

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/11
Paper 11

Key messages

- To score higher marks in **part (a)** questions, detail and depth is required.
- **Part (b)** answers require candidates to demonstrate their ability to evaluate and elucidate the significance of different aspect of Islamic history and faith.
- Ample practice of drawing connections between different historical events and lessons of resilience, perseverance and unwavering faith would prepare candidates for AO2 questions.
- Different parts of the questions must be correctly labelled.

General comments

Over time, notable improvement have been seen in the quality of answers presented. A considerable number of candidates are now able to provide highly accurate and in-depth information regarding the historical events discussed in their responses, supported by excerpts from the sources of authority and historical accounts from reliable literature.

Numerous thoughtful and reflective answers were also seen in **(b)** parts of the questions, displaying clear understanding of questions' specific demands, accompanied by coherent arguments and appropriate examples.

Those who provided a concise summary of the key events in **part (a)** but a generic comment or suggestion in **part (b)** obtained low marks.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) The candidates had to choose any two passages and write about the themes contained in each of them. Higher scoring answers focused on; God's authority, His high position, and His powers to provide protection against seen and unseen forces in passage (1), God's power of creation, His knowledge, elevated status of humans, granting of knowledge and forgiveness to Adam and through him to his descendants in passage (2). God's support for His chosen people and humiliating punishment of their opponent in passage (3).

Some common mistakes observed include mixing the themes with other Suras and passages or providing generic/broad themes or paraphrasing the given translation.

- (b) Sura *Nas* providing shield against magic, instilling confidence in God's power of protection, passage (2) inculcating hope of God's mercy and forgiveness while Sura *Kauther* inspiring Muslims to maintain trust in God during challenging times, were some of the commendable points explored by those achieving higher marks.

Candidates who provided only brief response or explored generic ideas such as having a strong belief in *tawhid*, or following God's commands without delving into specific themes could only achieve mid-range marks.

Question 2

- (a) The question required a description of the main events of the first revelation. Most of the candidates were able to provide a basic account of the events surrounding the Prophet's visit to the Cave Hira, his encounter with Jibril, and the support offered by his wife along with the confirmation provided by *Warqa*. The best responses were those however, which delved deeper, providing specific details, and in some cases quotes or excerpts from the historical account of the event found in reliable sources of Islamic history. Quotations from Sura *Iqra/Alaq* were another key feature of such responses. Ultimately, it was the depth and the level of detail within a response that determined the final mark received by candidates.
- (b) The Prophet's (PBUH) inability to read and write confirmed the authenticity and genuineness of God's message and was the main point of significance discussed by a large majority of the candidates. More able candidates however, explored other ideas as well, such as highlighting how this aspect demonstrates the approachability of the divine message itself. On the other hand, some candidates held a different view and maintained that the selection of prophets has a different criterion; ability to read and write is not necessarily a significant quality amongst them.

Many responses offered basic explanation, and so were awarded mid-range marks.

Question 3

- (a) Numerous events were given, with ample details highlighting Prophet's qualities of trustworthiness and forgiveness were the main feature of better responses. Good responses understood what each quality entails and selected events that exemplified those qualities.

Responses which were not given high marks confused the qualities mentioned above with others unrelated attributes such as humility. Many could not recollect substantial events from the life of the prophet (pbuh) or the details within each event were lacking depth and substance.

- (b) A considerable number of candidates responded effectively to this question, offering diverse ideas on establishing trustworthiness in the society. Fulfilling promises, maintaining confidentiality and looking after other's belongings were common suggestions, each of which used examples to make them specific in different ways by individual candidates.

Question 4

- (a) This was the most popular choice of question, answered exceptionally well by candidates in large numbers. Extensive and substantial details of the causes of the battle, preparation of both Makkan and Muslim sides, strategies employed and events that unfolded on the actual battlefield as well as subsequent developments were written about. Inaccuracies and lack of development were the main causes of lower marks in this question.
- (b) Almost every candidate who attempted this question talked about following: Prophet's instructions as the most important lesson Muslims can learn from this battle. Only a limited number of candidates however, provided further elaboration to show why the battle was significant. Some candidates had a tendency to repeat the information presented in the (a) part of the question, instead of expanding on the aspect of the question which asked about significance, or applying the lessons learned to the modern day lives of Muslims.

