God through regular prayer; by ensuring there are no pictures at home in front of the person praying; or that materialistic thoughts do not become modern day idols that distract from the attention of God.

Question 2

- (a) This question was generally well answered. Most candidates were able to provide a good outline of the revelation in the cave of Hira. Weaker candidates did not develop the points with relevant details, such as quoting the first revelation or what Khadija said or did when the Prophet narrated the event to her. Better candidates wrote about the conditions at the time of the Prophet's increasing seclusion, provided a detailed narrative about the Angel Jibril coming to the Prophet and how Khadija reacted to the news, and gave relevant quotations.

- (b) Part (b) proved challenging for many candidates, with some candidates not understanding the aim of the question.

Weaker answers mentioned that God giving the Qur'an to someone who could not read or write showed how He can make someone read if He wants, and did not provide reasons for the answer provided. Better answers wrote about the importance of poetry and language at that time which helped people see that someone who could not read or write could not produce this kind of work.

Question 3

- (a) This answer varied from being really well answered to being satisfactory. For those who answered it well, they were able to take two or three events from the Prophet's life, for each quality, and give details about how that event showed that quality. The details and development of each event were what enabled candidates to score well. Those answers that did not provide more than one or two events, or that mentioned the event without providing details of what happened and how it showed the Prophet's patience or trustworthiness, were not able to score highly.
- (b) Candidates tended to write about the importance of patience and trustworthiness in general, rather than why it was important for the Prophet to have that quality. Good answers were able say that the Prophet needed to be patient because all prophet's are tested and it takes a long time for people to accept the message, or that he had to be trustworthy so that people were able to have faith in his word when he brought the new message.

Question 4

- (a) Candidates gave reasonably good answers to this part, especially when writing about Abu Talib. Quite often candidates wrote well about one personality and less about the other. Many candidates did not write about or develop the story of Hamza and his martyrdom at the hands of Wahshi, but rather mentioned it in brief.
- (b) Most candidates answered this by saying that he did help strengthen the early Muslim community, but some then were unable to give reasons for their answer to allow good marks. Those that did give good reasons said that Abu Talib's support allowed the Prophet to carry on preaching his message as the Quraysh were not able to harm him while he was under Abu Talib's protection, or that he allowed the Muslims to stay in his gorge which protected them from harm.

Question 5

- (a) Candidates either wrote briefly about the Prophet narrating the verses to the scribes, or wrote mainly about the compilation at the time of the Caliphs. Those who answered it well wrote about the scribes, who they were and the duties they performed, including writing letters, that they wrote the verses on various materials and that the Prophet verified them.
- (b) For this part candidates tended to give a narration of the events surrounding the compilation of the Qur'an rather than the importance of the principles employed, e.g. compiling it in the dialect of Quraysh to ensure authenticity or checking written copies with those who had memorized the Qur'an.

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.

Candidates should be careful about labelling answers that have been continued on another sheet or somewhere else in the booklet.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/12

Paper 1

General comments

Generally speaking, most candidates were able to answer all the questions required. 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 some improvement in the evaluation of material (AO2). However, there are still a number of candidates who misunderstand the purpose of AO2 and provide descriptions rather than evaluation.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was generally well answered and candidates are improving their responses to this question. Where it was weak, candidates paraphrased the translation and wrote similar answers for both parts. Where it was good, candidates used their own words to describe the themes, offered a variety of themes from both suras, and showed good understanding of the knowledge they presented.

- (a) Sura 112 was well answered with candidates writing about the themes of *tawhid*, and importantly elaborated on this saying it meant God had no partners and no one else should be worshipped. Candidates with good responses also wrote about the meaning of God being unique and that there is no one like Him.

Sura 6 ranged from being well answered to average, where candidates simply told the story of Abraham and rephrased the translation. The better answers mentioned God's oneness and His power over things in creation, as well as the fact that He created everything which means that Muslims should worship only Him.

Sura 93 was similar in that many candidates wrote about the difficulties of the Prophet, rather than the themes of God's power, His help for those in need and being grateful.

- (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 avoiding *shirk* and being kind to orphans. Better answers mentioned details such as sura 112 being a means to purify faith, or sura 93 when Muslims are facing difficulties such as war, they should have patience and look to God for guidance. Where candidates wrote about a theme they should try to apply their knowledge of it in today's context, e.g. if writing about *tawhid* they could say that is important to remember God through regular prayer; by ensuring there are no pictures at home in front of the person praying; or that materialistic thoughts do not become modern day idols that distract from the attention of God.

Question 2

- (a) This question was generally well answered. Most candidates wrote about the function and purpose of the Qur'an and Sunna and the conditions when Sunna is implemented. These points were supported by relevant Qur'anic verses and hadith. Some of these candidates missed out on high marks because they stopped short of giving details of what the hadith said to elaborate on the Qur'anic ruling, or they did not provide enough examples. The best answers compared the authority of the Qur'an with that of the Sunna and, using developed examples, illustrated how the Sunna enhances the Qur'an but never contradicts it. These answers included accurate examples of both sources being used together and instances when Sunna is used alone.

