

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/11 Paper 1
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Key messages

Parts of a question must be clearly labelled.

An essay length answer is required for **part (a), Questions 2 to 5**. Most of the answers seen were brief and concise whereas to reach the higher levels that are available, demonstration of comprehensive, extensive and highly accurate knowledge is required.

General comments

Overall, the questions differentiated well. Candidates were able to show clear understanding of the questions' demands. Responses showcased the ability to argue and evaluate though, in many cases, the information and knowledge provided was very limited.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Many candidates relied on paraphrasing. Some candidates discussed the themes found in the passages. For the first two passages, candidates were able to say that the prophets were helped/looked after by God, given guidance and the ability to walk the path of righteousness along with knowledge and wisdom. For the last passage, candidates wrote about God's relation with creatures and control and protection against seen and unseen forces.

Where specific themes or underlying ideas are discussed, higher levels are achieved. Paraphrasing the passages or giving general information achieves the lower levels.

- (b) Inviting people to think about God's creations, forbidding *shirk*, strengthening belief in God's messengers and their message, creating trust in God's miracles and seeking His protection are some ideas explored by the candidates. Specific themes from the passage selected were referred to and their significance in belief and action was considered in good answers.

Some responses, however, were repeating themes and made simple suggestions about how Muslims should act in their daily lives. Even when good suggestions were made, elaboration was missing, limiting the levels.

Question 2

- (a) Candidates were asked to write about the description of God using *Ayat al-Kursi* and Sura *Ikhlas*. As the question wrongly identified Sura *Ikhlas* as Sura 114, answers that used Sura *Nas* (Sura 114) were equally accepted.

Excellent responses were able to take several concepts from both passages, such as God's omniscience, omnipotence, His oneness, and His uniqueness and elaborate them while using quotes from the Qur'an to support their answer. Numerous aspects of God's nature were covered in well written answers.

Some candidates wrote answers about aspects of the passages but did not elaborate. Others paraphrased the passages without any elaboration.

- (b) Two distinct approaches were observed in the answers to this question, some candidates took different aspects of God's nature from the passages under discussion and talked about how that information can be used by Muslims to make connection with God stronger. Others talked about the Suras overall and suggested ways in which these passages can be a useful reminder of God in day-to-day life.

Some responses showed little understanding of the question or gave a very simplistic answer based on some general suggestions about a Muslim's duties towards God.

Question 3

- (a) This was a popular choice of question, asking candidates to write about persecutions faced by the Prophet (pbuh) in Makka. Better answers were able to provide in depth information covering names of the prominent Quraysh leaders who were involved in oppression as well as details of what the Prophet (pbuh) endured. Details about social boycott, offers of enticement as well as coercion were also given by excellent candidates along with the reaction of the people of Taif during the Prophet's visit there.
- (b) At Taif, the example of forgiveness and refusal to punish people despite their actions by the Prophet (pbuh) was a popular choice. Candidates talked about how Muslims can learn lessons of patience and forgiveness. Some candidates gave a detailed descriptive account of the whole event whereas reference should have been sufficient, emphasis should have been placed on what lessons are to be learned and examples of how Muslims today can follow these examples in their own lives.

Question 4

- (a) Most candidates were able to identify the construction of the mosque, creation of the Brotherhood, as well as the Treaty of Madina as the main steps towards creating a united Muslim community. It was the depth of detail within each point which differentiated a good response from an average one. Better responses were able to give account of how the mosque was constructed and the purposes it served. Similarly, details about the Brotherhood, specifying how it was created, names of the pairs created, particulars of financial assistance offered to the immigrants and their reactions, were given in the better responses.
- (b) Good responses clearly identified measures that can serve to make Muslim communities united, such as helping immigrants and providing moral and social, as well as economic, support to new arrivals. Some candidates referred to the Charter of Madina and talked about how Muslims can ensure protection and freedom of religion for minorities living in Muslim societies to help unite communities.

Some candidates provided a basic list of suggestions without much elaboration. Such responses achieved mid-range levels.

Question 5

- (a) This was the least popular question, those attempting it were able to identify the main events of the lives of the two uncles of the Prophet (pbuh). Support for the Prophet (pbuh) and services to Islam offered by the two were the main focal point of the answers. For candidates to achieve the higher levels, detailed accounts were required.
- (b) Supporting one's family even when you disagree on some points or looking after orphans within the family were some of the lessons candidates wrote about in their answers. More insightful responses were able to elaborate the points made and draw some strong conclusions.

