

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 2068/12
Paper 1 History and Scriptures

General comments

Overall, the performance was good. There was evidence of a broad study of the syllabus and thorough preparation for the examination.

In **Sections A** and **B** of the Question Paper, the majority of candidates selected the correct information for answering questions and made every effort to focus on the demands of the questions. Candidates understood that part **(a)** questions required short answers of correct knowledge. They addressed part **(b)** questions with the seriousness they deserved and were aware that the skill of understanding was required as well as knowledge. Generally, the responses showed ample evidence of candidates attempting to analyse and evaluate in their answers. In some cases, however, candidates had not fully understood or paid proper attention to the wording of part **(c)** questions.

With regard to **Section C** of the Question Paper, candidates were aware that there was an opportunity for writing longer answers in this section and more marks are available.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a)** A significant number of candidates performed well on this question because they selected four features of polytheism in the Pre-Islamic period. Weaker candidates tended to focus on the evils of the society of the Pre-Islamic period, such as the exploitation of slaves, the treatment of women, gambling and drinking and so on. This may have been because some candidates had not read the question carefully enough or had not understood that the question required selection of aspects of religious belief.
- (b)** This question on the importance of Mecca as a centre of pilgrimage in the Pre-Islamic period was generally very well answered. Candidates showed understanding of the origins of the Ka'ba as a focus for pilgrimage from the time of Adam and Ibrahim. Good understanding was shown of the religious importance of the site at the time of Muhammad (pbuh), before Islam, and the commercial importance of Mecca as a centre of pilgrimage and a source of revenue for the Quraish.
- A few candidates misunderstood the question and based their answers on Mecca as important for the performance of Hajj, **after** the establishment of Islam.
- (c)** For the majority of candidates, their performance was weaker here than on parts **(a)** and **(b)** of the question. Good answers assessed the different factors that contributed to the Quraish's opposition to Muhammad (pbuh). Some of the weakest answers merely described the different ways Muhammad (pbuh) was persecuted by the Quraish.

Question 2

- (a)** Most candidates described four aspects of the character of Muhammad that caused people to respect him.
- (b)** Most responses to this question demonstrated good knowledge of the incident of the replacing of the Black Stone (Hajr al-Aswad). However, some answers demonstrated little understanding of

how this showed the character of Muhammad. The best answers combined a good description of the incident with a detailed explanation of the wisdom, diplomacy and leadership that Muhammad (pbuh) demonstrated on this occasion.

- (c) In general, answers to this question were evaluative and knowledgeable about the origins of the message Muhammad (pbuh) brought to the people of Mecca.

Section B

Question 3

The overall performance on **Question 3** was a poor one. After a good start on part (a), the majority of candidates who chose the question did not appear to have enough knowledge about events in Medina to answer either part (b) or part (c) accurately.

- (a) Good responses accurately described what happened when the Prophet (pbuh) decided on a place to stay when he arrived in Medina.
- (b) Only a few candidates had knowledge of the terms of the Charter of Medina or the reasons why it was drawn up. Some answers were totally inaccurate; they were accounts of why the Prophet (pbuh) left Mecca.
- (c) Candidates were asked to write about lessons to be learned from the behaviour of the Prophet (pbuh) in dealing with the hostility of the Jews in Medina and how these might be applied in life today. Candidates who had no knowledge of (b) only gave general comments about tolerance and/or patience.

Question 4

- (a) The best answers gave an accurate description of the part played by Abu Sufyan's caravan, returning from Syria, in the lead up to the battle of Badr. Weaker answers were embellished stories that contained some accuracy.
- (b) There was a strong performance on this question. The emphasis in the question was on the way God helped the Muslims to gain victory in the battle and candidates who recognised this and answered accordingly with knowledge and understanding of the references to God's assistance in the Qur'an gained the highest Level. Some good responses at Level 3 gave descriptions of the battle, which included only one or two aspects of God's assistance e.g. the Prophet's prayer and the assistance of 3000 angels.
- (c) What was required by this question was an analysis of what might have happened to the Muslims and the future of Islam if the battle of Badr had been lost and whether the Muslims had more at stake than the Quraish. Good answers addressed this but, in general, most answers tended to be an explanation of why the Muslims could have lost the battle because of inexperience and being outnumbered by the Quraish.

Section C

Question 5

- (a) This question on Sura Alaq was well answered by those candidates who addressed both parts of the question. Most knew the circumstances of the revelation of the Sura to Muhammad (pbuh) in cave Hira and showed understanding of the teachings it contains. Well balanced answers achieved Level 4.