Candidates had the opportunity to explore other significant ideas such as determination and steadfastness shown by the Prophet (pbuh) and Muslims in general but very few could do that.

Question 5

- (a) This question was one of the less popular choices compared to other optional questions. Responses at the top end of the marks wrote extensively about Fatima, following the events of her life in a chronological order, starting from Makkah where she was born and provided support to her father as a child at a very crucial time. Fatima's life in Madina as well as instances of her interactions with her father were also the main highlight of such answers. As very little is known about other daughters of the Prophet (pbuh), candidates could only talk about Ruqqaya's marriage, migration and death however, those choosing Zaynab as the second daughter had a little more information to offer.

- (b)** More insightful answers were able to draw some valuable lessons from the way the Prophet (pbuh) treated his daughters and effectively applied them to the lives of Muslims today. The answers awarded the highest marks emphasised treating them with kindness, love and affection, honouring them with equal status as sons. On the other hand, the candidates who could only make a few generic suggestions of good treatment of daughters, could attain satisfactory marks at best.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/12
Paper 12

Key messages

- To score higher marks in **part (a)** questions, detail and depth is required.
- **Part (b)** answers require candidates to demonstrate their ability to evaluate and elucidate the significance of different aspect of Islamic history and faith.
- Ample practice of drawing connections between different historical events and lessons of resilience, perseverance and unwavering faith would better prepare candidates for AO2 questions.
- Responses must be written in a clear and legible handwriting.

General comments

In general, quality of responses was commendable. Candidates displayed good knowledge of Islamic history and the themes of the passages set in the paper. In **(a)** parts of the questions, the depth and quality of the information presented determined the marks while for **(b)** parts, candidates who demonstrated the ability to evaluate and explain significance of the material did well.

It is noted that candidates emphasise more on knowledge-based question and make only a few generic suggestions for **part (b)** questions however, by expounding more and incorporating the practice of deriving moral principles from various events, higher marks can be achieved.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a)** Responses that stood out, demonstrated a keen focus on God's power of creation and the celestial bodies serving as a sign of His grandeur and majesty, concluding that He is deserving of worship for passage (1). Additionally, for passage (2) they emphasised God's kingship and ownership qualities as well as His mercy. For passage (3) candidates highlighted how God gave guidance to His chosen people and emphasised that natural phenomena do not possess any power of their own, but a medium to reach the real creator. Another significant feature of such responses was the elaboration of the themes identified and where possible, supporting the themes with specific quotes from the Quran.

Many candidates however, offered plain explanation of themes, some paraphrasing of the actual translation or some brief exploration of themes, earning them mid-range marks.

- (b)** Over time, candidates are demonstrating admirable efforts in presenting the significance of the themes in the lives of Muslims. Believing in God, not assigning any partners to him, asking for His mercy and not worshiping idols were quite generic and simplistic ideas presented by the candidates in large numbers. Those who came up with more insightful ideas and went beyond the more obvious suggestions and talked about exploring nature as a means to attain genuine understanding of God, emphasised the value of contemplation and observation of the natural world as well as the necessity of preserving it; these candidates with a more nuanced view scored higher marks. Furthermore, such responses emphasised the necessity of rejecting all forms of *Shirk* including those that are not immediately apparent but highly prevalent in the modern world.

Question 2

- (a) Overall, candidates did well on this question. A significant majority of candidates accurately recounted the events surrounding the first revelation which marked the start of the process of revelation. Furthermore, they expanded on the timing and occasions of the subsequent revelations. However, it was when candidates started describing different modes of revelation and bodily sensations the Prophet (pbuh) experienced, higher marks were achieved. The strongest candidates were able to quote examples from the authentic Hadith collections shedding light on the observations of the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) when they bore witness to him receiving the divine revelations earning them higher marks.

Those candidates who did not score as highly on this question spent too much time on the details of the first revelation that were not relevant to the question or gave extensive particulars of the timings of different Suras and the reasons for their revelations. This meant candidates either totally omitted modes of revelation or gave a brief or inaccurate account. It is essential for the candidates to maintain focus of the key aspects of a question, and to provide information that is relevant and accurate.

