

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 2068/12
History and Scriptures 12

Key messages

- It is important that candidates read the questions carefully before answering them.
- Candidates need to make themselves familiar with the rubric so they know how many questions to answer and from which section.
- Many candidates were able to provide an outline of the general points of an answer. Responses can be improved by adding more detail and elaboration upon the points.

General comments

Overall, candidates made a good attempt to answer the questions they selected. Very few candidates answered questions from the wrong section.

There were some candidates who seemed to have good knowledge of the topic they were answering about, but did not provide enough details.

For **Section A**, candidates demonstrated good knowledge about early aspects of pre-Islamic Arabian life, but did not provide enough key details required for their answers. **Question 1** was more popular than **Question 2**.

For **Section B**, most candidates had good knowledge to answer their chosen question. Slightly more candidates chose **Question 3** over **Question 4**, though **Question 4** tended to be better answered.

For **Section C**, candidates tended to know the teachings of the passage or Hadith, though development of the second aspect of the question tended to be missing. There was an almost even split in the numbers of candidates answering each question.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) This was well answered, with many candidates gaining full marks. Some candidates appeared to have confused the answer with types of trade rather than types of goods.

(b) Successful responses identified the different beliefs and practices and were at least able to mention the polytheists and their idols making *tawaf* in a state of nudity and having superstitions. Better answers gave good details of these practices and also mentioned the other beliefs present. Where it was not well answered the candidate focused mainly on the idols and wrote about the social practices of killing babies, etc.

(c) Some candidates answered this well and were able to discuss both the challenges faced by people when they become Muslim, as well as relating their answer to the pagan Meccans and the way they could not let go of their wealth and status which led to some of the difficulties. The best answers related this to current times when people become Muslim and how they also go through these difficulties. Many less effective responses included a description of the persecutions, rather than provide a discussion on the challenges faced by these new Muslims.

Question 2

- (a) This was answered well and most candidates were able to give at least three names of those who looked after the Prophet (pbuh), with many giving four names.
- (b) Most candidates were able to write something about the benefits that Halima had after taking the Prophet (pbuh) as a baby, and mentioned the event when Jibril came to clean his heart. Fewer candidates gave details about the circumstances that led to Halima taking the infant Muhammad (pbuh) and details about what happened when Jibril came. These details are what is required for the best responses.
- (c) Most candidates did not discuss the way the Prophet's childhood experiences helped him to understand others but rather gave a description of the challenges in his childhood. This is not what is required of AO2 Evaluation answers.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) This question was not chosen often. Where it was answered most candidates were able to identify 3 – 4 early converts, although a significant number of candidates mistakenly chose 'Umar as one of those early converts.
- (b) This question was not very well answered as not many candidates seemed to know many of the events of 'Uthman's life. Most were able to say that 'Uthman was married to the Prophet's daughter and that he supported the Prophet (pbuh) in battles, but often there was little detail given about these events. The better answers wrote about how 'Uthman supported the Prophet (pbuh) in the various battles, his generosity at Tabuk and his role in the Treaty of Hudaibiya.
- (c) Answers to this question varied. There were some basic answers about following the sunnah and following the Prophet's example and character, without giving any details. Other responses were more specific about what a simple life might entail, such as connecting with God and their faith over material belongings, spending on simple outfits. A few candidates said that it is not easy to live a simple life due to the way everything has been modernised and that people only care about wealth and luxuries.

Question 4

- (a) This was the more popular question to answer from **Section B**. For **part (a)** most candidates were able to identify two features of the Prophet's character and elaborate on what it meant.
- (b) Most candidates were able to answer this reasonably well, being able to recall the main points of the sermon and giving details about them or providing quotes. The best answers also gave details about the Prophet's illness and the events that happened during this time, though most candidates wrote about this briefly.
- (c) There were few good answers to this question. Some candidates were able to take two points from the sermon and write about how they were relevant for Muslims today. Examples of this included adhering to the Qur'an and sunnah, which gives Muslims now the basics of law and how to live and provides a complete code of life for them in changing times, and how the message of the finality of the Prophet (pbuh) is important today when people on social media have a lot of influence and try to get others to follow them in everything they do. Most candidates gave general points or made points that were not related to the final sermon.

