

# ISLAMIC STUDIES

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Paper 9013/12  
Paper 1

## General comments

The overall standard of performance this year remained high. Most candidates appeared well prepared for the examination and there were a number of excellent scripts from a range of centres. Most candidates had sound knowledge of the subject. Every year candidates are reminded and encouraged to pay attention to examination techniques, such as reading the questions carefully and developing answers as required. Unfortunately several candidates scored low marks because they did not answer the question set.

**Questions 1, 4, 7, 8 and 12** remained the most popular, while **questions 3, 6 and 11** were less popular and less well answered. **Questions 2, 5 and 9** did not attract many responses. Very few attempted **Question 10**.

## Comments on specific questions

### *Section A*

#### **Question 1**

- (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 best answers gave thorough factual details such as economic elements in maintaining the status quo and traditional loyalties and explained the ways in which pre-Islamic Arabian society worked. They were able to mention the names of idols in the Ka'ba. Weaker candidates often lacked sound knowledge and tended towards giving generalised statements. Some described a few beliefs and practices but without giving details.
- (b) Overall this question was not answered very well. There were some good answers, but unfortunately several candidates tended toward generalised statements. Some responses provided a few basic details without showing much knowledge. Some candidates gave brief answers and there was some repetition of points from part (a).

#### **Question 2**

- (a) This was the least popular question this year. There were many good answers to this part, but unfortunately several candidates misread the question and described events in general terms.
- The best answers gave a detailed account of the problems in Medina, and the suitability of the Prophet (pbuh) as a leader to solve them.
- (b) This part was generally well answered with the majority of candidates giving details of the Prophet's treatment of the non-Muslims. A high proportion of candidates wrote relevant, well-balanced answers, giving a complete account of the Prophet's conduct. Weaker responses lacked specific details and gave incomplete details.

### Question 3

This question did not attract many responses but was generally done well by those who attempted it. They gave factual details of the main events of his caliphate and the difficulties encountered by 'Uthman.

The best answers gave a detailed explanation of the causes of unrest and also traced the events that resulted from this. Some responses tended to write about the life of 'Uthman which was not what the question was asking.

### Section B

#### Question 4

- (a) This was the most popular question in this section and many of the candidates who attempted it did well.

Many candidates were able to provide a detailed account of the steps taken to make the collection of the Qur'an under the caliphs Abu Bakr and 'Uthman. However, some focused only on Abu Bakr. The best answers gave comprehensive accounts of the events leading to the collection process including references to the method used by Zaid ibn Thabit and the mus'haf kept by Hafsa.

- (b) This question was generally well answered, with many candidates demonstrating their familiarity with the events that prompted the caliphs to compile the Qur'an into book form. The most comprehensive answers attempted to show the centrality of the Qur'an in Muslim life and the need to have an agreed text. Basic answers provided a few details without showing much knowledge and tended toward generalised statements. Some responses gave quite brief answers and there was some repetition of points from part (a).

#### Question 5

Good answers described the contents of the surah and pointed toward its theme of tawhid. The best responses to this question gave a full account of the main elements in the surah and attempted to link them to the main themes of the Qur'an as well as writing in detail about God's total knowledge and control. Basic answers simply gave an outline of the surah, with some only translating the surah and stating its importance in Muslim life.

#### Question 6

The relatively small number of candidates who chose this question answered it well and attempted to show the centrality of the Qur'an in individual and communal life among the Muslim community. The best answers explained the importance of the Qur'an, but also pointed to the example of the Prophet (pbuh). Better answers to this question displayed a very sound knowledge and understanding of the Islamic law and suggested that the Qur'an is and will be fundamental, but also referred to the Sunnah, Ijma and Qiyas. They were able to discuss in detail the ways in which the Sunnah and other secondary sources have been used to expand the teaching of the Qur'an. Some responses simply stated the importance of believing in the Qur'an.

### Section C

#### Question 7

This question was reasonably well answered although many responses did not go beyond a paraphrase of the wording of the question. The most thorough answers discussed the significance of the shahada and its centrality to aspects of Islamic thought and action. They attempted to explain that in order to become a Muslim, it is not sufficient to only pronounce the shahada, but that new Muslims have to submit to the will of Allah completely and follow the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammed (pbuh). Some responses were either very brief or the explanation was confused.

