

ISLAMIC STUDIES

<p>Paper 2068/12 History and Scriptures</p>

Key messages

- It is important that candidates read the questions carefully before answering them.
- It is important that candidates make themselves familiar with the rubric, so they know how many questions to answer and from which sections.
- Many candidates were able to provide an outline of the general points of an answer. They could improve their responses by providing more detail and elaboration of the points.

General comments

There was a small number of entries this series and overall, candidates performed well with some very good answers. Most candidates made a good attempt to answer the questions they selected, and very few candidates answered questions from the wrong section.

For **Section A**, candidates knew about early aspects of pre-Islamic Arabian life but needed to include more key details or focus their answers more on the aspect required by the question. **Question 2** was more popular than **Question 1**.

For **Section B**, candidates demonstrated good knowledge when answering their chosen question. Both questions were popular choices with slightly more candidates choosing **Question 4** over **Question 3**.

For **Section C**, candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the teachings of the passage or Hadith, though development of the second aspect of the question tended to be missing. **Question 5** was a much more popular question to answer than **Question 6**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates were able to provide two points that impressed Khadija. Few candidates elaborated on the points, which was necessary for a successful answer.
- (b) Few candidates wrote about the Prophet's relationship with Abu Talib and the care that he provided that helped the Prophet (pbuh), such as being loved in his family and teaching him about trade. Other candidates were able to give a little information about how Abu Talib looked after the Prophet (pbuh) but did not provide the necessary details.
- (c) This question was reasonably well answered. There were some good responses about protecting relatives and offering support to them.

Question 2

- (a) This question was well-answered.
- (b) This was well answered with most candidates knowing how women and slaves were treated and being able to give examples of that treatment. Candidates knew that women were treated as though they were objects that could be traded or inherited like property or animals and that women

were also used to pay off debts. They also knew that slaves were often treated cruelly, being punished by their masters at will and, like women, they were regarded as goods/possessions rather than human beings. Most candidates gave well balanced answers covering slaves, women and children.

- (c) This question was well answered overall, with responses saying that the lives of women did improve because they were considered equal to men in terms of faith and they were to be treated well. Some candidates could have improved their answers by offering more evaluation rather than giving a purely descriptive answer. For example, answers could also have been improved by offering another opinion, e.g. the culture of treating women badly was deeply embedded in society, and so even though Islam brought rights for women, it was not always easy for people to change and to implement these rights.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) This was well answered overall, with most candidates being able to give two points on the Prophet's character. The most successful responses elaborated well on those points.
- (b) This question was answered well, and there were a few excellent answers. The best answers provided a range of detailed information about the Prophet (pbuh) being taken by Jibril, having his heart washed, leading the prophets in prayer, and then good descriptions of the people he met on his ascent to the heavens. Weaker responses included the Prophet's journey but did not provide details.
- (c) There was a mix of answers for this question. Most candidates were able to say that good friendship is about loyalty, but usually did not expand on that. A few only described the friendship between the Prophet (pbuh) and Abu Bakr.

Question 4

- (a) This was very well answered with most candidates being able to identify four points that made the Quraish angry.
- (b) This question was very well answered. Candidates knew the main points of the battle and were able to provide details too. Fewer gave details about the Prophet (pbuh) being injured or Hamza being killed, but generally there was enough information and detail to produce successful responses.
- (c) Most candidates were able to give a general answer about obeying the Prophet (pbuh) for success and generally following Islam. There were some good points made in more successful answers such as 'don't be disheartened if you initially fail and the forgiveness can help people move on and get better.'

Section C

Question 5

- (a) This was by far the more popular question in this section, with answers ranging from average to excellent. Most candidates were able to provide an outline of the main teachings of Sura Fateha and a brief mention of its use in the five daily prayers. Better responses provided a commentary on each verse and gave examples of it being used a prayer, e.g. being used to ask for help and guidance and being used as a *rukya*/healing from different ailments.
- (b) Answers to this question were good with candidates giving examples of how they can use the teachings to be more responsible for their actions. Examples were that they can repent instead of having despair when they commit sins, that they are servants of God so should remember their place and not be arrogant and that they have to monitor themselves and their behaviour as they know they will be accountable for their actions.