Section C

Question 5

- (a) This was a slightly more popular question to answer in this section, and most candidates were able to write the main teachings of each verse and provided some elaboration on the teaching. Many candidates also wrote about the importance of gaining knowledge, though there were a significant number of candidates who wrote about the teachings but did not write about how they relate to the importance of knowledge.

(b) Answers to this question were generally satisfactory, with candidates focusing on helping communities, but the part of abilities given by God was not written about. There were some very good answers that included the fact that God has given humans the ability to read/write and they can use this to teach the Qur'an and sunnah, as well as pondering the world around them, or that the ability given to be able to work and earn money can be used to help those who are poor and in need.

Question 6

(a) Candidates who answered this question had some understanding of the teachings of the hadith, though answers were quite general on how to treat others and were not focused on the hadith. Where it was well answered candidates gave details of how they can be generous with their actions and mouths (not saying hurtful things, controlling the tongue as it will testify against the person), ways to be generous to neighbours, even if they are not always nice, and how to welcome guests and treat them with kindness.

(b) Answers to this part were quite general with most candidates writing about ways to be generous rather than evaluating how easy it is to be generous. Some good answers, however, discussed that if people have the habit to be generous it will be easy, or if they take the Prophet (pbuh) as a model it will be easy.

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Key messages

- It is important that candidates read the questions carefully before answering them.
- Candidates need to make themselves familiar with the rubric so they know how many questions to answer and from which section.
- Many candidates were able to provide an outline of the general points of an answer. Responses can be improved by adding more detail and elaboration upon the points.

General comments

Overall, candidates made a good attempt to answer the questions they selected. Very few candidates answered questions from the wrong section or did not attempt all the questions.

For **Section A**, candidates demonstrated good knowledge about early aspects of pre-Islamic Arabian life, and many were able to provide detail in their answers. **Question 2** was more popular than **Question 1**.

For **Section B**, most candidates had good knowledge to answer their chosen question. **Question 3** was chosen significantly more than **Question 4**.

For **Section C**, candidates tended to know the teachings of the passage or Hadith, though development of the second aspect of the question tended to be missing. A significant number of candidates chose to answer **Question 5** over **Question 6**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) This was a well answered question with many candidates gaining full marks.

(b) Most candidates were able to explain the importance of Mecca as a place for pilgrimage by saying that many people came on trade caravans for worshipping idols at the Ka'ba and the way they performed *tawaf* and sacrifices. Fewer candidates gave details about the pilgrimage, the way that Adam and Ibrahim were involved in its construction or that it was a sacred precinct even for the non-Muslims.

(c) Many candidates were able to write about the significance of the history of Mecca, that it was the first place that God established his house. However, fewer candidates were able to relate this significance to Muslims today, for example by saying that the house of God is the direction to which Muslims now still pray towards every day, or that its history allows Muslims to understand the hardships previous believers went through.

Question 2

(a) This was a popular question, with most responses showing a few ways in which Khadija supported her husband.

- (b) Most candidates knew about the events of the first revelation and were able to write about the Prophet's experience. Where it was not as well answered it was usually due to brief descriptions or not enough information about what happened when the Prophet (pbuh) went home and Khadija took him to Waraqa. Responses could be improved by elaborating on the descriptions as much as possible, in this case giving the quote of the first revelation, the description of Jibril, and the conversations between the Prophet (pbuh) and Jibril, Khadija and Waraqa.
- (c) This was a well answered question, with most candidates discussing the fact that the Prophet (pbuh) needed time to get used to the revelation, that he needed reassurance and support, and that God had not given the command yet.