### **Question 8**

This question was very popular and many of the candidates who attempted it did well, with some providing outstanding responses. The majority of the candidates possessed sound knowledge about the Five Pillars of Islam and their importance in Muslim life. They provided a range of evaluative statements and most were able to link these statements to the question. Although many answers identified distinctive features of the Pillars and explained how they give a sense of unity, some responses merely described them without giving details.

### **Question 9**

This question was not a popular choice. Several candidates lacked the specific knowledge required to address this question effectively. Very few candidates could explain the significance in Muslim beliefs of scriptures revealed earlier than the Qur'an. The best answers to this question were able to name earlier revelations and explained their importance in Islam. Many candidates did not read the question carefully and concentrated only upon the importance of the Qur'an.

### **Section D**

#### **Question 10**

Very few attempted this question and responses generally showed a lack of understanding. Most candidates merely described the importance of the Qur'an.

#### **Question 11**

This question was not a popular choice. Several candidates lacked the specific knowledge required to address this question effectively. Very few candidates could give a comprehensive account of ijtihad, together with one or more examples of its use in Islamic legal thinking in today's world.

#### **Question 12**

This was the most popular question in section D and many of the candidates who attempted it did well. The majority of candidates were able to offer detailed accounts of the relationship between the Qur'an and Sunnah; providing examples to explain the importance of the Prophet's Sunnah in interpreting and supplementing the teaching of the Qur'an for legal purposes.

# ISLAMIC STUDIES

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Paper 9013/13  
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- (b) Overall this question was not answered very well. There were some good answers, but unfortunately several candidates tended toward generalised statements. Some responses provided a few basic details without showing much knowledge. Some candidates gave brief answers and there was some repetition of points from part (a).

#### Question 2

- (a) This was the least popular question this year. There were many good answers to this part, but unfortunately several candidates misread the question and described events in general terms.
- The best answers gave a detailed account of the problems in Medina, and the suitability of the Prophet (pbuh) as a leader to solve them.
- (b) This part was generally well answered with the majority of candidates giving details of the Prophet's treatment of the non-Muslims. A high proportion of candidates wrote relevant, well-balanced answers, giving a complete account of the Prophet's conduct. Weaker responses lacked specific details and gave incomplete details.

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### Section B

#### Question 4

- (a) This was the most popular question in this section and many of the candidates who attempted it did well.

Many candidates were able to provide a detailed account of the steps taken to make the collection of the Qur'an under the caliphs Abu Bakr and 'Uthman. However, some focused only on Abu Bakr. The best answers gave comprehensive accounts of the events leading to the collection process including references to the method used by Zaid ibn Thabit and the mus'haf kept by Hafsa.

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#### Question 6

The relatively small number of candidates who chose this question answered it well and attempted to show the centrality of the Qur'an in individual and communal life among the Muslim community. The best answers explained the importance of the Qur'an, but also pointed to the example of the Prophet (pbuh). Better answers to this question displayed a very sound knowledge and understanding of the Islamic law and suggested that the Qur'an is and will be fundamental, but also referred to the Sunnah, Ijma and Qiyas. They were able to discuss in detail the ways in which the Sunnah and other secondary sources have been used to expand the teaching of the Qur'an. Some responses simply stated the importance of believing in the Qur'an.

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### **Section D**

#### **Question 10**

Very few attempted this question and responses generally showed a lack of understanding. Most candidates merely described the importance of the Qur'an.

#### **Question 11**

This question was not a popular choice. Several candidates lacked the specific knowledge required to address this question effectively. Very few candidates could give a comprehensive account of ijtihad, together with one or more examples of its use in Islamic legal thinking in today's world.

#### **Question 12**

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# ISLAMIC STUDIES

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Paper 9013/22  
Paper 2

## General comments

The standard of entry this year was reasonable. Nearly all candidates properly understood the rubric and answered the correct number of questions, from the right sections. Most balanced their time proportionately so that they were able to ensure the same standard of answer across all five responses that they attempted. Invariably this benefitted candidates much more than the small minority who attempted one or two questions well then either left one question out or found themselves short of time at the end.

Sections A and D appeared to be best answered. Typically Section D was the most popular, with many candidates choosing to answer two questions from this section. Candidates are developing their responses for Section A to contain more evaluative comment, which helped raise some of the marks awarded typically to a good level of response. This is also evolving in answers for Sections B and C, but candidates were on the whole slightly less confident with the subject matter in these sections.