Some responses omitted a description of the revelation but offered good explanations of the teachings and although they addressed this part of the question confidently, the omission of the circumstances of the revelation limited their achievement.

There were also a significant number of responses where candidates gave an accurate description of the revelation but misinterpreted the teachings in the verses and so limited their answer to Level 2.

- (b) There were some interesting discussions here about the advantages of studying religion; the most common benefits being seen as strengthening faith and being able to teach others. Generally, disadvantages or negative aspects such as study leading to a questioning of faith were not explored. Most answers were satisfactory rather than good.

Question 6

- (a) Good answers addressed this question with clear understanding of the teachings in the Hadith and how these might affect the thoughts and actions of Muslims. Detailed examples of good character were incorporated into answers as evidence of belief being put into action. A significant number of candidates gained Level 3 and Level 4.

Only a few candidates demonstrated any misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the teachings but some of the weaker answers did not develop or omitted the examples of good character.

- (b) This question provoked many lively and discursive answers about actions done in secret and was well answered. Most discussed the difference between actions hidden because of shame or guilt and actions done discreetly to achieve good and gave examples of each to support their arguments. Some weaker answers addressed only the need for secrecy if actions were wrong e.g. immoral or against Islamic teaching and many of these answers were one-sided with very little development.

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 2068/13
Paper 1 History and Scriptures

General comments

Generally, the performance was very good. Many candidates displayed a good knowledge of the topics in their chosen questions. The ability to select and deploy the correct information, whilst keeping a focus on the question, is a skill all candidates need to use to gain the maximum credit.

In **Sections A** and **B** of the Question Paper, the performance on part **(a)** short answer questions was good. It was also apparent that a significant number of candidates addressed part **(b)** questions with the seriousness they deserved and were aware that the skills of understanding as well as knowledge were being assessed. Overall, there was appropriate awareness that the skills of analysis and evaluation were required for part **(c)** questions and the performance on these was good.

With regard to **Section C** of the Question Paper, candidates were aware that there was an opportunity for writing longer answers in this section and more marks are available.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a)** This question on the features of a city dwellers life in the Pre-Islamic period was well answered by candidates who selected information about trade, commerce and commercial life in Mecca.
- (b)** Generally, well answered. Most responses gave a detailed account of the nomadic and tribal customs in Pre-Islamic Arabia.
- (c)** Good answers to this question assessed both the customs that were abandoned when people became Muslims and those aspects that were adapted and incorporated into Islam. Some weaker answers listed only the customs or cultural vices that were abandoned and discussion of the reasons was limited.

Question 2

- (a)** The majority of candidates gave accurate description of how Khadijah gained evidence of Muhammad's good character.
- (b)** The performance on this question was a mixed one. The majority of answers gained Level 3 for information on the main events in Muhammad's early life with Abu Talib. There were also some very comprehensive answers, which gained Level 4. Some inaccurate answers contained only a little relevant information.
- (c)** Generally, performance on this question was linked to the amount of accurate information selected for part **(b)**. Most candidates understood what was required and made a satisfactory attempt to link events in Muhammad's early life with the characteristics of a prophet.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) Well answered. The details of Bilal's persecution were well known.
- (b) Most responses showed good knowledge and understanding of the events of the migration to Abyssinia and the best expressed and most coherent accounts gained Level 4. In the main, answers showed that candidates were confident of their knowledge of this event. There were many sound accounts that differed only in the amount of detail they contained that gained Level 3.

Some candidates were unsure of the material and included the Prophet (pbuh) in the migration but gave enough accurate information to gain Level 2, satisfactory.

A few candidates confused the migration to Abyssinia with the Hijra.

- (c) Overall, there was a very creditable response to this question. Candidates tackled the arguments with enthusiasm and provided good comparisons between the sufferings of Muslims today in various parts of the world and those of the early Muslims. Some compared the favourable conditions of Muslims in their own communities with those of the early Muslims in Mecca.