Question 3

- (a) This question was the more popular from this section, but **part (a)** was generally not answered well. Many candidates wrote about what happened while they were waiting, rather than the reasons they went to Hudaibiya instead of going to Mecca.
- (b) Answers to this part of the question showed that most candidates knew about the subject of the Treaty, but answers were brief and needed more details to improve. A number of candidates focused on what happened to 'Uthman and did not write enough about the rest of the events.
- (c) This part was generally well answered, with candidates able to relate the question to their own lives and show ways that they can show patience. Examples included making dua to God to lift their tests and trials, not releasing stress by shouting or treating others badly, but turning to prayer instead.

Question 4

- (a) This question was not answered often. Most candidates identified two or three of the Prophet's wives.
- (b) This question was generally not answered very well. Candidates did not seem to know all the names of the Prophet's daughters, nor many significant events in their lives. Answers were quite general and focused on the Prophet (pbuh) loving and supporting his daughters. Any details were related to Fatima, but even these were limited to her marriage to 'Ali and the fact that she passed away soon after the Prophet (pbuh).
- (c) Answers to this part were average, with most answers focusing on the role of women in general rather than how the roles the Prophet's wives and mothers played can help show Muslims how women can be educators, businesswomen, etc.

Question 5

- (a) This was a much more popular question to answer from this section. Most candidates did well by demonstrating knowledge of the teachings of Sura Fateha, but responses needed to include more elaboration and meaning about the teachings. There was also little said about how the sura was used in the everyday lives of Muslims. Reciting Sura Fateha in the daily prayers was the most common response to how it is used in the everyday lives of Muslims.
- (b) This was reasonably well answered, with many answers saying it was easy to follow the straight path by following the Qur'an and sunnah by praying, fasting and learning about Islam, which is easy now with the amount of information available to people. Fewer candidates were able to say why it may be difficult to follow the straight path, which could have improved their responses.

Question 6

- (a) This question was averagely answered. Candidates were able to give some teachings about behaving well towards others, following God's guidance and leaving that which we doubt. Most answers needed more detail and did not mention enough about what it means to have good character.
- (b) Answers to this part were good, with many candidates giving good examples of how to be role models. Examples included praying and doing good deeds in the best manner, so that they can be

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an example for their children to follow, and that they should give their children room to grow and allow them to understand that mistakes can be rectified with forgiveness.

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Key messages

- It is important that candidates read the questions carefully before answering them.
- It is crucial that candidates focus on the question asked. Many responses were about topics in general rather than addressing the specific questions.
- Many responses could have been improved significantly by adding more depth and detail, for instance by adding examples or quotations.
- Responses to AO2 Evaluation questions were mostly basic with some discussion or analysis, and could improve by focusing more on the question asked.

General comments

Overall, responses seemed weaker than in previous years.

For candidates to improve, it is recommended to practice focusing on exactly what is asked by each question and specifically tailor the response. Writing in general about a topic does not provide a successful answer. If candidates write everything they know about a topic, this usually includes too much irrelevant information that cannot be credited.

Candidates are advised to learn the details for each topic and practice them. Facts and explanation, as well as examples and the occasional relevant quotation could improve answers.

The weakest area of knowledge seemed to be revelations of the Qur'an, which could be improved by some more in-depth learning about the circumstances of revelations.

Responses to AO2 Evaluation questions could be improved by practising skills of discussion and analysis. Many responses included repetitions from AO1 Knowledge and Understanding questions here.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Section A appeared to be the strongest section overall. Most candidates chose **Question 2**, but those who chose **Question 1** performed equally well.

Question 1

(a) For this short question, candidates might mention four separate points, or mention two and develop each with additional information. Examples included stating that 'Umar formed a committee of six people, and then develop this by adding the names of two or more members of that committee. Another example was that as 'Umar was dying, he asked the committee to decide within three days; the next Caliph should make an oath of office on the 4th day. Again, this shows a clear point and some development.