Some candidates wrote about how *ijma'* and *qiyas* are related to the Qur'an and Sunna, rather than focussing on the primary sources.

- (b) Part (b) proved challenging for some candidates, with answers only giving one reason, or saying that they agree/disagree, but without being able to prove their point with reasonable arguments in support of their statement.

Those who answered it well discussed the preservation of the Qur'an for all times and that modern day situations can use *ijma'* and *qiyas*, derived from the Qur'an, to come up with new rulings. They also explained the idea that Muslims require the Qur'an more now than 1400 years ago to be able to connect to their faith and know what God wants from them. Those who thought it was not as relevant now gave reasons, for example, people now do not give the Qur'an the status it deserves or they are too immersed in worldly pursuits, although these points tended not to be as well developed.

Question 3

- (a) This was generally well answered by most candidates, and was a popular choice from the optional questions.

Weaker answers focused on the persecution of the Muslims, wrote about the migration to Abyssinia, or gave a brief description of the migration then went on to write at length about the construction of the mosque, etc. on arrival in Madina.

Good answers discussed the events of the migration in chronological order, the main personalities and their roles in the migration, and provided accurate and relevant Qur'anic quotations.

- (b) Where this was well answered, candidates wrote about the first mosques being a sign of the importance of prayer, that Muslims now had the freedom to worship which was denied in Makka, and that it was the focal point to unite the early community and promote Islam.

Question 4

- (a) This was the least popular of the optional questions and was answered reasonably well. Good answers described each battle in detail, mentioned the numerical aspect of each battle, gave accurate details about the main individuals involved and their roles, as well as providing the reasons for the battle and the outcomes.

Where it was not well answered candidates mixed up details of the battles and often wrote about one battle in depth, with very little about the other one. Regarding the battle of Mu'ta the majority of candidates incorrectly said that the Muslims won this battle.

- (b) This was reasonably well answered, with most candidates writing about Khaybar and saying that the Muslims had to fight to ensure stability. Few mentioned the financial gains from this campaign.

Question 5

- (a) This was a popular and well answered question. Where candidates scored highly they were able to focus the answer on the life of Khadija, rather than her being the wife of the Prophet. Those that wrote about her life before she met and married the Prophet provided a fuller answer.

- (b) This was generally well answered with most candidates attempting to offer details of how marriages now can be benefitted by the example of Khadija and the Prophet. Weaker answers only mentioned one point or gave a general answer about loving and looking after each other. Better answers picked out elements of their marriage and expanded on how they provided a good example, such as the man being younger than the woman should not get in the way of marrying someone pious and sincere, or that if men are finding their work stressful then their wife should offer support to him rather than criticizing him.

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.

Candidates should be careful about labelling answers that have been continued on another sheet or somewhere else in the booklet.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/21

Paper 2

General Comments

Part (a) answers are knowledge based description and detail and development is what enables the candidates to gain the higher levels. Many answers did not include high level description, detail or development. Part (b) tests candidates on their evaluative skills. In this area there was some success. There were a few scripts in which only Part (b) answers of **Questions 2 to 5** were attempted.

Question 1

Most candidates managed to give satisfactory responses to both parts of this question. There were some exceptional candidates though who showed a clear understanding of the teachings of the hadiths they attempted to answer and then in Part (b) effectively stated how Muslims could put the teachings of the hadiths into action. Hadith (iii) was paraphrased by some candidates rather than showing clear understanding.

Question 2

There were two parts to this question, how the compilers checked the biographies of the transmitter and why they thought it was important to do so. Candidates needed to address both these elements. Some answers did discuss the elements of a strong *isnad* but touched upon one or two points only without going into giving examples of how the compilers went about collecting the hadiths. Some went on to write about *musnad* and *musanaf* hadiths whilst others spoke of *matn* which was not relevant in this answer.

For Part (b) responses were mostly satisfactory, with occasional good responses in which candidates wrote about how authentic hadiths help Muslims practice the *sunna* of the Prophet and help Muslims to practice the pillars correctly.

Question 3

In answer to this question candidates needed to write about the four main false prophets that emerged during the caliphate of Abu Bakr, namely Al-Aswad al 'Ansi, Tulayha, Sajah and Musailimah. They needed to give brief biographies on each and write about who Abu Bakr sent to fight them, what the outcome of these battles was, dates and other such details. Musailimah was the most dangerous and the battle of Yamama fought against him was the most significant so more focus should have been on him. However candidates struggled to give the names of the four false prophets and instead of giving specifics of the battles and outcomes they wrote a generic line or two that Abu Bakr sent a force led by Khalid bin Waleed and they were defeated.

Part (b) was dealt with better and the candidates wrote about how, had Abu Bakr not defeated the false prophets, the teachings of the Qur'an would have been corrupted and other such examples.

Question 4

This was not a very popular question. It was attempted by a few candidates who knew the facts of this battle, the key players were mentioned, the length of the battle was given, and the date was mentioned. The facts of the battle were given but they were not developed so the top levels were not attained by many.