Question 4

- (a) The details of how the Prophet (pbuh) consulted his companions before the Battle of Trench and the adoption of Salman al Farsi's suggestion of digging a Trench were given by most candidates.
- (b) Most attempts at this question were written with enthusiasm and some accuracy. Good answers contained an account of the reaction of the Meccans to the trench and the events and conditions of the following siege and withdrawal. The best answers also showed understanding of the infidelity of the Quraish's allies and the Prophet's successful attempt to stir up discord among them.
- (c) Generally well answered with some thoughtful evaluations about the test of endurance caused by the conditions of the siege and the courage and determination shown by the Muslims during the Battle of Trench. Candidates who also evaluated that God's help was paramount in sending storms and winds that changed the situation overnight in favour of the Muslims gained Level 4. Satisfactory answers made some attempt to move beyond a factual approach.

Section C

Question 5

- (a) The question asked candidates to explain the background to Sura Ikhlas and what it teaches about the nature of God. Some candidates, however, did omit the background to the revelation and this was often to their disadvantage because it sometimes caused a loss of focus in their answer.

In general, responses were good or satisfactory. Weaker answers often repeated the words of the Sura without any development about meaning.

- (b) Many of the answers to this question were vague and undeveloped. The majority of candidates cited accountability and doing good deeds; avoiding bad deeds as the greatest affect the teachings might have on the life of a Muslim. Answers were often superficial and repetitive. Most candidates would have achieved better marks by giving practical and concrete examples of the affect of belief on the life of a Muslim. Such as having complete faith in the Oneness of God, trusting in his supremacy and obeying his commands, using the Qur'an and Hadith for guidance in every aspect of life.

Question 6

- (a) In answer to this question candidates showed good understanding of why the Hadith contained the injunction to 'speak good or keep silent' and gave examples of both appropriate and inappropriate actions and speech and their affect upon other people. Many candidates wrote at length about examples of generosity towards neighbours and guests and gave detailed explanations of those who could be categorised as neighbours and guests. The best answers also addressed the belief in God and the Last Day and in accountability before God for one's speech and actions. Comprehensive answers gained Level 4. The majority of responses covered most of the main points and gained Level 3.
- (b) Generally, the performance in part (b) did not quite match that in part (a) but some answers were good. In agreeing with the statement, many candidates expressed the view that lack of generosity was a character defect that Muslims should strive to overcome. Only a minority of candidates thought that it might be a matter of circumstances or lack of resources. Teachings about caring for others were quoted as reasons why all Muslims should strive to be generous to others.

ISLAMIC STUDIES

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

General comments

This was the second year of examination under syllabus 2068 and many good responses were seen. Nearly all candidates followed the rubric and answered the correct amount of questions from the required sections. Also, writing paragraphs has improved, as has part (c) evaluation responses. Some sections, especially the subject matter for **Section C**, need more detail, since there are 12 mark questions here which require slightly longer and more in depth responses than in the other sections.

Evaluation questions were generally well answered. Candidates need to consider different points of view in a little more detail and give evidence in examination responses to show this. For example, a candidate might agree with a statement, but then go on to describe that they understand why some others might disagree, or take a different point of view whilst also agreeing. Including this before coming to a conclusion could help good candidates improve their responses to very good or excellent.

Comments about specific questions

Question 1

- (a) **State four actions Uthman took to ensure the Qur'an was accurately preserved.** (4)

This question was reasonably well answered. Candidates were aware that a process of checking was set up; that Uthman sent the Qur'an to be distributed far and wide and that unauthorised versions were destroyed. Some candidates confused earlier work undertaken under Abu Bakr's Caliphate with that of Uthman. Good responses made the point that the accounts were checked with surviving Huffaz, who knew the Qur'an off by heart and could therefore verify that Uthman's version was accurate.

- (b) **Describe the ways in which Uthman changed the state that he ruled.** (10)

The state which Uthman ruled referred to the government of the Caliphate. Candidates understood this in broad terms and referred to many different matters, including improvement of religious facilities, building of wells, organisation of the military and creation of a naval fleet. Freedom for trading and expansion were other features. Weaker answers wrote about Uthman's standardisation of the Qur'an, whereas stronger answers covered most areas and sometimes commented that changes were generally, but not always good – there were some unfair trade practices for example.

- (c) **'Uthman's greatest achievement was to preserve the Qur'an.'**
Discuss this statement and give reasons to support your views. (6)

The best responses engaged in discussion about the statement and focused on discussing the concept of 'greatest'. The preservation of the Qur'an was undoubtedly important because it is the same, unchanged version which is used today, so this supports the statement. Others argued that the expansion of the Islamic Empire was a greater achievement, or that all Uthman's successes were equally important in his legacy.