Whilst candidates performed well in the middle levels of response, there were fewer excellent answers this year. Centres would benefit from teaching their students to make clear and sharp definitions of terms in their introductory paragraphs. Candidates generally built up arguments through logically structured paragraphs, as their essays progressed, but could further enhance them by referring back to the terms of the question. The best answers had a clear point to each paragraph and each paragraph contained an explanation about how it fitted in with the specific focus of the question. It is not sufficient to write about the topic in general; the specific focus of the quote, question wording and response required are challenges for the candidates to respond to.

Candidates are reminded of the need to study in more depth than at O Level where a topic is present on both A Level and O Level syllabuses. At this level a mastery of detailed examples and an ability to debate and discuss their significance is important. It is not necessary to learn quotations but some candidates did deploy them with skill to illustrate points made in their essays. Quotations should be used in that way; to provide an example to strengthen a point made to answer a specific question. There is no need to add quotes where they are not directly relevant.

Wherever possible, credit will be given where candidates make personal responses showing their own opinion, based on reasoned argument, in their conclusions. This is one area that could be further developed and teachers are encouraged to practice this with their students to help develop their essay writing skills further.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section A**

- 1 This was a stimulating and popular question. Essential to begin with was a definition of what 'more Islamic' might mean within a short introductory paragraph, up to around 10 lines. The best answers did this which gave them a focus with which to refer back to as their essays developed. They went on to describe aspects of Umayyad rule in paragraphs, and measured each paragraph according to the definition made in the introduction. The same was done for the Abbasids. This created a good structure with which to make a conclusion showing evaluation and therefore reaching the higher levels of responses. Centres are encouraged to practice essay writing with structure so that candidates can develop their skills at written argument and put themselves in a better position to reach an answer demonstrating thought and evaluation. Some responses claimed one or the other were more Islamic, some that there was little difference. The main feature of a good answer was the quality of the argument and its justification, rather than which dynasty they chose.

2 This question was popular and well answered. Candidates had clearly learned the achievements of their chosen caliph in detail. The best answers considered a range of factors in which the early state might be developed: political consultation, alliances and people in key positions; religious infrastructure with building of mosques and pilgrim facilities; social development with facilities for the ordinary people especially those living in cities, as well as any building which would improve their quality of life; and economic rules to encourage fair trade and expansion. Very good answers weighed up how far the chosen caliph did develop the state, how far they did not and what was left to be done by their successor.

3 Candidates responded well to this question. Focused answers looked at a range of political factors involved in managing the expanding Empire at the time, as well as using the strengths of the power base of each ruler, so that vulnerabilities were minimised.

Mu'awiya had a power base in Syria having been appointed governor there by Caliph Umar. He developed his army there, and found it a safer base to which to rule from than Medina where many disaffected followers of Ali, Hasan and Husayn resided. Damascus was also better placed for expansion westwards.

Baghdad provided a well-placed capital, with plentiful water supply, and enabled al-Mansur to embark on a prestigious building project to cement his power and status. Having defeated the Umayyads to the west and assassinated a potential thorn in his side, Abu Muslim, in the east, Baghdad was a strategic choice to control the Empire from.

Good answers included a range of factors about both capitals, adding detail about the historical developments of the Islamic Empire at each time.

### Section B

4 A few good answers challenged the question and argued that the differences were small and of minor significance. Others detailed differences in addition to giving background information about both legal scholars. Very good answers gave worked examples of how *Sunnah* was used in specific cases. Some responses looked at the use of *Sunnah* within Shariah in general, but this question required a specific focus on the understanding of the concept by Malik and by al-Shafi. Centres who wish to prepare students by practising this question might ask them to prepare a table of the use of *Sunnah* comparing the two scholars. Conclusions can then be drawn by analysing to what extent they were different using the information presented side by side in the table.

5 Many candidates knew about the Hadith collection methods with regards to the *matn* and *isnad*, the verification of the content of Hadith and the reliability of the chain of narrators. The best answers elaborated on these and drew comparisons with other collections of hadith which could be seen to be less reliable due to the same standards of rigour as Bukhari and Muslim not being employed. Excellent answers gave examples of hadith which had been accepted and others which had been rejected and reasons why they had been included or not, justified with reference to the collection methods.

6 This question was generally well answered. The best answers focused their work on the actual terms of the question. General answers merely wrote an overview of Mu'tazili teachings, whilst better answers focused only on '*aql*', tawhid and '*adl*'. Candidates generally wrote a short introductory paragraph defining the three terms, then a detailed paragraph about each one in turn. Conclusions linked the terms together to help understand the logical equilibrium behind Mu'tazili ideas, as well as adding the candidates own opinion or criticism about this.

