

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 9013/11

Paper 1

General Comments

The overall standard of performance for this paper remains high. Most candidates appeared well prepared for the examination and there were a number of excellent scripts from a range of Centres. Many candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge of the subject. **Questions 1, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 10** remained the most popular and were answered satisfactorily. **Questions 5, 6 and 11** were less popular and less well answered. Very few candidates attempted **Question 2** and **9**. **Question 12** did not attract many responses. It is important that candidates pay attention to examination techniques such as reading questions carefully and developing answers as required.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

Overall this question was very well answered. Part **(a)** was particularly well answered.

- (a)** This question was generally well answered, with many candidates demonstrating their familiarity with the beliefs and practices of the people of pre-Islamic Arabia. The better candidates were able to identify differences between beliefs and practices and these were well described. Weaker answers often lacked sound knowledge and tended towards generalised statements.
- (b)** Part **(b)** was generally well answered with the majority of candidates explaining main criticism of these beliefs practices. However, some candidates merely repeated the answer from part **(a)**.

Question 2

This was the least popular question this year but was generally done well by those who attempted it.

Question 3

- (a)** Strong responses acknowledged the specific requirements of this question and gave a detailed explanation of the causes of unrest among the Egyptians and also traced an out line of the events that resulted from this. Weak responses did not show enough knowledge of precise historical events and generalised on the life of caliph 'Uthman.
- (b)** The majority of candidates possessed a sound knowledge of the factors which led to the battle of Siffin. A high proportion of candidates wrote relevant, well-balanced answers, giving approximately equal attention to both 'Ali and Mu'awiyah. Weaker responses tended to be more descriptive and lacked specific details.

Section B

Question 4

- (a)** Candidates were required to give a detailed account of the steps taken to make a collection of the Qur'an under the caliph 'Uthman. The majority of the candidates possessed sound knowledge of the factors which led to the development. Some candidates' responses did not focus on the question. Such candidates based their entire response on the period of Caliph Abu Bakr. To gain high marks candidates needed an answer which was explicitly linked to 'Uthman.

- (b) This was generally well answered. However, some candidates gave brief answers and there was some repetition of points from part (a).

Question 5

This question was not popular as very few candidates attempted it.

Question 6

The relatively small number of candidates who chose this question answered it well and displayed a wide range of knowledge about the importance of the Qur'an in Islam. They provided a range of evaluation statements and most were able to link these statements to the question.

Section C

Question 7

This question was very popular and many of the candidates who attempted it did well. There were some outstanding quality responses to this question. Most candidates were able to provide a complete list of the principle rites in connection with the institution of the pilgrimage as observed by the Muslims and offered the clear explanation of the link between Prophet Abraham and *Hajj*. Some candidates did not read the question carefully and concentrated only upon the ceremony of sacrifice, more focus on the question could have resulted in higher levels.

Question 8

This question was quite popular and was done well by a large number of candidates.

- (a) Candidates were asked to identify the distinctive features of the Friday communal prayers that are not shared by prayers at other times. The majority of candidates were able to identify these unique features as well as compare them with other prayers. A number of candidates gave only a partial answer to this question by describing these features without any comparison and as a result levels were limited.
- (b) This question was generally well answered. However, some responses were either too brief or the explanation was confused.

Question 9

Very few attempted this question.

Section D

Question 10

This was the most popular question in this section and many of the candidates who attempted it did well. The majority of candidates showed a good knowledge and understanding of Islamic law.

Question 11

The main purpose of this question was to encourage candidates to give specific examples of Hadiths and explain how individual Muslims put the Prophet Muhammad's Sunnah into practice today. Most candidates outlined their knowledge and understanding of Hadith as a primary source of Islamic law and wrote at length, leading to unfocused answers. The better answers to this question displayed a very sound knowledge and understanding of the Hadith and Sunnah and were able to provide detailed examples as illustration.

Question 12

This question was not a popular choice, but several candidates who answered it were knowledgeable on Islamic law and gave detailed accounts of *qiyas*, providing examples to illustrate their answers. Some responses needed more knowledge of the topic, they were superficial, lacking supporting examples.