Question 2

- (a) **How did Ali become Caliph, despite his reluctance to do so?** (4)

Fewer candidates opted to respond to **Question 2**, but those who did made reasonable responses. The best answers to this part described the details of discussions over Ali's appointment, at which time there was a need to appoint a Caliph after Uthman's murder. Detailed responses explained that the Khawarij issued an ultimatum and the people of Medina agreed in the Prophet's Mosque that Ali should be chosen.

- (b) **Give an account of the campaign of Caliph Ali against the Kharijites.** (10)

There were some complex and lengthy accounts in response to this question, but the best answers were not necessarily the longest. Good answers focused on the Kharijites and gave a good overview of events from the initial rebellion up to the Battle of Nahrawan.

- (c) **'Ali was unsuccessful because he did not want to become Caliph.' Discuss this statement and give reasons to support your views.** (6)

There were some good examples of evaluative responses to this statement. Some candidates challenged the question and argued that Ali did the best he could in difficult circumstances, so it should not be concluded that he was unsuccessful. Others argued that Ali faced very difficult situations and so was unsuccessful, but not because of his reluctance to be Caliph. Some agreed with the statement, arguing that the delay in appointing Ali at the start of his Caliphate and his attempts to make peace rather than lead in a forthright manner showed reluctance which resulted in confusion and failure.

Question 3

- (a) **State the four different classifications of Hadith according to their reliability.** (4)

This was a straightforward question to those candidates who knew the categories. It was not necessary to explain each, just to identify the names of the classifications using their transliterated Arabic or English terms. Candidates generally either knew them, and received full marks, or did not, so tended to receive no marks.

- (b) **Relate the methods used by the collectors to ensure the content of Hadith were reliable.** (10)

There were some very good responses to this question but also some weak responses. Good responses noted that collectors checked the content of the Hadith with the Qur'an, and other Hadith accepted as genuine. If a Hadith was biased towards a particular tribe then it was rejected. Some candidates made mention of the checks on the trustworthiness of narrators. Very few gave examples of how a specific Hadith was verified, but those who did wrote excellent responses.

- (c) **'The Qur'an alone can solve all problems.' Assess this statement, giving reasons to agree or disagree with it.** (6)

Candidates generally answered well, arguing that the Qur'an was the basis of faith and primary source for Muslims because it is considered the word of God. Many argued that it was not enough because the Hadith are needed to understand how to pray. However, better answers considered the word 'problems' and discussed how modern issues, not always covered by the Qur'an, needed guidance from scholars through *ijma* and *qiyas*.

Question 4

- (a) **Describe Prophet Yusuf's dream according to the Qur'an.** (4)

Question 4 was the most popular on the paper and well answered. Candidates knew in detail about Yusuf's dream and most gave excellent answers for this part of the question.

- (b) **Give an account of how Prophet Yusuf (AS) became separated from his family.** (10)

There were some excellent descriptions of the narrative for this part of the question. Many described Yusuf's father's reluctance; the brother's trick and their use of a blood stained shirt to make an excuse for his disappearance. The best answers remembered to include how Yusuf was taken away by a passing caravan, which explains how he left the well, but did not need to go further into the story of his later experiences in Egypt.

- (c) **'Prophet Yusuf (AS) turned misfortune to success.'**
Give two examples of how Muslims today can learn from this. (6)

One answer explained how the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) also turned misfortune to success after the Battle of Uhud, when he used the time to build up strength in Medina, which then led to the victory of the Muslims. Many answers explained that it was all part of God's plan and a test for Muslims, so they should not lose hope or give up. The best answers gave specific examples, perhaps personal experiences, where they had overcome situations such as family misfortunes but ended up keeping faith in God and gaining future success.

Question 5

- (a) **Give an account of the stages of the Hajj pilgrimage.** (12)

This was a popular question but there were few excellent responses. Candidates knew something of the stages but very few had a comprehensive overview of all of them. Responses were often confused about the order of Hajj and some mixed up visiting Medina with this Meccan pilgrimage. As a **Section C** question, a lengthy, detailed account is expected and centres are reminded that this question carries 12 marks, more than the equivalent questions in Sections A and B, so it would be worth studying Hajj in detail.

- (b) **'Spending money on pilgrimage is less important than donating to charity.'**
Discuss this statement with reference to Islam. (8)

Part (b) was better answered. Good responses argued that perhaps they were both important as both could refer to pillars of Islam, which are compulsory for Muslims. Some argued that not all Muslims go on pilgrimage and some cannot afford it, but they often can afford enough to give some to charity, even if only a little. Therefore charity was more important. Others argued that forgiveness may be achieved on the plain of Arafat during the pilgrimage, which enables Muslims to gain hope of eternal life in paradise and helps them to make a fresh start, so therefore pilgrimage is more important.

