

ISLAMIC STUDIES

<p>Paper 2068/12 Paper 1 History and Scriptures</p>

General comments

Overall, candidates made a good attempt to answer the questions they selected and there were very few who omitted any part of a question. Most candidates were conscientious in their reading of the questions and clearly understood what was required. Other candidates are reminded to read the questions more carefully before answering them.

There were many good responses to several of the evaluation style **part (c)** questions. In order to achieve higher marks in **part (b)** questions, candidates are encouraged to improve their in-depth knowledge of some of the topics in **Sections A** and **B**.

There were very few rubric errors.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) This was generally well answered. A wide variety of trades were given in responses. Some weaker answers only mentioned the sale of women and slaves.

(b) There were mixed responses to this question. Good answers focused on Mecca as the capital of the Arabian Peninsula; situated at the centre of trade routes; a place where pilgrims came to pay homage at the Ka'ba; a sacred site that had become the sanctuary for 360 idols. More developed answers included pagan worship, circumambulation of the Ka'ba, sacrifices, and the taxes levied on pilgrims by the Quraish as custodians of the Ka'ba. The details that were less often included were the connection with Adam and Ibrahim and the custom of forbidding violence within a 20-mile radius of the Ka'ba.

Other candidates, although they often wrote long answers, mainly described the social and commercial aspects of life in Mecca and although they gained some credit, a more specific focus on the religious aspects of pilgrimage would have improved their responses.

(c) Many candidates answered this question well. Thoughtful responses discussed issues such as dress code, time for prayer and festivals, whether the environment for work is 'halal', no handling of haram e.g. pork, alcohol or money obtained by interest or gambling. Some candidates considered broader, moral and social themes such as if a working environment involves helping others or involves being unfair and allows free time to spend with the family.

Question 2

(a) This question was very well answered, and many candidates achieved full marks. Some weaker responses only included the names of idols.

(b) It seemed that many candidates who chose this question did not have enough to say to gain the higher levels of marks. The best responses included some aspects of Ibrahim's life: his rejection of idol worship; his discovery of the true nature of God; his obedience to God's commands and explained the importance of these for the people of the Pre-Islamic period. He was important because with Ishmael (AS) he reconstructed the Ka'ba and proclaimed Mecca as a centre of

pilgrimage, and his influence was seen in the rituals practiced at the Ka'ba, pre-Islam and the hanifs, who were monotheists and followers of the religion of Ibrahim (AS) who did not take part in pagan practices or idol worship. Other candidates wrote only briefly about aspects of the life of Ibrahim (AS) and did not make any of these links. Therefore, candidates are advised to revise Ibrahim's importance in the Pre-Islamic period in a little more depth, in order to improve their answers.

- (c) There were many good answers to this question, providing evidence of good evaluation. Candidates discussed the importance of history for understanding events in the lives of prophets and learning the messages from them to apply in the present day. Weaker answers were descriptive rather than evaluative.

Question 3

- (a) Overall, this was answered well. Candidates referred to a range of reasons for opposition to Muhammad (pbuh): his threat to the Quraish way of life; his rejection of pagan rituals and the religion of their ancestors; his freeing of slaves which some pagans felt upset the social order; his background as an orphan which to many in the Quraish meant he was not accepted as a preacher or leader.

Some candidates mistakenly wrote about the ways Muhammad (pbuh) was attacked rather than the reasons for the opposition to him. More careful reading of the question would have improved these responses.

- (b) Many candidates showed that they knew the events of the night of the Hijrah very well and gave a lot of detail in their answer. The question focused on the events of the night Muhammad (pbuh) left Mecca, but some candidates went beyond what was required and wrote accounts of the whole emigration. Candidates are therefore encouraged to read each question carefully before writing an answer.
- (c) In discussing the importance of migration to the spread of Islam, some candidates demonstrated a thorough understanding of the demands of the questions. They referred not only to migration to Medina but also to migration more widely such as the Muslims who went to Abyssinia, or even modern-day migrations, which helped to spread Islam to different parts of the world through interaction with others. Some responses were more limited and concentrated on the expansion of Islam immediately after the Hijrah. Weaker answers were about how conditions improved for the Muslims who migrated to Medina but not about the spread of Islam.