- (b) Many thoughtful and insightful answers were presented in response to this question. A wide range of reasons and points were shared by the candidates highlighting the significance of the gradual revelation of the Quran. One frequently discussed aspect was the need to provide guidance tailored to the specific needs of the Muslim community. Another highly significant point was to alleviate physical hardships experienced by the Prophet (pbuh) while receiving the revelations. Other less commonly mentioned but equally significant points included the necessity of preservation and recording of the divine book as well as ease of gradual implementation of the Quranic injunctions. One major feature of good answers was the elaboration and exemplification of the points made.

Candidates who provided a single justification or a few points, but no elaboration could only score mid-range marks.

Question 3

- (a) Candidates were required to identify multiple events from the Makkan life of the Prophet (pbuh), provide specific details of those events and identify how the Prophet (pbuh) displayed patience and self-restraint during those occurrences.

Candidates who achieved top marks selected a wide range of events, delved into deeper details and clearly mentioned the exemplary character shown by the Prophet (pbuh).

A significant number of candidates however, made selective choices of events and provided detailed description for some only, or missed the opportunity to highlight the qualities demonstrated by the Prophet (pbuh), hence scoring mid-range marks. Those who could write about only a few events or omitted mentioning the conduct of the Prophet (pbuh) during these occurrences altogether, scored lower marks.

- (b) Noteworthy efforts were made by the candidates to illustrate how Muslims can exhibit patience and self-restraint in their own lives. Several examples presented were quite intriguing and thought provoking. Candidates who could successfully relate these lessons to contemporary issues facing modern Muslims or people in general, and who drew meaningful parallels were able to score higher. On the other hand, those who could only make some generic suggestions about how to be patient during hardships could only achieve mid-range marks.

Question 4

- (a) This question was quite popular with the candidates. A majority of those attempting this question successfully described the historical background or the factors that led to the conquest of Makkah. Main events such as the preparations for the attack, actual infiltration of the Muslim army and the subsequent peaceful take over were mentioned by a large number of candidates.

Minute details of the advancement of the Muslim contingents and the clearing of the Holy Kaaba and the general pardon granted to the Makkans as well as the administrative decisions taken by the Prophet (pbuh), supported with excerpts from the historical resources, took answers to the

higher levels. On the contrary, poorly memorised accounts, inaccuracies and lack of depth and detail in the description caused lower marks.

- (b) It was pleasing to see candidates successfully demonstrating their understanding of the geopolitical implications of the conquest and its significance for the development of Islam. More proficient candidates talked about several advantages to Muslims such as extension of Islam, the capture of the holiest site in the Islamic faith, the resolution of continued clash with the Makkans and the opportunities of further expansion of Islam.

Many could only list Makkans accepting Islam in large numbers as the most significant outcome of this event thus scoring midrange marks.

Question 5

- (a) Only a limited number of candidates chose to answer this question. Amongst those who attempted it, the discussion about Amina, the mother of the Prophet (pbuh) was relatively briefly due to the scarcity of information available about her short life. Instead, candidates focused more on Halima and recounted significant events from the life of Halima that involved her relationship with the Prophet (pbuh).
- (b) The majority of responses revolved around the suggestion of treating orphans with kindness. However, in order to score higher marks, candidates needed to broaden their evaluation and discuss different aspects of the Prophet's upbringing to draw lessons that are applicable to modern times.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/21
Paper 21

Key messages

It is important that candidates read the questions carefully and understand what is required in their answer before starting to write their response. At times the candidates write an answer that they may have prepared for a topic rather than answering what the question is asking them to write about.

General comments

On the whole the candidates did well. Legibility is at times an issue and candidates need to be mindful that they scripts must be read, and therefore make a bit of an effort to write clearly.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) No particular Hadith posed a problem to candidates. To write relevant answers, candidates need to pick up on the key words or phrases from the Hadith they are attempting to answer, and explain what they refer to in order to give the teachings of the Hadith. For example, in Hadith 7 they need to say what 'strives in the way of Allah' means. Likewise, the key word in Hadith 1 is sincerity. What sincerity means in the context of this Hadith needs to be written about in **Part (a)** and how it can be achieved was to be written about in **Part (b)**. It is a delicate balance to maintain between teaching and action for this specific Hadith that needs to be carefully differentiated between.
- (b) Candidates answering **Part (b)** tend to write about the importance of the Hadiths. They must be alerted to the fact that **Part (b)** answers are evaluative, and that for Paper 2 the **1(b)** focusses on how teachings given in answers must be acted upon. It is in Paper 1 that **1(b)** asks for the importance of Surah(s)/verses in a Muslims life. This distinction between the different needs of **Part (b)** questions is important to bear in mind.