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 9013/12

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Question 3

- (a)** Strong responses acknowledged the specific requirements of this question and gave a detailed explanation of the causes of unrest among the Egyptians and also traced an out line of the events that resulted from this. Weak responses did not show enough knowledge of precise historical events and generalised on the life of caliph 'Uthman.
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Section B

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ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 9013/02

Paper 2

General comments

The standard of answers in November 2013 was comparable to that in previous years. In some Centres there was a significant improvement in results due to a more analytical style of answer, in which the terms of the question were directly addressed and discussed. This formed the structure of the best answers. Solid answers tended to take a chronological or fact based approach, adding a concluding paragraph to address the specific terms of the questions. Answers which followed a model or which covered the facts of the topic well but did not address the terms in the question needed to be developed further.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a popular question which many candidates attempted. The best responses focused most on the reasons behind Umayyad success, rather than simply describing that success. For example, a description of the architecture was a result of the stable rule but not a reason for the political and military success. Descriptions of Umayyad success in battle began to answer this question; analysis of Umayyad political organisation went further and explained how regions were organised, personalities managed and rivalries controlled. The conflict with Ali and the Shi'i was generally very well explained. Some of the best answers challenged the terms of the question in their introduction and defined what military and political success was. The immense failure of other rival powers at the time was another angle this question could be addressed from.

Question 2

Basic answers to this question wrote a chronology of the Umayyad's fall from power. More developed answers wrote an essay which took the factors for the rise of the 'Abbasids and came to a conclusion about which factor they found most important. The most advanced answers focused on individuals and weighed their contribution against other factors. For example, one excellent answer discussed the mistakes made by Umayyads such as Uthman and his extravagance, which weakened Umayyad moral credentials. It then went on to Abu al-'Abbas as-Saffah and his defeat of the Umayyad's at the Battle of Zab. Was it his skill in leading up to this campaign that was decisive? Most candidates concluded that there was no single individual responsible, and the best responses highlighted the contribution individuals had made as well as evaluating it in the greater scheme of things.

Question 3

Few candidates chose this question, but the few who did composed some interesting and wide ranging responses. The best answers defined in their introduction what the cultural and intellectual achievements were that they would be writing about: areas such as legal advances, poetry, Hadith collections, architecture, theology or *kalam* and so on. One candidate argued that the austerity of Umayyad Caliph 'Umar II was a cultural achievement because it created a culture more in tune with Islamic teachings without the finery of his predecessors. The intellectual achievements in the technical progress made during the 'Abbasid era were mentioned by the best candidates.

Question 4

Basic responses gave an accurate biography of 'Al-Shafi'i. More developed responses focused on his contribution to developing Islamic legal thinking in his use of the Qur'an as a primary source, secondly supported by Hadith; then if need be backed by the consensus of scholars (*ijma*) and only then defined by analogy to a similar situation (*qiyas*) where situations arose that could not be directly answered by the

Qur'an. Some candidates took the approach to compare 'Al-Shafi'i with the scholars who started the other 3 madhabs. This was also a valid approach, and some good answers made points about similarities with others as much as difference. The best conclusions noted the significance of 'Al-Shafi'i in the development of Islamic legal thinking at the time.

Question 5

The exhaustive and methodical processes for verification of Hadith, both *isnad* and *matn*, carried out by the Hadith collectors, were needed in this response which many candidates answered well. Candidates had evidently learned the criteria used by Hadith verifiers both in terms of the character of the narrator and the subject matter of the Hadith. The very best answers noted the slight differences of emphasis of some of the different Hadith collectors.

Question 6

Few candidates answered this question but those who did generally answered it well. The best answers focused on the importance of reason as opposed to revelation: that the orthodoxy of the day would not accept the extent to which the Mu'tazilah in their logical interpretation of sacred text which went so far as to consider the Qur'an the work of mankind since an other-worldly, unseen God could not create a human book. The best answers looked at Mu'tazilah interpretation of the afterlife and their use of 'aql or reason and teased out where exactly their views could be uneasily accepted and where they overstepped the mark and were rejected by the mainstream of the day.

Question 7

This question was quite well answered. Candidates knew the role of the Imam in Shi'i Islam and wrote about it in detail. The response of candidates to this topic has improved in recent years. Candidates should qualify their argument by stating clearly that Shi'i regard... and Sunnis regard... so that it is clear that the candidate has understood the teachings in both traditions. It would be beneficial if candidates studied the role of Khalifah in a little more detail so that they could give it equal consideration as Imam in their essays.