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Paper 0493/12 Paper 1
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Key messages

Question 1 part (a) requires a description of the main themes of the passages selected while **part (b)** asks candidates to show the significance of those themes in the lives of Muslims. Some responses provided paraphrasing in **part (a)** and some common lessons in **part (b)** while some gave a general note on God and His qualities irrespective of whether that specific quality is discussed in the passage selected or not. Other **part (b)** answers were descriptive. Strong, realistic and sound arguments supported by examples, where possible, make a good **part (b)** answer.

General comments

Candidates showed better understanding of the demands of the questions. Answers to **part (b)** also showed some improvement. However, these responses need to be less descriptive accounts and focus more on showing an understanding of the information through evaluation, sound arguments and exemplification.

Overall, the questions differentiated well; more able candidates provided responses that had extensive and accurate information in **part (a)** answers, while **part (b)** answers demonstrated a good understanding of the questions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Some candidates paraphrased the passages, while others repeated the translation; a few described the underlying themes. Sura 1 and Sura 112 were the most popular choices wherein candidates were able to talk about God's relationship with humans, such as humans needing guidance from God, God's power over His creation and His qualities of mercifulness for Sura 1 while His absolute nature and His ability to exist on His own without any relationship to anyone for Sura 112. Sura 93 was the least popular nonetheless, better responses talked about God's assistance to His prophets and special instructions of good treatment for the vulnerable in society.
- (b) Some responses gave simple suggestions about Muslim beliefs and acts based on the teachings of the passages selected, such as believing in one God, not associating any partners, or praising/worshipping Him. Others repeated the themes/teachings. Better answers, however, referred to specific themes and talked about how they impact the beliefs and actions of Muslims.

Question 2

- (a) **Question 2 (a)** asked candidates to describe the process of the preservation of the Qur'an after the Prophet (pbuh). Many were able to provide significant details of the preservation and standardisation of the Qur'an during Abu Bakr and Uthman's Caliphate. Excellent responses quoted from the personalities involved in the preservation from the historical accounts and gave extensive description of the processes involved in the preservation along with the names of the people that played significant roles.
- (b) This question was answered well, overall. Better answers highlighted all the gains associated with the accessibility of the Qur'an in different forms, focusing particularly on the benefits of the internet which provides a wide range of services to Muslims, in addition to easy accessibility such as provisions of translation, Qirat and Tafseer, making understanding and memorization easier. Some

candidates talked about different forms the Qur'an is available in, without discussing the benefits. Better answers gave several advantages, including easy accessibility.

Question 3

- (a) Candidates showed a good understanding of the demands of the question by selecting relevant and accurate information and presenting it in a precise and focused manner. Excellent responses were able to point to several incidents before prophethood that were indicative of the Makkans' behaviour towards the Prophet (pbuh). Such responses were not limited to his titles, keeping belongings and the black stone incident only, rather candidates referred to his reputation in business dealings and testimonies of several Makkans about his impeccable character. For the second part, specific details of the main oppressors and the persecution carried out by them individually as well as those committed collectively, were stated in detail. Some candidates wrote about how the Prophet (pbuh) responded to or reacted to persecution; this was not relevant.
- (b) Many candidates wrote about why the Quraysh trusted the Prophet (pbuh) with their belongings. Only a few could explain why their continued trust in the Prophet (pbuh) was significant, such as it showed that they did not distrust his character, the Quraysh opposed him due to their own reservations, not because the Prophet's teachings were wrong, and it sets an example for Muslims to be honest to even their worst enemies.

Question 4

- (a) This question was less popular. Some excellent answers were seen covering the early lives of Hassan and Hussain, their services during the Rashidun caliphate and finally the last days of their lives with particular emphasis on the incident of Karbala. Responses were able to offer details of the significant events from the lives of the Prophet's grandsons.
- (b) Some answers offered deep insights into lessons that can be learned from Hussain, including standing by what is right and opposing injustice, even if it means sacrificing your life. Patience and endurance with unwavering trust in God are other lessons that were mentioned. Many, however, gave an answer focusing more on what Hussain did, and then drawing a general lesson from it by suggesting, 'Muslims should have faith in God too' and 'face difficulties with steadfastness'.

Question 5

- (a) Aisha was the most popular choice of those attempting this question, followed by Hafsa. Candidates were familiar with Aisha's life events. Her youth, beauty, closeness to the Prophet (pbuh) and services to Islam were highlighted. For Hafsa and Sawda, the backgrounds of their previous marriages, marriage to the Prophet (pbuh), services to him and to Islam were mentioned. Accuracy, precision and depth of information took responses to the higher levels, whereas generic information with some specific events from the lives of the wives chosen achieved the mid-range levels.
- (b) Many candidates talked about how wives must look after their household and family, including their husbands. Better answers were able to say how women can be inspired to get, as well as impart, education, take an active part in social and political spheres of life and take up leadership roles.