Question 2

- (a) The question clearly asked the candidates to answer the question referring to the **set** Hadiths and say how they helped establish brotherhood in the community. An ideal answer was one that referred to a Hadith, and expanded on how it helped establish brotherhood. At least 4 Hadiths needed to be written about in well-developed answers. Many candidates gave no more than three Hadiths. Full Hadiths did not necessarily have to be quoted, a reference to them was enough. Some candidates wrote about Hadiths that are not part of the set syllabus; they must be reminded to not do that. If Hadiths which were referring to individual conduct were written about, and the candidate said how they helped create brotherhood it was seen as creditable content. The link back to the Hadith to establishing brotherhood in the community was a key element.
- (b) This **Part (b)** answer was well attempted by candidates who went on to give sound evaluative reasons to say why brotherhood in Islam was given much importance.

Question 3

- (a) This was a straightforward knowledge-based question asking candidates to write about the false prophets Hazrat Abu Bakr dealt with in his caliphate. All four false prophets needed to be written about; Musaylima was the false prophet about whom the most could be written. For answer to be credited as having detail and development, an account of the Battle of Yamama fought against him needed to be given. Some candidates mixed up the details of the first three false prophets, a few focused on just the Battle of Yamama others wrote about 2 or three of the false prophets. Answers which were comprehensive were well rewarded, but those with insufficient knowledge of this topic achieved lower marks.
- (b) Thoughtful answers were given to **Part (b)**. Some said how defeating both the false prophets and those who refused to pay *zakat* was equally important and presented their reasons for their viewpoint. Others made a choice between the two options and gave evaluative responses. Both approaches were credited.

Question 4

- (a) This was a popular question answered by a good number of candidates. After giving the words of the *Shahada* candidates needed to write about the significance of the *Shahada* in Islam. In so doing, they needed to focus on both parts of the *Shahada*. The first part declaring a Muslim's complete faith in the Oneness of God and that no one other than Him is worthy of worship and the second part acknowledging the Prophet (pbuh) as the Prophet of God and acknowledging his right to be respected and followed. Some candidates did not write about the significance of both the parts whilst a few did not write the words of the *Shahada* as the question asked them to and so lost a few easy marks.
- (b) A thoughtful answer was needed for this part of the question, and good understanding of the *Shahada* was shown and why it was important to understand it. Every year candidates improve their skills at writing evaluative **Part (b)** answers showing their understanding of the topic.

Question 5

- (a) This question asked specifically about the moral and spiritual benefits of fasting, whereas a relatively significant number of candidates answered instead about fasting's physical and health benefits. It was seen that some candidates perhaps stuck to what they had prepared. They should be encouraged to confidently improvise prepared knowledge to meet the requirements of the question.
- (b) Good answers were seen to this part of the question as it was an open field, they could use any benefit of fasting and say why in their opinion it was the most important and they did just that.

Conclusion

Keeping calm in an exam is an important tool as it will allow candidates to improvise and use their overall knowledge about the subject if they find they are not fully prepared for a question. Testing their knowledge by setting them questions in classroom tests with a twist is one way to prepare them for slightly different questions.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 0493/22
Paper 22

Key messages

Candidates must read and answer questions fully to get to the higher levels or the higher marks within the levels. Good answers require a detailed and well-developed response, the space provided for the answer is a good indication of how much needs to be written for a good answer. Good relevancy, accuracy and detail with supporting quotes where applicable add to answers and enable candidates to get higher marks.

General comments

Candidates showed sound knowledge of the topics that were asked about in **Part (a)** answers. **Question 3** was not attempted by the majority of candidates who sat this paper. Part of **Question 5(a)** asking about predestination and divine decree was confused with the Oneness of God and the Day of Judgment.