Question 4

- (a) On the whole, this was answered well with the majority gaining full credit for concise answers on the role of the archers at Uhud. A small number of candidates appeared to have confused the details or referred to a different battle.
- (b) In this question about the Battle of Trench, the amount of detail and development in responses discriminated between the good and excellent answers. The majority of candidates covered the main points, but needed to demonstrate more understanding and extensive knowledge to improve their answers. Candidates are encouraged to go beyond the rote learning of a standard, predictable answer to this type of question.
- (c) There was a mixed response to this question. Good answers offered reasons and evidence as to why certain qualities and actions of the Prophet (pbuh) might have inspired loyalty amongst his followers, giving specific examples. Many other answers identified aspects of the character and personality of the Prophet (pbuh), but did not make a link with inspiring loyalty.

Section C

Candidates were equally divided in their choice of question in this section.

Question 5

- (a) There was a good performance on this question on Sura An Naas. Successful answers covered both parts of the question equally, explaining both the teachings and their relevance for Muslims.

Successful responses included an explanation of the teachings and their relevance for Muslims in guiding them and protecting them from evil. Weaker answers covered only one part of the question, or only paraphrased the verses of the Sura.

- (b) Most candidates chose the Qur'an and Sunnah as the best way to get to know God's message and supported their answer with relevant teachings and verses as well as the quoting of Muhammad's Farewell Sermon. The majority of candidates appeared comfortable with the question and usually a range of other ways to know about God's message were also mentioned, including gaining guidance from an Imam or learning from the knowledgeable in the Muslim Ummah, as well as the importance of individual enquiry. A minority of candidates simply stated a view as to what was the 'best way' and gave a short description or limited discussion of it.

Question 6

- (a) There was evidence that many candidates thought carefully about this question and a number gave excellent and very good responses. Most candidates showed understanding that the Hadith on doubt is about being confronted with a situation, principle or matter of faith that is ambiguous in nature and the solution is not clear-cut. In explaining the teaching, some candidates were able to quote other teachings from the Qur'an and Hadith or example of the Prophet (pbuh).

There were some good examples of putting the Hadith into practice and taking steps to avoid doubt. Most candidates chose to write about food and the need to avoid restaurants and other venues where the ingredients are in doubt. Other examples were about experiencing uncertainty over the number of Rakats prayed (and choosing to err on the safe side in repeating a Rakat) and about doubt over whether Wudu has been invalidated. Some gave examples of personal relationships and judging others without certainty or proof.

There were few candidates that wrote only about being suspicious of a married partner.

- (b) Successful responses demonstrated understanding that this was a question about Hadiths in general and not solely about the Hadith in **part (a)**. A number of answers were thoughtful and evaluative, and the different views examined included the purpose of Hadiths, the gift of free will and the role of conscience in making judgements. Candidates who wrote only about the Hadith on doubt limited the scope of their answer and many repeated information from **part (a)**, giving the same examples.

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 2068/13
Paper 1 History and Scriptures

General comments

The performance on this paper varied from excellent and very good answers to weaker responses.

In **Sections A** and **B**, candidates appeared to find **part (a)** questions an accessible entry to the question. There were many good responses to several of the evaluation style **part (c)** questions. In order to achieve higher marks in **part (b)** questions, candidates are encouraged to improve their in-depth knowledge of some of the topics in **Sections A** and **B**.

Overall, in **Section C**, the responses to **part (a)** questions showed good understanding of what was required but not always an appreciation that 12 marks are available here. Some answers were brief and some were overlong paraphrases without an explanation of the teaching.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) This was very well answered.
- (b) Very good responses concentrated on the social conditions during the Pre-Islamic period, keeping to the focus of the question. Many answers were good or satisfactory because there was usually a mixture of social, religious and tribal customs described, so only part of the answer was creditable. Candidates' performance could be improved by studying aspects of life in Pre-Islamic Arabia according to the topics in the syllabus.
- (c) Good answers offered arguments both for and against the statement, and the majority of candidates came to the conclusion that the good aspects of Pre-Islamic society were outweighed by evidence of immorality and corruption. The best responses extended the argument to show why Islam was needed to bring about an improvement.