Many candidates gave general answers for Part (b) e.g. we learn that he was a brave man, some said it teaches us never to waiver from what we believe in. Candidates could have been more specific and said something such as 'Umar went on conducting the affairs of the state even though there was a threat to his life because he believed that God is the giver of life and death and so Muslims should learn to put their trust

in God or that he did not have security guards around him and was always accessible to the common man which could be a lesson for modern day rulers. There are many approaches to this answer.

Question 5

The focus of this answer should have been on social justice which Islam promotes. Many of the candidates chose one or two pillars and wrote about how they impact on the community instead of covering all five pillars. Some good points were made but again the answers lacked substance which was needed to get the top levels.

Candidates answered Part **(b)** better.

Conclusion

Part **(a)** for all the questions is testing knowledge of the topics. It is the detail and development of that knowledge which leads to the top levels. For the Part **(b)**s the candidates did better.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/22

Paper 2

General Comments

Candidate performance was at a good standard. **Question 3** was popular with the majority of the candidates attempting it. For **Question 5 (a)** it was noticed that a large number of candidates for part **(i)** wrote about the various forms of *jihad*. The question asked them to write about armed warfare so information about other forms was irrelevant.

Question 1

Hadith **(iii)** was the least popular amongst the hadiths given but those who attempted it explained the teaching and the action well.

In Part **(a)** of this question candidates needed to explain the teachings Muslims gain from these hadiths, for hadiths **(ii)** and **(iv)** the majority did this successfully but many simply paraphrased the content of hadith **(i)**. To gain the higher levels candidates need to bring out the teachings of the hadiths in their own words, not just paraphrase.

In Part **(b)** answers some candidates tend to repeat the teachings and understanding of the hadiths they have written about in Part **(a)** rather than writing about how those teachings can be applied to everyday life. Again for hadith **(i)** paraphrasing was used rather than application and the use of examples from Islamic history or the present times.

Question 2

Good responses were seen for Part **(a)** of this question and the majority wrote about the *isnad* and *matn* of hadiths and went on to give examples of how the compilers travelled to distant places to collect hadiths. Some candidates also brought in the categories of hadiths and linked them to the *isnad* and *matn* of hadiths to develop their answers which was credited if relevant.

Part **(b)** was also well answered and a variety of reasons were given for why it was important for the compilers to apply the rules for selecting authentic hadiths. The reasons ranged from how these rules prevented the *ummah* from deviating from the correct path prescribed by the Prophet, to creating unity amongst Muslims, to keeping the teachings of Islam pure.

Question 3

This was the most popular question of the 3 optional ones. Candidates wrote good accounts of the problems that riddled 'Ali's caliphate, from the change of governors to the battles of Camel and Siffin and the problem with the Kharijites. It was the detail and development in the answer that gained the higher levels. In some answers there was confusion over names in the battles e.g. they said that Mu'awiya fought 'Ali in the battle of Camel with Ayesha. There was also some confusion over who the Kharijites were, some said they were Jews others non-Muslims, they were neither. The battles of Camel and Siffin were the first civil wars of Islam and a realistic understanding of this fact is needed.

In Part **(b)** some wrote of the battle of Camel as being the most significant problem and others chose Siffin. A good number identified the Kharijites as being the most significant problem 'Ali faced. It was when evaluation was offered as to why the problem they had chosen was significant that the higher levels could be achieved.

Question 4

Mixed responses were given for Part (a) of this question. Candidates wrote about sins being forgiven, developing a closer bond with Allah and it creating equality and brotherhood amongst the Muslims. These were reasonable points to make with candidates achieving a good level. Those who achieved the top levels wrote about how the economy also flourishes, that problems facing the Muslim countries can be discussed and alliances can be formed amongst say visiting heads of state which could help solve the problems facing the *ummah*. Some candidates wrote about how the various acts of Hajj teach the pilgrims about the faith and its history which was a relevant point. Some candidates wrote only about the rites of Hajj which was not relevant.

Everyone who knew the *talbiya* gave a satisfactory response. Some excellent answers went on to say that in the *talbiya* the pilgrim confirms accepting God's invitation and responds to it.

Question 5

It is important that candidates read the question carefully. In (i) of Part (a) instead of writing about the Prophet's teaching on armed warfare which could have included not initiating the fight; not harming women, children and the old; not cutting down fruit bearing trees or torturing the prisoners of war they wrote the first hadith from the examination paper and explained it or wrote on the different types of *jihad* which was not relevant. Part (ii) was answered with more relevant information.

In Part (b) there were mixed responses with candidates agreeing and disagreeing on whether the Prophet's teachings on *jihad* were relevant today. Many candidates wrote about how Muslims had moved away from practicing the teachings of the Qur'an and the Prophet today and went on to say that for that reason the teachings of the Prophet on how to conduct *jihad* had become irrelevant.

Conclusion

Candidates need to read and understand the questions before launching into the answer. A moment of reflection can prove most useful. It must be said that the candidates are becoming more and more confident answering the Part (b) evaluative questions and some very intelligent answers were given.