Question 6

- (a) There were mixed responses to this question. Candidates who answered it well were able to say that controlling anger is a strength and that it should be controlled to avoid indulging in sins which is why the message was repeated. Weaker responses were quite general about not getting angry to avoid sins, without any elaboration on it.
- (b) Answers to this part were generally good, with candidates engaging well with the question, giving examples of ways they could control their anger such as drinking water or sitting down, or even seeking refuge with God by saying, 'I seek refuge with God from the accursed Shaytan.'

ISLAMIC STUDIES

<p>Paper 2068/22 Development, Sources, Beliefs and Observances</p>

Key messages

- For AO1, candidates would benefit from providing a few more details and quotations to support their answers. Referring to a Qur'an or Hadith quotation was an excellent way to support a good answer.
- For AO2, most candidates were able to make some kind of discussion, but some repeated too much knowledge from the previous part. It is important that AO2 responses are evaluative, for example by providing different points of view.
- As with previous years, specifically addressing the focus of the question is essential and something candidates could improve upon.

General comments

There was a small entry for this series and overall, most candidates produced good answers to the set questions.

In **Section A**, the question about 'Umar was by far the more popular; in **Section B** the question about the Hadith and Qur'an was most popular; and in **Section C** candidates chose roughly equally between the two options.

Candidates could improve their knowledge on some of the syllabus topics, especially for **Section C** such as holy books and birth rituals. Candidates could also improve on focusing their responses on the question set, rather than writing about a topic in general.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) 'Umar's entry was a specific part of his rule, and candidates were required to focus on this. Many did so, but others wrote about 'Umar's accession in general. It is important to focus on the question. Marks were given for points made as well as elaboration: it was not necessary to make four separate points. The strongest responses were able to add details such as that the entry was peaceful, with negotiation for handover to the Muslims.
- (b) Most candidates did refer to 'Umar's humility and knew many details to support their answers, making this one of the strongest responses. His visitations during the night, wearing rags and checking on the state of the poor people in the city, were much quoted. Some candidates knew how 'Umar ruled and could give many of the details, but without specifically pointing out his humility.
- (c) Weaker answers made one or two points about 'Umar being a good leader, without drawing out the significance of this. Stronger answers explained that 'Umar's example was significant in inspiring others with his faith and humility. This example could then be put into place by other rulers. Some made the point that 'Umar prioritised Islam and put matters of faith above money, something which other leaders might learn from today. Another way of opening discussion was to note how Muslim

communities today might mention 'Umar, in Islamic sermons, in daily life when referring to religious practice and so on, and use this as a way to start of discussion about his significance.

Question 2

- (a) This question was well answered overall. A list of four groups was an acceptable in answer to this question. Groups creditable included women, children, elderly people, monks or religious people.
- (b) Khalid ibn al-Walid was a commander who helped organise the army and keep people loyal to Abu Bakr. He took an important role in expanding and maintaining the state for the Caliph. Candidates knew well about the main threats to the state from the false prophets. Good answers needed to point out that it was Khalid ibn al-Walid who was dispatched to deal with them. The strongest answers gave details of how he did so, in the case of Tulaiha, Musailama and Sajah in particular. It was Khalid who was in charge and victorious at the Battle of Yamama, so details of this were also relevant. Further, Khalid led campaigns against the Persians and in Syria. The strongest responses gave the most comprehensive accounts whereas weaker ones gave less detail, covering only one or two points outlined above.
- (c) Pointing out the background and the establishment of Muhammad's governance in Medina was relevant here, which Abu Bakr followed on from. It was the city which was the focus of Muslim rule and many companions lived here. This was important in that they support both Abu Bakr's rule as well as religious scholarship and ensuring the Muslim community stayed on the straight path – on matters including belief in Prophethood and payment of zakat, both of which were challenged at this time. The strongest answers pointed out how the city set the context and provided the support for Abu Bakr's reign in line with the Sunnah left by Muhammad (pbuh), most of which was based here.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) This question was very well answered by most candidates. Weaker responses copied the 'very sound' detail from the question, which could not be credited, although explanation or use of other words to show the meaning was credited.
- (b) A key point about this question was the word 'together', so candidates who were able to bring out this interplay between both sources in their use gave the strongest responses. Weaker responses tended to write two separate paragraphs, one about the Qur'an and the other about the Hadith, not always pointing out any links between their use. Strong answers mentioned specific examples, most commonly prayer (salah) which draws on the Qur'an's general command and words of the Qur'an in recitation, practised with standing, bowing and prostrating in the manner of the Prophet (pbuh) as detailed in his Hadith. Some candidates explained legal issues, how to use both sources to derive Islamic legal rulings (shariah), using the Qur'an first as the word of God, and then the Hadith to show how this is put into practice, often with specific detail.
- (c) This question could be discussed in a range of settings, with many candidates choosing to refer to Islamic knowledge. In the modern day with so many sources available, such as on the internet, Muslims might find it important to always check sources of knowledge with a scholar they know who is trusted as a reliable verifier of traditions. The importance needed to be highlighted in answers: or the consequences of not checking being the other side of the coin.