Question 2

- (a) This was well answered, and many responses had details that went beyond the scope of the question.
- (b) There were many good, detailed answers for this question. Other responses told the story of the first revelation accurately, but did not quote Sura Al-Alaq or Gabriel's message to Muhammad (pbuh). Weaker responses usually showed some knowledge of the event, but paid little attention to providing details such as the number of times the angel commanded Muhammad (pbuh) to recite and the appearance of Gabriel outside the cave.
- (c) Most answers were one-sided with many good reasons for learning about the early life of the Prophet (pbuh). A few responses did consider another view about the importance of Muhammad's later life, or, the centrality of the Qur'an.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) Although candidates who attempted this question showed some knowledge of the boycott of the Banu Hashim, most wrote generally about the boycott without checking that they had identified four separate features. This prevented some candidates from attaining full marks.
- (b) Comments made previously about other **part (b)** questions apply here: answers could have been improved by adding more detail and development. Candidates are advised to check their answers to ensure that they have included all they know. Some responses related the events in Taif, but omitted or gave an inaccurate, confused account of the encounter in the garden.
- (c) This was answered well with many thoughtful answers both for and against the statement.

Question 4

- (a) Generally, the terms of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah were well known and clearly described.
- (b) Generally, candidates who attempted this question were knowledgeable about the events leading up to the conquest of Mecca and the reasons for the Prophet's decision to mobilise the Muslim army to attack Mecca. A notable omission in some answers was that the role of Abu Sufyan was not fully explained. Some candidates went on to include the events after Muhammad (pbuh) entered the city, which were not required for this question.
- (c) Candidates discussed the acts of leadership shown by the Prophet (pbuh) and the lessons that might be learned by Muslim leaders today. There were some very good responses that addressed both parts of this discussion. Others interpreted the question in a variety of ways. Some answers focused on the qualities of leadership shown by Muhammad (pbuh) but did not draw out what lessons might be learned. Others wrote generally about the lessons to be learned by Muslims rather than Muslim leaders.

Section C

Question 5

- (a) There was a mixed response to this question on Sura Fateha and responses covered the full range of marks. Most candidates organised their answer verse by verse rather than explaining the themes in the teachings. This approach led some to combined explanation with straight paraphrasing, which gained credit for the explanation but not for the paraphrasing.
- (b) Generally, answers to this were good where candidates had understood that the question was referring to the ways that the Day of Judgement might influence the life of a Muslim. Others who had a good knowledge of the concept of the Day of Judgement explained the belief but did not assess its influence on the life of a Muslim. Candidates are reminded that **Section C part (b)** questions are evaluation questions.

Question 6

- (a) Explanations of the teachings in the Hadith were often very good. Some candidates omitted to include examples. This could have been avoided by reading the question more carefully.
- (b) Candidates were required to discuss the ways in which the example of Muhammad (pbuh) is relevant to Muslims today, using one other Hadith to support their answer. Most provided a good assessment of the value of the example of Muhammad (pbuh) and the best responses used other Hadith to support their answer. Some candidates focused on the example and seemed to have ignored the reference to Hadith.

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 2068/22
Paper 2 Development, Sources, Beliefs
and Observances

General comments

This year's paper saw the full range of responses, ranging from excellent to weak. Some candidates knew the subject matter well and were able to make clear and accurate descriptions in answer to AO1 knowledge-based questions. They performed particularly strongly on **Section C** and seemed to have been very well prepared for this section. Candidates also performed very well on evaluation questions, especially **3(c)**, **4(c)** and **5(b)**, which shows an improvement to candidates' approach to these questions.

Parts of the specification which could be improved and learned in more detail by some candidates include Ali's Caliphate and the life of Isa (AS). Candidates are also reminded that in **Sections A** and **B**, part (a) questions require only short answers, each worth 4 marks, so it is not necessary to write lengthy answers here as it may take time away from other parts which do require longer responses.

Candidates chose questions in roughly equal numbers in each section. Some wrote about the topic in general, such as the rule of Abu Bakr for **Question 1**, rather than selecting some aspects of his rule, particularly how he organised the military for **1(a)** and dealt with the false prophets for **1(b)**.

Comments about specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Some candidates outlined Abu Bakr's creation of 11 battalions; organisation for expeditions against the Byzantines, Persians and Syrians; appointment of experienced commanders such as Khalid bin Walid and Usama; use of Shura consultations to decide tactics and support for the salary payment of needy soldiers. Some candidates seemed to have struggled with this question.
- (b) There were some good answers to this question. The best responses were able to name some of the false prophets and give details about how they were dealt with. Many gave details about Tulaiha and Musailama, with some candidates also mentioning Ansi and Sajjah. Less strong answers wrote about the false prophets in general, without giving names or specific details.
- (c) Some candidates gave lists of good things which Abu Bakr did, and wrote that these might be an inspiration for today. Better answers went on to elaborate on how Abu Bakr's achievements could inspire leaders today. Some very good responses mentioned that the majlis shura, a form of consultation, might encourage states today to consult people and avoid rule by a single person without help. Others mentioned Abu Bakr's fairness as a good example to inspire rulers today to rule fairly and justly, bearing in mind faith in God and God's guidance, like Abu Bakr did as a Caliph rightly-guided by God.