'*Aql*' means rational thinking. The Mu'tazili put emphasis on gaining knowledge through human intellect, and were criticised by the Ash'ari for putting less emphasis on revelation. '*Adl*' is divine justice. To the Mu'tazila, everything had to balance. If a person faced injustice in this world, it would be equally out in the next. Tawhid refers to Islamic monotheism. Excellent responses explained how far Mu'tazili teachings used reasoning to justify the existence of one God, the characteristics of



God and God's place in Creation, and how far reason explains divine justice in the afterlife. Note that is not the same as paraphrasing what the teachings mean. The best answers discussed how far Mu'tazili relied on 'aql and how far they were different from the Ash'arite theologians of the time – some arguing that there was some overlap as well as difference, and a range of different viewpoints.

### Section C

- 7 (a) (b) Detailed knowledge was well demonstrated in the responses given to this question. Fatima was youngest daughter of the Prophet (pbuh) and Khadija, wife of Caliph 'Ali and the mother of Husayn. Some candidates mentioned her humble background and the way she helped and tended to the sick on the battlefield. Fatima helped to clear camel waste which had been thrown onto the back of the Prophet (pbuh) during prayer. A well rounded over-view of Fatima's life gained a good mark. For Husayn, many answers focused on Karbala which was very well described in detail. Husayn was killed there for refusing to submit to the forces of the rival Yazid.

The importance of these people in Shi'i Islam was approached from different perspectives. The historical perspective: explaining why the different sects diverged after Karbala; the perspective of leadership according to the Prophet's lineage or through consultation; and the place and significance of Imams. Shi'i Muslims trace their Imams back to 'Ali, Fatima and Husayn and view the position of the Imam as carrying special spiritual significance from having been involved in this struggle for, as they see it, the right and the true. The best responses linked this to the position of the Imam today in Shi'i Islam.

- 8 There were some exceptionally good responses to this question, which was very pleasing for examiners to see. The best responses defined Sufism in terms of both practices and theology. Reasons for attraction included the support and fellowship received through Sufi orders, and guidance given by a Sheikh; attractive zikr and meditations to bring a believer closer to God; in some ways a flexible approach with space for an individual spiritual path, easier to follow than a more orthodox, more precisely laid out approach. Suspicion could come from accusations of innovation in worship through the introduction of new practices, or by abandoning traditional routines for more fluid approaches; to theological ideas in which God is found within and in which the distinction between a person and God becomes blurred. Where a response made these arguments well, backed with examples, then the highest level of response was awarded.

- 9 (a) (b) Few chose this question but those who did responded well. **Part (a)** proved straightforward for candidates. The best responses began with a short introductory paragraph defining the terms. For **part (b)**, many quoted al-Ghazali's works to justify their arguments, making a good response. For example, in his work 'The Incoherence of the Philosophers,' al-Ghazali criticised Aristotle, Plato and those Islamic philosophers who had borrowed from their works. An alternative view is that al-Ghazali was not totally opposed to all *falasifah*, but classified it as a separate, permissible discipline. Reference and discussion of different views made for an excellent conclusion and a high level of response awarded to the very best answers.

#### Section D

- 10 (a) (b) Very few candidates attempted this question, but those who did generally performed well. **Part (a)** was relatively straightforward and those candidates who were comfortable and confident with the subject matter were able to achieve high marks with this part. The second part was slightly less well answered but most candidates did define differences. Good answers focused on the reaction to colonialism and whether to adapt to a modern education system with Sayyid Ahmad Khan, or diverge away from western models, as with Hasan al-Banna. The extent to which these movements were different was a source of debate in a few answers which reached the higher levels of responses.
- 11 This was a popular question. Despite this, many candidates did not score as well in their response to this question as to their other responses on this paper. The few who did perform well followed the same structure of answer that might be expected elsewhere in the paper. The best answers defined what covering the body might mean in its various forms: from full niqab, chador or burqa; a veil over the hair; a partial veil or a modesty dress of loose clothes without necessarily veiling. The best answers referred to the Qur'an, with quotations, and Hadith, to trace the origin of these customs. Then, cultural traditions in one or two countries might be referred to, explaining social norms and values and the expectation of covering. Note that the question referred to women who are concerned to cover, so answers should refer to their decision within the context of Islam. The best responses recognised a variety of different interpretations to this question and drew together the main factors identified in a clear summary in conclusion at the end.
- 12 This was a relatively popular question. There were a few good answers, although for most candidates this was not their strongest response. The best answers defined the differences and the equality in status according to the teachings found in the Qur'an and Hadith as their starting point. Some disagreed with the question and elaborated on differences between men and women, or explained how cultural traditions did not always honour what was taught in religious texts. Discussions included the importance of education for both genders; rights in marriage, divorce and inheritance; differences in roles within the home but also expectations to support each other. It could be argued that differences in the position of female witnesses in law or in the position as regards polygamy constitute inequality. A counter argument could be that some individuals depart from the principle of equality which is nevertheless strong in the original teachings.