Question 8

This question was well answered. The first two parts were well answered by most candidates. The third part could be addressed in more detail. This other-worldly aspect of intense spirituality within Sufism was understood at a basic level by candidates who wrote about the need to let go of the desire for material possessions.

Question 9

Very few candidates chose to answer this question. Those who did wrote reasonably good responses which considered how far Islamic philosophy aimed to justify Islam in terms of human reasoning, but at the same time drawing limits on the extent of reasoning as opposed to revelation, which always had the upper hand. Most candidates referred to al-Ghazali in their answers.

Question 10

Very few candidates chose to answer this question. Those who did and were able to give a detailed account, tended to make reasonable responses. The best answers identified what the two men they chose said and did and expanded this to explain why this was significant for Islamic political movements of their time and afterwards. It was this consideration of the significance which brought the best answers up from a satisfactory to a good answer.

Question 11

This was a very popular question. Candidates are reminded of the need to address the question specifically and explain the teachings of the Qur'an. Basic answers explained the teachings of Islam in general, without specifying their origin and whether they were from Qur'an, Hadith or tradition. Better answers gave a partial account of some of the Qur'an's teachings, with references. Excellent answers gave comprehensive quotes and references for the teachings about Christians, Jews and others. Basic answers discussed the conduct of *dawah* or mission to non-Muslims. More advanced answers considered social issues in a country they knew well, and how those of different faiths addressed public religious festivals, equal rights in education and equality of opportunity in the workplace.

Question 12

A provocative statement, meant to encourage debate and discussion. Basic answers wrote about Islamic teachings about men and women. More developed answers outlined Islamic teachings, gave references and considered areas where there was equality and where there was difference. One excellent response noted that there were differences in approach and discussed what that meant in terms of importance. By so doing, the candidate had addressed the key words in the question and concluded that women were not less important but were important in different ways. This topic needs to include debate and discussion to address statements such as this, so that candidates can develop their skills of focusing on debate and discussion.

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 9013/21

Paper 2

General comments

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Question 7

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Very few candidates chose to answer this question. Those who did wrote reasonably good responses which considered how far Islamic philosophy aimed to justify Islam in terms of human reasoning, but at the same time drawing limits on the extent of reasoning as opposed to revelation, which always had the upper hand. Most candidates referred to al-Ghazali in their answers.

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This was a very popular question. Candidates are reminded of the need to address the question specifically and explain the teachings of the Qur'an. Basic answers explained the teachings of Islam in general, without specifying their origin and whether they were from Qur'an, Hadith or tradition. Better answers gave a partial account of some of the Qur'an's teachings, with references. Excellent answers gave comprehensive quotes and references for the teachings about Christians, Jews and others. Basic answers discussed the conduct of *dawah* or mission to non-Muslims. More advanced answers considered social issues in a country they knew well, and how those of different faiths addressed public religious festivals, equal rights in education and equality of opportunity in the workplace.

Question 12

A provocative statement, meant to encourage debate and discussion. Basic answers wrote about Islamic teachings about men and women. More developed answers outlined Islamic teachings, gave references and considered areas where there was equality and where there was difference. One excellent response noted that there were differences in approach and discussed what that meant in terms of importance. By so doing, the candidate had addressed the key words in the question and concluded that women were not less important but were important in different ways. This topic needs to include debate and discussion to address statements such as this, so that candidates can develop their skills of focusing on debate and discussion.

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 9013/23

Paper 2

General comments

The standard of answers in November 2013 was comparable to that in previous years. In some Centres there was a significant improvement in results due to a more analytical style of answer, in which the terms of the question were directly addressed and discussed. This formed the structure of the best answers. Solid answers tended to take a chronological or fact based approach, adding a concluding paragraph to address the specific terms of the questions. Answers which followed a model or which covered the facts of the topic well but did not address the terms in the question needed to be developed further.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was a popular question which many candidates attempted. The best responses focused most on the reasons behind Umayyad success, rather than simply describing that success. For example, a description of the architecture was a result of the stable rule but not a reason for the political and military success. Descriptions of Umayyad success in battle began to answer this question; analysis of Umayyad political organisation went further and explained how regions were organised, personalities managed and rivalries controlled. The conflict with Ali and the Shi'i was generally very well explained. Some of the best answers challenged the terms of the question in their introduction and defined what military and political success was. The immense failure of other rival powers at the time was another angle this question could be addressed from.