(b) 'Uthman preferred to give positions to trusted people and let them take decisions for their own regions. Candidates gave some details of this and mentioned some areas where the Islamic caliphate took over under 'Uthman's reign. Some mentioned the navy but could add much more detail. 'Uthman tasked Mu'awiyah to create a naval fleet. From 649, the fleet was built up and went to battle against the Byzantines (Romans) at the Battle of the Masts in 655. This brought the forces

of the caliphate to the Mediterranean and some ships even went as far as Spain and were said to have taken some coastal areas there.

(c) Candidates might argue that 'Uthman was important for the early history of Islam in expanding and consolidating the caliphate. In the West, 'Uthman's navy reached parts of Spain. This was significant in setting the scene for 700 years or so of Muslim influence in Europe and North Africa. Gaining a sense of how Islam developed and expanded from the prophetic period to the period of the Four Pious Caliphs, and then the subsequent caliphates and development of Hadith collections and law schools may help candidates understand the importance of the contribution of each Caliph for AO2 questions.

Question 2

(a) This was well answered, with many candidates gaining full marks. Weaker responses included 'Umar's conversion during the life of the Prophet (pbuh). This could not be credited as the question was about 'Umar as Caliph.

(b) This was the most popular question on the paper and candidates tended to perform well. Some candidates listed the facilities 'Umar gave, which related to humility and piety. Better responses engaged with the meanings of the words: 'Umar was thought of as selfless and always ready to act with humility, considering the needs of others. Some candidates could be clearer in their understanding of 'pious', which means to be religious in practice such as to pray regularly and sincerely.

(c) Many candidates simply stated that people today should be humble and pious. Most gave a few examples, but often left their answers without developing them. Some good answers included more development. One excellent answer stated that to some extent humility might be interpreted as weakness, so a leader might face a hard time leading their people if they were too humble. This was contrasted with the importance of humility in following not only 'Umar but also the Prophet (pbuh), such as by consulting others and not dictating, which might be seen as a basis for improving leadership today.

Section B

Question 3

(a) Acceptable answers included Cave Hira, Mecca, Medina, Badr, Uhud, Taif, Quba, Hudaibiya and Cave Thawr. Short answers simply naming the places were acceptable. It was not necessary to add description here, as this was required in part (b).

(b) This question was not well answered. Few candidates knew about revelations from Mecca, and even for the most famous one, the first revelation, only a few knew details of the Night of Power and were hence unable to describe it well. It is important that responses give specific details and include narrative of what Muhammad (pbuh) and the angel Jibril said, how Muhammad (pbuh) responded and so on. One or two relevant quotations would have improved answers as well.

(c) There were some good answers, but many were short and undeveloped. To develop an answer, candidates are advised to think of several perspectives and give some modern-day examples about facing hardships. Some responses included further details about the Prophet's hardships and simply said follow that today, which was too basic and not sufficient. There might be many occasions when a Muslim feels they are facing hardship and wants to give up, but then finds strength from the fact that Muhammad (pbuh) was able to cope with hardship with God's support and revelations: God never abandoned his Prophet (pbuh). The circumstances of revelation help Muslims to understand the life of Muhammad (pbuh) and how God guided him on every occasion. This can give Muslim's confidence that God always guides them in all that they do. Muslims could learn from this to help guide them and know what to do in times of hardship today.

Question 4

(a) This was a popular question and very well answered. Four descriptive words were sufficient, and details did not need to be added. Most candidates gained four marks. They mentioned that Yusuf (AS) was handsome, helpful, gentle, respectful, well-mannered, patient, kind, considerate, wise, forgiving and a family man.

(b) Candidates knew the story of Yusuf (AS) but needed to be more selective about choosing the relevant parts to put in their answers. Some gave an account of his whole life and the episode with his brothers, which was not asked by the question so could not be credited. The relevant parts included that Zulaikha fell in love with Yusuf (AS) and tried to seduce him. Yusuf (AS) tried to escape and Zulaikha ripped his shirt from the back. This provided evidence that it must have been Zulaikha, as the shirt was ripped at the back. Many answers missed out the banquet prepared by Zulaikha, at which each woman had a knife for their food. She told Yusuf (AS) to come out to show them his beauty, and they were so stunned they cut themselves. Zulaikha said Yusuf (AS) must be cast into prison if he did not obey her order then, but he did not wish to commit the sin. So Zulaikha persuaded her husband to send Yusuf (AS) to prison to save her reputation. Parts of Yusuf's life after this were not relevant to this question, so were not credited.