Part (b) questions on the whole were well answered, and candidates who struggled in **Part (a)** answers in some cases went on to give good evaluative answers for **Part (b)** questions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) A lot of paraphrasing was seen in answers for Hadiths 6 and 8. The teaching given in Hadith 6 focusses on removing evil from society lawfully to help create a just and peaceful community and that everyone needs to play their part in achieving this object. The candidates do not need to keep the literal wordings of the Hadith, as they are already given but write about the essence of the teaching. Likewise, for Hadith 8 many said 'those killed in the way of Allah are martyrs'. 'Killed in the way of Allah' are words from the translation given. Instead of quoting the Hadiths back to examiners, candidates should focus on what they mean and what the teaching shows to achieve the highest marks.

Hadiths 2 and 17 were well answered.

(b) In this part, those who struggled with explaining the teaching given in Hadiths 6 and 8 were able to show their understanding. It must be impressed upon candidates that in this part of the question, their answer they should give examples to show how the Hadiths' teachings can be put into action, and not write the answer giving the importance of Hadiths as some tend to do which makes the answer descriptive.

Question 2

(a) This question asked about the two components and the two classifications of Hadiths with the second part of the question asking candidates to write about the relationship between them. This relationship could have been written about in a number of ways. Candidates could have said how together the two components help verify the authenticity of the Hadith or how *sanad* was linked with *musnad* Hadiths as it was compiled on *isnad* lines and likewise how *matn* was linked with *musannaf* Hadiths as they were compiled as per the topics.

Most candidates did well in describing the components and classifications of Hadiths but did not write about the relationship between them. Candidates who understood *isnad* and *matn* and

musnad and *musannaf* were able to briefly make the connection and wherever in the answer this relationship was shown it was credited.

- (b) Most candidates were able to answer this question comprehensively, showing very good understanding of the importance of having genuine Hadiths and how useful they are for Muslims to live their lives according to the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh), in understanding the Qur'an and law making.

Question 3

- (a) This question was only attempted by a small number of candidates and was the least popular on the paper. There were a variety of responses to this question, with some responses being credited with high marks, while others either misread the question or did not understand it. A common mistake among those responses which misunderstood the question confused it with the Battle of Nahrawan fought in the caliphate of Hazrat Ali and so unfortunately lost all the marks for this question. Some responses gave a very vague account of the battle which could have been applied to any major battle fought in the caliphate of Umar and could be rewarded with only a Level 1 mark. Few wrote about the Battle of Qadissiya instead of Nihawand. In a battle question it is necessary for candidates to be correct with the specifics of their answers, otherwise they face not being awarded any marks.
- (b) Those who got **Part (a)** right got **Part (b)** right.

Question 4

- (a) This question asked about the benefits of *salat* to both the individual and the community. The benefit of both needed to be given, but many candidates wrote about either or and hence lost marks. Friday Prayers and Eid prayers are of course congregational prayers and when written about were read as development of the answer. Candidates however, must understand that the daily five prayers are also recommended to be read in congregation especially for men and the benefits of praying five times a day in the mosque should have been the bulk of this part of the answer.
- (b) This question asked about why it is important to begin to pray *salat* from a young age. Responses to this question showed consistently good understanding, and clearly developed ideas.

Question 5

- (a) This question had two parts, the candidates needed to write about Muslim belief in Prophets and belief in God's predestination and decree. Both are big topics, but the candidates were expected to give the key beliefs of both Articles and perhaps expand on a few to develop their answer. Some responses however, confused God's predestination and decree with either *Tauhid* or Day of Judgment and thus were not able to receive credit for the second part of the answer.
- (b) As **Part (b)** of this question was linked to God's predestination and decree, those candidates who did not correctly identify these aspects in their response to **Part (a)** were on the wrong track in **Part (b)**. However, when relevant and creditable writing was seen in the answer, it was rewarded.

Conclusion

Candidates must take time to read and understand what the question is asking, too many responses did not do this, and consequently did not fully answer the question. Developing relevant points, backing them with detail and quotes where necessary is an important exam skill which candidates need to develop, and for which candidates need to be trained.