

Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Religious Studies

Unit L (RSS11) *Islam 2 The Life of the Prophet*

June 2009 Examination Candidate Exemplar Work:

- Candidate B



2009 (June) Unit L Islam 2 The Life of the Prophet

Example of Candidate's Work from the Examination

Candidate B

3 (a) Explain the nature of the Umma in Madinah.

(30 marks)

AO1

Candidate Response

3a) After the hijra in 622, the prophet (s) established the first ever muslim Ummah. In Makkah the prophet (s) had only a few followers, while in Madinah, the majority of the population of Madinah had now become muslims, so the first muslim Ummah was set up.

There were 3 three main groups of people who made up the muslim Ummah in Madina. Firstly, there was the was muhajiroon, who were the muslims that had come from emigrated from Makkah during the hijra with the prophet (s). Secondly, there was the ansars. The ansars was the name given to the people who already lived in Madina, ~~from~~ who belonged to the tribes of Aws and Khazraj. Thirdly, there were the group of hypocrites. The hypocrites were either from the jewish tribes or the tribes of Aws and Khazraj. The hypocrites, were those people who pretended outwardly to be muslims but were not really. They did not truly accept the prophet (s) or his message. Allaah says in the Quran, "There are some who say we believe in Allaah and the last but they don't really believe. They think they believe Allaah, yet they believe none but themselves!"

The Ummah of Madina was mainly made up of muslims who had extremely strong faith, with the exception of the hypocrites. The strong faith of the Madinan Ummah was illustrated during

the Battle of Badr, when they were outnumbered, had very ~~or~~ few arms and didn't have half the wealth that the Quraysh had. Yet, they had faith, strong faith in Allah and the fact that Allah would not let them lose. Hence, Allah sent down his help through angels, who helped the Muslims throughout the battle, and they were victorious.

The brotherhood between the Madinan Ummah was also very strong. Allah says in the Qur'an "hold on tight to the rope of Allah together, and be not divided". This illustrated when ~~after~~ immediately after the Hijra, the Muhajiroon had left all their belongings, wealth and some of their families behind and therefore had ~~not~~ nowhere to stay. The Ansar offered to share their homes, wealth and even their livelihood (farming) in order to help the Muslims out.

~~The~~ In addition to this the loyalty and love the Madinan Ummah felt for Allah, the prophet and their religion was extremely strong. As a result of this some ~~of~~ even left behind their families when they emigrated to the Madina with the prophet (S). Some of the Muhajiroon, even went as far as to fight with their non-Muslim family members during the wars.

In conclusion, I think the nature of the Ummah in Madina was that they were highly religious and the love for Allah and the religion was very strong.

Commentary

AO1 (30 marks)

This question is taken directly from the Specification.

This is generally a well-focussed answer. Its opening claim that the majority of the Madinan population were Muslim in 622 is, however, debatable.

The Muhajirun and the Ansar are correctly identified although the candidate fails to say that the Ansar were Muslims, or to offer a translation of the term. The description of the 'hypocrites', linked to the Qur'an, is very effective.

The strong faith of the Umma is commented on and illustrated. It is developed later in the answer when the fact that the Umma would fight their own blood relatives is used as evidence of their new loyalty.

The brotherhood within the community is made clear, as is the support given to the Muhajirun by the Ansar. There is passing reference to the Jewish tribes.

Assessment

Reference to the constitution of Madinah would have helped this answer, as well as greater attention to Muhammad's role as leader within the community.

The answer is generally relevant, but, for example, the treatment of Badr is a little off-key, and mostly accurate. It is a reasonable length.

Level 6 (24 marks)

- (b) The Madinan Umma of Muhammad's time still has a vital role for Muslims today. (15 marks) AO2

Candidate Response

3b. Some would agree with the claim that the Madinan Ummah of Muhammad (s) time still has a vital role for Muslims today, arguing that there are many lessons, Muslims today can learn from the Madinan Ummah, for example, Muslims today could learn from the way the Madinan Ummah loved the prophet (s), Allah and their religion. Firstly, Muslims could learn from the piety of the Madinan Ummah in Muhammad's (s) time. Even during battles, the Muslims took time out to pray and during the battle of Badr took place during the month of Ramadhan, and the Muslim majority of the Muslims were fasting during a battle. The Muslims today could learn from this hence it plays a role in their lives today. Also, individuals from the Madinan Ummah, such as Abu Bakr (r.a), Ali (r.a) and many other companions of the prophet (s) who were part of the Madinan Ummah narrate many hadiths of the prophet (s). "Pray as you see me pray". Hence the Madinan Ummah plays a vital role in for Muslims today because through the hadith which many of them narrated we learn of the prophet (s).

his life and his teachings.

Commentary

AO2 (15 marks)

This addresses an issue flagged up on the Specification, and candidates should have debated it prior to the examination.

The candidate offers two reasons why the Umma is important and these are supported by examples. The answer is, however, one sided, and shows no sign that there is a debate on this matter.

Level 4 (9 marks)

Total for this question is 33/45: Grade A borderline standard June 2009

- 4 (a) 'After the death of Muhammad, the Umma identified a new leader.'