Question 2

- (a) Almost all candidates knew that Uthman was murdered at home, and many gave details about the siege of his home and the attempts of his wife Naila to protect him. The best answers were short and direct, giving clear details.
- (b) This question was not so well answered and many candidates achieved a level 2 response, giving only some details. The best responses gave details of the period of confusion and how Muslims eventually gathered at the mosque in Medina to pledge allegiance to Ali, having given an ultimatum to resolve the leadership issue within 24 hours, so that order might be established out of a situation where chaos was developing.
- (c) Some candidates argued that Ali's military campaigns were successful and gave minor details. Better responses saw the significance of the question and either argued they were very successful, because the situation Ali faced was so difficult he did the best possible in the circumstances; or that they were not as successful as they might have been, but that Ali adhered to right and true causes as a rightly guided Caliph, and that it was more important to stay true to this than to win every success.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates gave very strong answers and were able to identify four methods such as checking the person narrating a Hadith was of a known family line; had met the Prophet (pbuh); had met the next narrator; was of sound mind; good memory; pious; good character; known for telling the truth; did not tell lies or spread rumours. Any four of these could be mentioned for full marks; there was no need to write lengthy answers here. A small number of candidates misunderstood the question and wrote about different categories of Hadith.
- (b) Some candidates misread this question and wrote about the Night of Power, whereas the focus of the question was to begin after that night. Good responses referred to occasions of revelation such as after some time when the Prophet (pbuh) worried at night (Sura Duha); when he was commanded to preach openly; and further details of main beliefs revealed at Mecca about tawhid (oneness of God), risalah (prophethood) and akhirah (life after death). Some candidates focused on the 'how' of revelation. The Prophet (pbuh) was sometimes on a camel; sometimes lying down. He often experienced a heaviness and sweating during the intensity of revelation. Sometimes revelations were sent with Angel Jibril appearing clearly in person and sometimes through dreams. The best descriptions were more detailed, sometimes with the addition of short, relevant quotes from the Qur'an or Hadith or accounts of the context of one or two of the revelations.
- (c) This question was well answered. Candidates generally showed appreciation for why the Qur'an was important, being the word of God for Muslims, and containing details about the main beliefs. Most argued the Hadith were also very important in providing detail, such as how to pray, adding to and complementing the Qur'an. Good evaluations considered both and how they might be used together.

Question 4

- (a) This question was very well answered with nearly all candidates achieving full marks.
- (b) Candidates knew of the virgin birth of Isa (AS); of some of his miracles including his ability to speak from the cradle. Many candidates missed out the incident in the Temple, which happened when Isa (AS) was around 12 years old. Isa (AS) went to Jerusalem. He joined a crowd listening to the high priests in the Temple. He was the youngest one there. Isa (AS) asked questions that were so deep that the high priests were unable to answer. They were afraid of the boy's intellect and boldness. They tried to make Isa (AS) be quiet but he continued to boldly express his views about belief in the One true God. Candidates could improve their responses by adding more detail about the events in the life of Isa (AS).
- (c) Many candidates excelled in this question and thought analytically to identify similarities between the two prophets. A whole range of similarities were found: to spread the same message of

monotheism and warn against idolatry; humility of character; patience and perseverance in the face of opposition; even persecution. The best responses developed their discussion giving some detail on some of these aspects.

Section C

Question 5

- (a) This was a popular question and generally well answered. It should be noted that there were two aspects: the signs of the last days and the events on the Day of Resurrection. Some candidates only wrote about one aspect.

Candidates generally knew about lots of different signs. Some referred to greater and lesser signs. Strong responses noted the appearance of dajjal, sometimes referred to as the anti-Christ, and the return of Isa (AS) and the appearance of the Mahdi, to defeat dajjal and enter a period of justice and peace before the final Day of Resurrection. Angel Israfil's trumpet, the bodily resurrection and the events of Judgement were also well known by candidates.

- (b) There were some good examples of evaluation in response to this question. Many candidates noted the differences in role in that angels had no choice, whereas prophets had more interaction with human beings, and the significance of each role, including that of angels in Judgement and prophets in communication of God's messages. Most candidates argued that the roles were different so significant in their own ways, not greater or lesser than each other, which made for a good, evaluative answer.