Question 2

Basic answers to this question wrote a chronology of the Umayyad's fall from power. More developed answers wrote an essay which took the factors for the rise of the 'Abbasids and came to a conclusion about which factor they found most important. The most advanced answers focused on individuals and weighed their contribution against other factors. For example, one excellent answer discussed the mistakes made by Umayyads such as Uthman and his extravagance, which weakened Umayyad moral credentials. It then went on to Abu al-'Abbas as-Saffah and his defeat of the Umayyad's at the Battle of Zab. Was it his skill in leading up to this campaign that was decisive? Most candidates concluded that there was no single individual responsible, and the best responses highlighted the contribution individuals had made as well as evaluating it in the greater scheme of things.

Question 3

Few candidates chose this question, but the few who did composed some interesting and wide ranging responses. The best answers defined in their introduction what the cultural and intellectual achievements were that they would be writing about: areas such as legal advances, poetry, Hadith collections, architecture, theology or *kalam* and so on. One candidate argued that the austerity of Umayyad Caliph 'Umar II was a cultural achievement because it created a culture more in tune with Islamic teachings without the finery of his predecessors. The intellectual achievements in the technical progress made during the 'Abbasid era were mentioned by the best candidates.

Question 4

Basic responses gave an accurate biography of 'Al-Shafi'i. More developed responses focused on his contribution to developing Islamic legal thinking in his use of the Qur'an as a primary source, secondly supported by Hadith; then if need be backed by the consensus of scholars (*ijma*) and only then defined by analogy to a similar situation (*qiyas*) where situations arose that could not be directly answered by the

Qur'an. Some candidates took the approach to compare 'Al-Shafi'i with the scholars who started the other 3 madhabs. This was also a valid approach, and some good answers made points about similarities with others as much as difference. The best conclusions noted the significance of 'Al-Shafi'i in the development of Islamic legal thinking at the time.

Question 5

The exhaustive and methodical processes for verification of Hadith, both *isnad* and *matn*, carried out by the Hadith collectors, were needed in this response which many candidates answered well. Candidates had evidently learned the criteria used by Hadith verifiers both in terms of the character of the narrator and the subject matter of the Hadith. The very best answers noted the slight differences of emphasis of some of the different Hadith collectors.

Question 6

Few candidates answered this question but those who did generally answered it well. The best answers focused on the importance of reason as opposed to revelation: that the orthodoxy of the day would not accept the extent to which the Mu'tazilah in their logical interpretation of sacred text which went so far as to consider the Qur'an the work of mankind since an other-worldly, unseen God could not create a human book. The best answers looked at Mu'tazilah interpretation of the afterlife and their use of 'aql or reason and teased out where exactly their views could be uneasily accepted and where they overstepped the mark and were rejected by the mainstream of the day.

Question 7

This question was quite well answered. Candidates knew the role of the Imam in Shi'i Islam and wrote about it in detail. The response of candidates to this topic has improved in recent years. Candidates should qualify their argument by stating clearly that Shi'i regard... and Sunnis regard... so that it is clear that the candidate has understood the teachings in both traditions. It would be beneficial if candidates studied the role of Khalifah in a little more detail so that they could give it equal consideration as Imam in their essays.

Question 8

This question was well answered. The first two parts were well answered by most candidates. The third part could be addressed in more detail. This other-worldly aspect of intense spirituality within Sufism was understood at a basic level by candidates who wrote about the need to let go of the desire for material possessions.

Question 9

Very few candidates chose to answer this question. Those who did wrote reasonably good responses which considered how far Islamic philosophy aimed to justify Islam in terms of human reasoning, but at the same time drawing limits on the extent of reasoning as opposed to revelation, which always had the upper hand. Most candidates referred to al-Ghazali in their answers.

Question 10

Very few candidates chose to answer this question. Those who did and were able to give a detailed account, tended to make reasonable responses. The best answers identified what the two men they chose said and did and expanded this to explain why this was significant for Islamic political movements of their time and afterwards. It was this consideration of the significance which brought the best answers up from a satisfactory to a good answer.

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