Outline how a new leader was identified and explain the differing views of this process found in Sunni and Shi'a Islam.

(30 marks)

AO1

Candidate Response

4a. After the death of the prophet (s) in 632, the muslim ummah was left in turmoil as the prophet (s) had not appointed a successor, before his death. Before, the prophet Muhammad (s) had even been buried, a debate had begun between the muslims as to whom should be the next of leader of the muslims. Should it be from the Muhajiroun or the ansar?

Abubakr (r.a) thought the leader should come from the Quraysh or the muhajioun as the Quraysh would not accept the authority of anyone else. Abubakr (r.a) put forward the name of Umar (r.a) as the next leader of Islam. However, Umar (r.a) put forward Abubakr (r.a) as the next leader of the muslims and reasoned that the prophet (s) had insisted that the p Abubakr (r.a) should lead the prayers while he was ill. The majority of the muslims accepted this and pledged their allegiance to Abubakr (r.a) as the first caliph.

On the other hand, there was a small group of people who believed the successor of the prophet (S) should come from Ahl al Bayt - the family of the prophet (S). Therefore, it should have been Ali (R.A) as he was the cousin of the prophet (S) and he was his son-in-law. This is where the divisions in Islam began forming.

According to sunni Islam, Abubakar was the first rightly guided caliph, after whom came Umar, then Uthman, and lastly Ali. These were the four rightly guided caliphs who followed in the exact steps of the prophet (S).

In contrast to this, according to shia Islam, before the prophet (S) death, after the farewell sermon, at a place called Ghadi Khoom, the prophet (S) said, "... of whom ever I am maula, Ali is also maula". According to shia Islam, here the prophet (S) appointed Ali as his rightful successor. However, in sunni Islam, the word "maula" is interpreted differently and they take the meaning of this to mean that the prophet (S) was praising Ali and not appointing him his successor.

These differing ^{views/interpretations} caused the divisions found today ~~is~~ between sunni and shi'a Islam.

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Commentary

AO1 (30 marks)

The candidate offers a brief summary of the election of Abu Bakr. This is just sufficient as an 'outline'. However, traditions that suggest that Ali was excluded from the debate would have been useful, as would traditions concerning his attitude towards the new Caliph.

The candidate clearly presents the Shi'a understanding that Muhammad had nominated Ali as his successor. The interpretation of the key term 'maula' is explained.

A clearer explanation of the contrasting views of Sunni and Shi'a about how the Caliph was identified was needed. This could have included, for example, the Shi'a attitude to the authority of the first four Caliphs.

Assessment

In the context of this first June examination, this answer was assessed as, just, level 6 and given a mark of 24/30.

Level 6 (24 marks)

- (b) Assess the view that Islam has never recovered from the crisis caused by the death of Muhammad.

(15 marks)

AO2

Candidate Response

4b. Some would agree with the view that Islam has never recovered from the crisis caused by Muhammad's death. Arguing that, it was the crisis caused by Muhammad (s) death and the debate over who was correct the successor of the prophet (s), that led to the death of Ali's son Hussain, who was killed by Yazid, the then caliph. Hussain was asked to challenge Yazid as caliph by a group of people who thought Ali should have been first caliph and not Abubakr. Hence, the death of Hussain led to the origins of a separate sect of Islam, called Shiism.

Another reason why some would argue that this view is correct is because even today, there are two separate sects of Islam, one being Sunni Islam and the other Shia Islam. Even though the Shia Islam did not truly begin until the death of Hussain, the idea actually began when the debate over succession began.

On the other hand, some would disagree with this view because once Abubakr (R.A) was appointed as the first caliph, the debate was over, the crisis that was caused by the death of Muhammad (s) was over and Abubakr (R.A) had a successful caliphate, in which he spread Islam all over the world.

Another reason they could disagree with this view is

because if it wasn't for the group of Muslims killing Uthman (R.A) then divisions in Islam may never have formed. The crisis caused by the death of Muhammad (s) would have been over, of course Muslims would always feel the loss of their prophet but a completely new sect may not have formed and eventually Muslims would have recovered to full strength. However, because

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the debate of successorship being carried forward and the origins of shi'ism, it seems that muslims have not recovered from crisis caused by death of prophet (s). ~~In conclusion, I think as long as there is more than just one sect of~~
 In conclusion, I agree with the above view and think that muslims have not recovered from death of prophet (s), nor will they ever recover.

Commentary

AO2 (15 marks)

The point of the opening paragraph here is not quite clear. The second, however, clearly argues that the divisions in Islam following Muhammad's death still remain. This is the only aspect of the 'crisis' caused by the Prophet's death that is tackled by the candidate – it would have been profitable to consider other factors e.g. those leading to the wars of re-conquest. The argument that the election of Abu Bakr ended the crisis is not convincing given what else the candidate has to say. The final section attributes the division in Islam to events later than the Prophet's death. This is a valid point but does not actually help in a debate about whether Islam has or has not recovered from the crisis that did happen.

Assessment

Awarded level 5, 10/15, for an argument that does recognise more than one point of view.

Level 5 (10 marks)

Total for this question is 34/45: Grade A Borderline standard June 2009