Question 6

- (a) **Describe Muslim belief in predestination and its significance for Muslims.** (12)

Few candidates answered this question and there were few good answers. The best answers explained that God has pre-written the fate of Muslims on the divine tablet and thus when Muslims lead their lives, they thank God for everything, because it is all part of God's plan. At the same time, Muslims should not assume their place in heaven is guaranteed and some consider that God could change the plan. Life is a test of faith for entry into the hereafter.

- (b) **'Greater Jihad is in the heart of the believer.'**
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your point of view. (8)

There were some better responses for part (b). Most knew the definition of 'Greater Jihad' and explained it in their answers, before going on to describe the effect of this belief in the daily struggles of a Muslim. The best responses gave good examples, often personal, about heart-felt dilemmas and temptation, such as whether to have the strength to fast in Ramadan whilst non-Muslim friends around are eating. Few disagreed with the statement although some argued that the struggle was in taking action to uphold their faith, not just thinking about it in their heart.

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 2068/23

Paper 2 Development, Sources, Beliefs
and Observances

General comments

This was the second year of examination under syllabus 2068 and many good responses were seen. Nearly all candidates followed the rubric of the examination and answered the correct number and combination of questions from which they were required to choose.

The evaluation questions – part (c) in **Sections A** and **B** and part (b) in **Section C** – were particularly well answered. Many candidates saw the significance of the questions raised and made mature and thoughtful responses to discuss the issues. Excellent responses drew on personal experience and referred to different points of view.

Subject knowledge was mostly strong and some answers were excellent.

Comments about specific questions

Question 1

- (a) **State four military campaigns in which Umar was victorious.** (4)

A wide range of responses were valid here: victory against the Romans, Persians; at Buwaib, Qadisiya, Namarraq, Nahawan; the conquest of Jerusalem and Egypt – all of these were common responses and many candidates received full marks.

- (b) **Give an account of how Umar improved life for the community under his rule.** (10)

This was reasonably well answered. Many candidates knew detailed information about the rule of Caliph Umar. The best answers selected information and specifically related it to how this improved life for the community, as required in the question, rather than everything Umar did as ruler. Development of religious facilities helped Muslims and particularly pilgrims; building of schools helped education; constructing canals helped water supply; regional officials helped control and keep peace to help the lives of ordinary people in the regions.

- (c) **To what extent would you agree that the Four Pious Caliphs encouraged consultation?** (6)

Abu Bakr was at first unwilling to accept the role of Caliph, but after consulting the other companions, he accepted their decision. He set up the *shura*, an assembly to consult on the policies he should implement. This practice was continued by Caliph Umar. It could be said that this was a form of democracy and consultation.

Nevertheless, it was not consultation in the sense of a modern democracy. There were no democratic elections in which everyone voted. Umar made clear his insistence on Islamic teachings which were revealed. These could not be changed by voting. Uthman was criticised at times for promoting family members and trusted friends, rather than consulting more widely. It became difficult to consult as the Empire grew larger.

Candidates needed to include information about all of the Caliphs and to answer the question to get the higher Levels.

Question 2

- (a) Identify four problems Uthman faced at the beginning of his Caliphate. (4)

Any four problems were acceptable, and many candidates achieved full marks. Most mentioned that there were different versions of the Qur'an; that Uthman was mild in character so found it difficult to be assertive; that some officials were disloyal. Some candidates mentioned the problem of Uthman being thought of as having appointed corrupt officials; however this was an accusation after Uthman appointed some members of his family as regional leaders and so not at the start of his reign.

- (b) Describe the ways in which Uthman addressed these problems. (10)

Some responses focused only on one or two problems, such as addressing the problem of different Qur'ans by providing a standardised version. Better answers gave a more comprehensive description of a range of problems and how Uthman addresses these, such as his flexibility for army benefits when they conquered land; loosening restrictions on trade; building of the fleet to address the harassment of the Byzantines and so on.

- (c) 'The Caliph Uthman was too weak to be a successful leader.'
To what extent do you think this statement is true? Give reasons to support your answer. (6)

Many candidates agreed that Uthman was mild mannered but not necessarily weak, since he was one of the Four Pious Caliphs he must have had many strengths. His actions to create a standardised version of the Qur'an were opposed by many and it took strength to see this project through. Those who argued that Uthman was weak and unsuccessful tended to focus on his trading policies and his appointment of relatives who took advantage of their positions and were seen by some as corrupt.