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Paper 0493/21
Paper 2

Key messages

It is important to read the question and understand its requirements and answer all aspects of it.

General comments

Candidates did well in this session. Some very good **Part (b)** responses were seen showing good understanding of the topic being asked about.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Candidates did well in this compulsory question. Hadith # 18 was the least popular Hadith amongst the 4 selected for this paper. Hadith # 8 was one Hadith candidates struggled with in previous sessions. This session however, it was answered well by the majority of candidates who selected it. Candidates understood and expressed the teaching given in the Hadith that all those believers who are engaged in righteous acts and die whilst pleasing or with the intent of pleasing God are counted amongst martyrs.

For Hadith # 20 it could perhaps be explained that the teaching given in it is that everything one has is God given and that actions without good intentions are meaningless and that a believer's relationship with God is based on piety.

In **Part b** of this answer candidates gave good examples of how the teachings given in **Part a** could be put into action. If the teachings are clearly understood, then it is easier for candidates to express themselves by saying how they can be acted upon.

Question 2

This question was about how Qur'an and Hadith are used in formulating Islamic law. A small minority of candidates did not understand the requirement of the question and wrote about the four categories of Hadiths. There were some who understood the question but gave a few relevant examples of how Qur'an and Hadith both are used in making law but failed to expand on how. An answer for example would say Qur'an says to establish prayer but the Hadith of the Prophet (pbuh) tells believers how to pray. This is correct but in Levels marking more development of the above is needed to get to the higher mark within a level or to get to the next level.

Those candidates who gave relevant examples and references as well as prophetic Hadiths and quoted verses from the Suras to develop their answer achieved the higher levels. Also, in a question on Islamic law making it was important that candidates gave references not just with regards to religious practice but covered a range of topics/areas where the Qur'an and Hadith are used together to formulate law e.g. rules of inheritance, fasting, prayers, theft, usury etc.

Part (b) asked the candidates to write about the importance of *ijma* in present times. When examples of *ijma* were given, they had to be supported with reasons to show how the *umma* benefitted by its practice or how it could be disadvantaged by not having a certain rule passed by *ijma*.

It is important for candidates to give opinions to engage with the question in **Part b** and present reasoning that demonstrates their understanding of the topic.

Question 3

For this **Part (a)** question the candidates needed to encapsulate the main events of Abu Bakr's caliphate which established his caliphate. Starting with his humility which was reflected in his inaugural speech to his short caliphate being distinguished by two main concerns: to continue to send the Syrian expedition and to put down the *ridda* wars which included accounts of the false prophets, non-payment of *zakat* by some tribes, rebellions and how he dealt with them. All of which could have been included in the answer.

Candidates could have written about his administrative reforms e.g. setting up of the *shura*, *bait ul maal*. His battles with the Byzantines and Persians could have been mentioned and how the compilation of the Qur'an helped strengthen and unify the *umma* could have been seen as an act that established his caliphate more firmly.

Many candidates wrote about the Syrian expedition led by Usama, the wars with the false prophets but did not mention the administrative reforms or his military successes which established his caliphate. In a broad question details of every event are not expected but candidates need to cover all the main events broadly and develop some of them. It is the coverage of points made and their development that determined the final mark.

Part (b)

One achievement had to be selected and the candidate needed to give their opinion on why they felt it was the most significant. Writing about more than one does not achieve higher levels. The better supported choice is taken as the answer. Most candidates for this part answer wrote about the compilation of the Qur'an as his most significant achievement.

Some chose defeating the false prophets as the most important achievement of Abu Bakr's caliphate. Whichever the choice when supported with sound reasoning marks were awarded.

Question 4

There was a lot of content that could have been covered in response to this **Part (a)** question. That prophets were sent to convey God's message to humanity, the number of prophets sent, their character and nature, their miracles, names of the books that were revealed to them, as role models, highlighting the first and the last Prophet (pbuh), for example.

Some answers were too brief, others covered more points. The better candidates were able to show their knowledge and bring in content and develop it for a 10-mark essay question.

Part (b) required the candidates to give their personal opinions on why prophets were chosen from within their own communities. Some sound reasoning was seen in this part answer and candidates did well.

Question 5

This question asked for a descriptive account of oneness of God (*tawhid*). Candidates needed to discuss all three aspects of *tawhid*, unfortunately quite a few only wrote about the oneness of the Lordship of God and did not cover oneness in worship of God and oneness of the names and attributes of God.

Part (b) was well done. Candidates produced answer that showed understanding of how the signs in nature make belief in God stronger and fill a believer's heart with faith.