Question 6

- (a) This question was well answered. Candidates described different types of Jihad, including the Jihad of the sword and the Jihad of the word, as well as the inner Jihad of the 'nafs' to strive against personal ego and follow Islam however difficult that might be. The strongest answers developed their accounts, giving details of teachings such as restrictions on holy war, and situations where following Islam might involve difficulty and striving, making it a personal Jihad.
- (b) Candidates generally understood how fasting (Sawm) during Ramadan could be demanding, by requiring Muslims to get up early and go without food and drink during daylight hours, sometimes whilst facing temptations. Some noted the demands of extra devotions such as Tarawih prayers.

The best responses made some evaluation of these demands with others, such as the need to pray five times a day throughout the year, or the demands of the Hajj pilgrimage, which might require saving up and the completion of a physically demanding journey. One excellent response argued that for the true believer, none of the pillars were demanding at all, since they were a joy to complete and brought a Muslim closer to God along the way.

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 2068/23
Paper 2 Development, Sources, Beliefs
and Observances

General Comments

This year's paper saw many excellent responses. Candidates knew the subject matter well and were able to make clear and accurate descriptions in answer to AO1 knowledge-based questions. They also made some excellent responses to AO2 questions by prompting discussion and evaluation.

The best responses answered the specific questions set. Sometimes this required selecting relevant knowledge rather than writing in general about a topic, which weaker responses tended to include. Stronger answers focused on the key words in statements, particularly for AO2 evaluation questions, and referred back to them, questioning how far the statements were the best way of responding to the topic. It was possible to achieve the full range of marks for evaluation and discussion questions by taking different views and by referring to more than one viewpoint in favour or against a particular statement – there was no 'set' answer – but the quality of discussion and reasons given helped to make the best answers.

In **Section A, Question 2** was very popular and in **Section C Question 6**. In **Section B**, candidates chose either **Question 3** or **Question 4** in roughly equal numbers.

Comments about specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates mentioned the involvement of Talha and Zubair, and Aisha, and knew something of the involvement of Aisha on the camel, and Ali's attempt to negotiate. Some wrote that Talha and Zubair died fighting in this battle whereas most sources suggest they left the battle before Ali was eventually victorious.
- (b) The best responses were sequenced and organised, describing events clearly and in the right order. Less strong answers described some of the events in less detail, perhaps missing one or two or describing some in less detail. Accounts often began with the anger of Aisha, Talha and Zubayr with Uthman's death and their demand the murderers be brought to justice. The mistrust between them and Ali increased and the opinions of the people of Medina, as they developed, with the influence of Mu'awiya added. Some responses mentioned the truce at Basra then the breakdown of this in confusion, in the context of which the Battle of Camel took place.
- (c) Many candidates agreed with the statement and gave examples of times when Ali had negotiated. Given difficult circumstances, he tried hard and did well to achieve truces at various times. On the other hand, Ali was known as a rightly guided and righteous Caliph, as one of the four first Caliphs, and this was his defining legacy rather than that of a negotiator for which he is less well known. Some candidates mentioned the first civil war originating from this time, which suggested that Ali was righteous but not necessarily so skilled at negotiation.