Question 3

- (a) Give four examples of moral teachings from the Hadiths that you have studied. (4)

A wide range of responses were acceptable here, such as the importance of telling the truth and not backbiting. 'Moral teachings' does not mean details of worship: some candidates gave Hadith about how to pray a *rakat* of prayer.

- (b) Describe the methods used to ensure the narrators of Hadith could be trusted. (10)

This question was reasonably well answered. The focus was on the narrators through the *isnad*, the chain of narrators, although some candidates additionally gave details about how the subject matter of the Hadith, the *matn*, is verified. Good responses mentioned a range of different ways of checking the reliability of the narrator: good character; trustworthy; not known for lies or wrong doing; pious; fair in business and of good mind and understanding.

- (c) Discuss the extent to which the Hadith are still relevant for today's world. Give two reasons to support your answer. (6)

A wide range of Hadiths were chosen in various responses to answer this question. The better answers not only chose Hadiths but explained them, sometimes making personal responses about experiences of candidates which they could relate to a Hadith. A few candidates added qualifiers such as Hadiths needed to be interpreted carefully for today's world, or re-interpreted, to take account of changing circumstances.

Question 4

- (a) **How did Allah make Adam (AS)?** (4)

This was very well answered with many candidates citing that Adam (AS) was made from clay and Allah blew life into it, some adding that Allah said “be”. Fewer candidates mentioned that traditionally this was said to have occurred on a Friday and that Allah gave Adam knowledge of all things.

- (b) **Explain how and why Adam (AS) disobeyed Allah.** (10)

This was reasonably well answered. The best answers described the story in detail, and included some reference to the religious meaning behind disobedience, forgiveness and thereafter mission to serve as stewards of the earth until returning to face God’s judgement. The best answers made the link between Adam’s actions and God’s plan for the world.

- (c) **‘Muslims should not worry about disobedience because Allah will always forgive them.’ Do you agree? Explain your answer, with reference to the story of Adam (AS).** (6)

Many candidates disagreed with the statement and argued that the attitude of not worrying was too lax. Muslims should be concerned in all that they do to follow God’s will in the hope that God will view their actions and intentions leniently on the Day of Judgement. Muslims should not presume they should receive forgiveness. However, some candidates argued that the Qur’an mentions mercy and compassion far more than God’s punishment, so it is right for Muslims to lead their lives in respect of God without necessarily worrying.

Question 5

- (a) **Describe how Muslims use the Qur’an in their worship and in the home.** (12)

Many answers focused on using the Qur’an for moral guidance but were weak on the practical uses of the Qur’an, and verses from it, in prayers and in the Muslim household. The best answers mentioned the tradition that no prayer is complete without the recitation of Surah Fatiah from the Qur’an. Other points made were the use of the Qur’an at home by displaying verses framed on the wall, and by keeping the Qur’an on the highest shelf, to show respect and in the hope of blessings in return. Other aspects of use in worship include to recite it beautifully and other aspects at home to read it when facing choices or to overcome difficulties, such as to gain guidance about who to marry.

- (b) **‘Reciting the Qur’an is more important than translating it.’ Do you agree? Give reasons to support your views.** (8)

Responses were fairly well balanced between those who agreed and those who disagreed, with better answers appreciating different points of view as well as making a personal conclusion. Some argued it is more important to recite as it is recited in Arabic as part of the five daily prayers, a pillar of Islam, considered compulsory for Muslims. Others argued that translating is more important so that people can understand the meaning and therefore apply it in their lives.

Question 6

- (a) **Describe when and how Muslims say du’a prayers and explain their significance.** (12)

Du’a prayers are usually said at the end of the five daily prayers. They include words before starting to eat; special du’a at Friday and Eid prayer services; prayers for guidance and personal requests to God. Few candidates described many different occasions when du’a prayers are said, and most focused on personal requests often said after the normal five daily prayer services. The significance in passing over worries to God and gaining help at difficult times was partly covered by candidates’ responses.

- (b) **‘Giving Zakat is the best way to unite Muslim communities.’**
Discuss this statement and give reasons to support your views. (8)

This part was better answered and most candidates were able to appreciate different points of view. The focus of the question was on unity not importance, and the best answers understood and responded to this.