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Paper 0493/22 Paper 2
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Key messages

It is of utmost importance that the candidates read the question carefully and understand what is required in the answer before starting to write their response. At times, some candidates did not write answers to the questions that were actually set.

General comments

Overall the candidates did well. Legibility is at times an issue and candidates need to be mindful that their scripts are read and therefore make an effort to write clearly. **Question 4** asked about how Muslims could practice peaceful *jihad* in their daily lives but many, despite the instruction given, wrote about fighting (*qital*). No marks are given for irrelevant parts of the answer, so it needs to be impressed upon candidates that they need to answer what they are being asked and not put down pre-prepared answers on topics.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

All four Hadiths were quite evenly attempted by candidates. What candidates must not do in their answers is paraphrase.

In **Part (a)** candidates had to write about the teaching given in the Hadith, they must be mindful that in this part that is what they do and that they do not develop their answer by including actions in **Part (a)**. Hadith #1 was a challenge in this regard. The simple teaching here was to be sincere to Islam in belief and action and that all actions had to be backed by sincere faith for them to be meaningful. Many candidates went on to write about how they could be sincere to the elements given in the Hadith which was really a **Part (b)** answer. Hadith #5 is not about *zakat*. Charity in this Hadith refers to *sadaqa* and these distinctions are important to be aware of, candidates need to engage with and understand the teachings given in Hadiths and not rely on the translation given in the question paper to base their answer upon.

Part (b) responses must be restricted to how the teachings of the selected Hadiths could be acted upon. If as in certain Hadiths, such as Hadith #5, certain actions are given in the content of the Hadith, candidates must use examples other than the ones given. **Part (b)** answers need to reflect the understanding of the candidates.

The better prepared candidates were able to show good knowledge of teachings given in the Hadiths for **Part (a)** and displayed an equally good understanding of how those teachings could be acted upon in **Part (b)**. To get to the top levels the distinction between teaching and action must be clearly made in both parts.

Question 2

This compulsory question required candidates to choose any 4 **set** Hadiths (from the syllabus) and to say how Muslims should act upon them in daily life. Many candidates understood the word **set** to mean the Hadiths given in **Question 1**. They were not disadvantaged for doing so if the responses were relevant to the question. There was repetition in their answer as two of the Hadiths had been already selected by them and answered. A range of Hadiths related to individual conduct of Muslims could have been referred to such as Hadiths 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 18. Some candidates did not write about four as asked and referred to one or two Hadiths.

Part (b) asked about communal benefits. Many wrote about personal benefits not communal benefits.

The importance of reading the question and understanding it before starting to write an answer cannot be emphasised enough.

Question 3

Part (a) Candidates in response to this question needed to write about the administrative reforms 'Umar introduced as caliph and how those reforms made the caliphate prosperous and well run thus improving the lives of the citizens.

Most of the candidates who answered this question wrote about 'Umar's reforms but did not go on to say how the reforms impacted the caliphate and improved the lives of the people. Some candidates wrote about 'Umar's role in the compilation of the Qur'an which had no relevance to the reforms he introduced. Those who had come prepared did well in this part answer.

Part (b) The question was very specific and asked students what 'Umar's actions **after his attack** said about his character.

- The strength of his character.
- His love for the Prophet (pbuh).
- His sense of duty until the very end.

Above are some points that could have been written about and developed. Some candidates did do just that and got to the top levels in this part answer. Some candidates gave general comments linked to his character after the attack on his life. Some confused 'Umar with 'Uthman and recounted the martyrdom of the third caliph.

Question 4

Part (a) Some candidates were able to write about the way peaceful *jihad* can be carried out by Muslims in their daily lives. Some gave Hadith # 6 from the syllabus: *Whoever of you sees an evil action...* to explain peaceful *jihad*. *Jihad* of the sword or *qital* was not relevant to the question, this was not required in the answer and was not read as development. When writing about physical *jihad* being conducted peacefully candidate could have given *hajj* or fasting as examples.

Part (b) Some good answers were seen for this part of the question and many candidates showed a good understanding of how peaceful *jihad* benefits Muslims in their daily life. Some candidates did write about armed warfare and if it was relevant it was read as part of the answer.

Question 5

Part (a) When writing about Muslim belief in life after death and the Day of Judgement many did not focus on what happens immediately after death such as the questioning in the grave by *Munkir* and *Nakeer*, mini judgement, *barzakh*. Some gave good descriptive accounts of the Day of Judgement, quoting *Sura Zilzaal* and others. Others primarily focused on heaven and hell. Very few gave a comprehensive answer covering all the elements that were needed for a comprehensive Level 4 answer.

Part (b) Some good answers were seen but others wrote basic points and did not develop them. Mixed responses were given for this part answer.