Question 2

- (a) This question was exceptionally well answered with most candidates gaining full marks. **Question 2** was also the most popular choice in **Section A**. Any four characteristics were sufficient, provided they were accurate: Umar was pious, disciplined, fair, a good commander, strong, a skilled military commander, well organised, intelligent and so on. It was not necessary to write lengthy answers for this question – candidates should be aware to proportion the length of their responses and the time spent in keeping with the marks available.
- (b) Some candidates wrote in detail about the changes Umar made and although the answers were good, they were not selective. Better responses selected changes which Umar made and related them specifically to how they encouraged people to follow Islam, which was the intended focus of this question. Some changes were very clear and specific, such as building mosques and pilgrimage facilities, providing salaries for Imams to teach people about Islam and introducing tarawih prayers in congregation in Ramadan. Other changes promoted a general climate which promoted fairness and justice in the light of respect for God, following the example of the Sunnah.
- (c) Some responses listed Umar’s successes, perhaps giving one or two examples. Better responses focused on and explained Umar’s effectiveness in a range of areas. The more detailed, comprehensive and thoughtful the answer, referring to one or more area of Umar’s policies, such as his military successes, fairness and justice, or religious policies, the better the level of response achieved.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) Some candidates listed four occasions or named four surahs when revelations occurred, commonly the Night of Power; the command to start preaching in Mecca; the command to leave Mecca for Medina; the occasion to guide and support the Battle of Badr. Any four occasions were suitable. A few responses correctly identified times such as in the presence of Angel Jibril; on horseback; with the ringing of bells and so on; these were also credited as accurate descriptions of occasions of revelation.
- (b) On the whole this was very well answered. The best responses mentioned the work done by Umar and Zaid ibn Thabit in collecting the fragments from the Prophets scribes and ascertaining their authenticity; then the completion of the process with the destruction of unauthorised versions under Uthman, and the distribution of the Uthmanic Qur’an far and wide.
- (c) There were some good examples of very thoughtful evaluation in response to this statement. Some disagreed, arguing that God intended the Qur’an as the last and final message for posterity and therefore it must have been designed to be written down to preserve it accurately. Also, the Caliphs who completed this process were known as rightly guided and closely followed the Prophet (pbuh), suggesting they did what God intended. Others agreed, stating that circumstances changed in unexpected ways which was clear from Abu Bakr’s reluctance, but that as events unfolded, the process of writing down the book ensured.

Question 4

- (a) Candidates nearly all attained full marks for this question as they knew the story of Musa's childhood well and were able to describe it in detail.
- (b) The question required details of the meeting. Some candidates wrote about the life of Musa (AS) in its entirety, providing much longer answers than was necessary. The best responses focused on the meeting and particularly the competition between Musa (AS) and the magicians with their staffs which became snakes, and the victory of Musa (AS). A few excellent responses were able to add the occasional short quotation from the Qur'an about the story of Musa (AS).
- (c) Some mentioned the general message of monotheism; many identified the importance of patience in the face of adversity; some the importance of migration for the sake of freedom in order to practice their religion. The best responses went beyond describing these aspects of Musa's experience and related them to examples in today's world.

Section C

Question 5

- (a) Not many candidates chose this question but those who did made reasonable responses. Reference was made to the Qur'anic teachings about Tawhid and the message of Muhammad (pbuh) to spurn idolatry. The meaning in terms of belief in oneness was sometimes evidenced with short quotations from the Qur'an, often from Sura Ikhlas, which helped to inform good answers. The importance of a belief in a single creator bringing unity to creation and a purpose behind being were deeper points reflected upon in a few excellent responses.
- (b) Many disagreed with the question and explained why, mentioning the need to ask for help from an Imam or mosque teacher to learn how to read the Qur'an and understand it. Also mentioned as the need to understand the difference in language and the context of the Qur'an, set fourteen hundred years ago in Arabia. Help in the form of exemplification of teachings in practice from the Sunnah, evidenced through the Hadith, was also mentioned.

However, some agreed saying it was better to go direct to the word of God to get guidance as nothing else could surpass this. The danger of interpretation is that someone might add their own opinion and therefore divert attention from the text itself. Another view mentioned was the importance of reciting the text and understanding its beauty that way, rather than translating it for the present day.

Question 6

- (a) This was a very popular question. Most candidates were able to give comprehensive and detailed answers about prayer in Islam. The best answers described the preparations including making ablutions (Wudu) and making the intention to pray two rakat units farz of fajr reading behind an imam at the mosque or praying at home.

Many candidates wrote about the details of prayer in general but did not focus their answers specifically about fajr prayer. The best answers mentioned that the call to prayer for fajr includes the additional Arabic words with the meaning that 'prayer is better than sleep'; the intention for fajr; the number of rakats; and the precise timing before sunrise.

Candidates who mentioned additional dua qunut and tahajjud prayers were also credited as well as those who were able to identify the stages of prayer, beginning with the opening takbir and including the standing, bowing, prostrating and sitting phases. It was not essential to give the Arabic names but those who did were credited.

- (b)** There were some excellent answers to this question. Answers included the importance of fulfilling the commands of God, following the Sunnah of Muhammad (pbuh); to complete a compulsory pillar of Islam; to start the day with God in mind and develop God consciousness throughout the day as a result; to keep the mind of a Muslim on the straight and narrow; to gain reward at Judgement for the Afterlife; to develop personal connection to God were all mentioned in various responses. The best responses took some of these and went beyond listing them to explain why the points made are important in the lives of Muslims.