# ISLAMIC STUDIES

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Paper 9013/23  
Paper 2

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The importance of these people in Shi'i Islam was approached from different perspectives. The historical perspective: explaining why the different sects diverged after Karbala; the perspective of leadership according to the Prophet's lineage or through consultation; and the place and significance of Imams. Shi'i Muslims trace their Imams back to 'Ali, Fatima and Husayn and view the position of the Imam as carrying special spiritual significance from having been involved in this struggle for, as they see it, the right and the true. The best responses linked this to the position of the Imam today in Shi'i Islam.

- 8 There were some exceptionally good responses to this question, which was very pleasing for examiners to see. The best responses defined Sufism in terms of both practices and theology. Reasons for attraction included the support and fellowship received through Sufi orders, and guidance given by a Sheikh; attractive zikr and meditations to bring a believer closer to God; in some ways a flexible approach with space for an individual spiritual path, easier to follow than a more orthodox, more precisely laid out approach. Suspicion could come from accusations of innovation in worship through the introduction of new practices, or by abandoning traditional routines for more fluid approaches; to theological ideas in which God is found within and in which the distinction between a person and God becomes blurred. Where a response made these arguments well, backed with examples, then the highest level of response was awarded.

- 9 (a) (b) Few chose this question but those who did responded well. **Part (a)** proved straightforward for candidates. The best responses began with a short introductory paragraph defining the terms. For **part (b)**, many quoted al-Ghazali's works to justify their arguments, making a good response. For example, in his work 'The Incoherence of the Philosophers,' al-Ghazali criticised Aristotle, Plato and those Islamic philosophers who had borrowed from their works. An alternative view is that al-Ghazali was not totally opposed to all *falasifah*, but classified it as a separate, permissible discipline. Reference and discussion of different views made for an excellent conclusion and a high level of response awarded to the very best answers.

#### Section D

- 10 (a) (b) Very few candidates attempted this question, but those who did generally performed well. **Part (a)** was relatively straightforward and those candidates who were comfortable and confident with the subject matter were able to achieve high marks with this part. The second part was slightly less well answered but most candidates did define differences. Good answers focused on the reaction to colonialism and whether to adapt to a modern education system with Sayyid Ahmad Khan, or diverge away from western models, as with Hasan al-Banna. The extent to which these movements were different was a source of debate in a few answers which reached the higher levels of responses.
- 11 This was a popular question. Despite this, many candidates did not score as well in their response to this question as to their other responses on this paper. The few who did perform well followed the same structure of answer that might be expected elsewhere in the paper. The best answers defined what covering the body might mean in its various forms: from full niqab, chador or burqa; a veil over the hair; a partial veil or a modesty dress of loose clothes without necessarily veiling. The best answers referred to the Qur'an, with quotations, and Hadith, to trace the origin of these customs. Then, cultural traditions in one or two countries might be referred to, explaining social norms and values and the expectation of covering. Note that the question referred to women who are concerned to cover, so answers should refer to their decision within the context of Islam. The best responses recognised a variety of different interpretations to this question and drew together the main factors identified in a clear summary in conclusion at the end.
- 12 This was a relatively popular question. There were a few good answers, although for most candidates this was not their strongest response. The best answers defined the differences and the equality in status according to the teachings found in the Qur'an and Hadith as their starting point. Some disagreed with the question and elaborated on differences between men and women, or explained how cultural traditions did not always honour what was taught in religious texts. Discussions included the importance of education for both genders; rights in marriage, divorce and inheritance; differences in roles within the home but also expectations to support each other. It could be argued that differences in the position of female witnesses in law or in the position as regards polygamy constitute inequality. A counter argument could be that some individuals depart from the principle of equality which is nevertheless strong in the original teachings.