Question 4

- (a) The life of Prophet Yusuf (AS) was well known amongst candidates. Details of any signs were credited, such as the prostration of moon and stars to Yusuf (AS). Ya'qub's (his father) thoughts also counted as a sign. His dreams, as well as his action to protect Yusuf (AS) from harm, were signs that Yusuf (AS) might soon become important. Ya'qub (AS) also interpreted traditions from Ibrahim (AS) that his offspring would keep the faith alive as a relevant sign. Most candidates got two or three signs and the most comprehensive answers who included some detail were most successful.

- (b) This was a very well answered question and most candidates gave lengthy answers with much detail. The strongest answers outlined the jealousy which built up and the incidents in which this was displayed, specifically the favouritism of his father and then the incident at the well. Not many candidates were able to quote from the Qur'an or Islamic scholars referring to this story, but where the occasional quotation in translation was given, this helped to add detail and produced an excellent response.
- (c) Following on from the family disunity and then reparation of relationships in Yusuf's family, this question invited candidates to discuss the topic more broadly and make reference to lessons learned for today. It was necessary to make some reference to today's world and the role of families to address this question, going beyond discussion of Yusuf (AS). Some candidates did so and mentioned how family unity also helped to preserve faith and facilitated Muslims fulfilling their obligations both in terms of prayer and in terms of looking after relatives as required.

Section C

Question 5

- (a) The most successful responses were focused, naming two of the earlier books and then supporting their accounts with relevant quotations and details. Candidates could choose any two books: the Scrolls (Suhuf) given to Ibrahim (AS); the Psalms (Zabur) given to Dawud (AS); the Torah (Tawrat) given to Musa (AS) and the Gospels (Injeel) given to Isa (AS). Weaker responses wrote in general about holy books without specifically choosing two or naming them. Most answers mentioned the Torah which was revealed to Musa (AS) to preach to the Israelites. Candidates could mention laws in it. It also mentions the story of Musa (AS) and the situation of his people who needed this guidance, with their escape from slavery in Egypt. Next chosen was the Gospels (Injil). Few chose the others.
- (b) This question was not very well answered. It required candidates to assess the revealed books before the Qur'an, as referred to in **part (a)**, not the Qur'an itself. It was, however, relevant if a candidate made the point that the same basic message of beliefs was contained in all of the books which the Qur'an completed. The earlier holy books are not present in the world today, in Muslim belief, because they have been changed. This limits their significance; however, the general teachings can be found through the stories of the prophets who received them, and this can inspire Muslims nowadays. Responses that referred to all parts of the question: earlier books and relevance today, were the strongest ones as they were the most specifically focused. Weaker discussions tended to give generalised responses.

Question 6

- (a) Some candidates appeared to confuse some of the terminology in this question: rituals refer more to specific practices, based on religion, whereas cultural traditions such as food and parties are not really rituals, unless specifically part or accompanying a religious ritual. Successful responses referred to and correctly named the aqiqah ceremony, as well as adhan and Khitan. Candidates who mentioned a wide range of practices gave the most comprehensive answers. Weaker responses mentioned only one or two specific rituals and did not always name or give correct terminology to identify them. There was a wide range of responses given, ranging from very good to quite weak, so this is a topic that some candidates could improve on.
- (b) Weaker responses mentioned again some details of the birth rituals or went on to say they were important in general terms without applying this specially to the whole family. Stronger responses focused on the Muslim family as a whole; how they brought people together and made the focus of the event the Islamic aspects, ensuring the family was strengthened in faith and thanking God for the birth. This helped to focus minds in upbringing so all members of the family could help the child and feel some kind of commitment, having been involved in the birth ceremonies. These were good points made which enabled some candidates to produce successful responses.