(c) Today, Muslims can find themselves in situations where they may find it difficult to tell the truth as it might result in a punishment. They could end up taking the blame for something or lose out financially. The best answers took these points and developed them with examples and learning points which Muslims might think of if they find themselves in such situations. The best responses focused on the modern day and learning points and avoided repeating AO1 knowledge.

Section C

Question 5

(a) Most candidates chose **Question 5** and had reasonable knowledge about belief in God, but could have been more specific in answering the question with regards to *shirk*. The belief in general relates to the negative aspect: that nothing must be associated with God and to do so is a sin and can put someone outside the fold of Islam. This is a defining point and was central to the message Muhammad (pbuh) preached against the pagans. It might be emphasised by quoting the Qur'an Sura 112 or referring to the statement of faith in the shahadah: no God but God. This means no idols and no sons of God. Muhammad (pbuh) is always referred to as a prophet and messenger, never a god and never a son of God. Candidates who were able to specifically focus on this aspect of belief in God wrote the best answers, supporting them with relevant quotations.

(b) Many candidates wrote about a few ways to avoid distraction. Fewer evaluated those ways, for example by saying how effective they are and how they can help keep Muslims on track. Some mentioned being strict in practice of prayer and reading the Qur'an to avoid distractions. Some mentioned that mobile phone use and gaming should be limited, as well as limiting media exposure, such as watching less TV. There were some thoughtful answers in that regard, best when explained carefully in relation to the question.

Question 6

(a) The question specifically asked for two rituals, and a wide range could be chosen from. Most candidates knew the details of Hajj, but some wrote about everything that took place. Those answers did not perform well because they included lots of irrelevant information, which candidates spent too much time on that could have been spent on other responses. Candidates are reminded again to focus on the specific questions, which will provide clearer answers.

(b) Most candidates came up with several points including learning from the traditions of Hajj and from the history of the pilgrimage. They might see scenes of Hajj on television or read about it or hear talks about it from pilgrims in their local mosque. The best answers included some development, for example by evaluating how effective each learning point might be back in a candidate's home setting. In order to provide successful answers for AO2, candidates are reminded to add evaluative comments to their answers and not just to list learning points.

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Observances 23

Key messages

- It is important that candidates read the questions carefully before answering them.
- It is crucial that candidates focus on the question asked. Some responses included too much general detail about a topic rather than addressing the specific question.
- Responses could be improved by including more relevant examples and quotations in support of points made.
- Almost all candidates followed the rubric correctly, answering the correct amount of questions from each section. A few responses were incomplete.

General comments

The full range of questions was attempted by the candidates. Some questions were slightly more popular than others, such as **Question 1** about 'Umar; **Question 4** about Yusuf (AS) and **Question 5** about prophets.

Candidates' overall performance was very good; they clearly demonstrated improvement on knowledge and understanding.

Where a question asks candidates to choose two or four things, it is important that they clearly do so, name what they have chosen and write only about their choices. Writing about other points cannot be credited. Also, generalised answers do not specifically address the points asked for in the question, so tended to be less successful.

Many responses were good and showed a lot of detail. Answers could be improved by adding more relevant quotations and examples, especially for the extended **Section C** 12-mark questions. It needs to be emphasised that **Section C** answers are intended to illicit more extended answers, for which more marks are available, so candidates are advised to add more depth and length to their responses here.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) This question was well answered. Relevant responses included Egypt, Jerusalem, Persia/Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Eastern Turkey and Armenia. Areas already under the caliphate, such as Mecca and Medina, could not be credited here because they were not added under 'Umar. Answers could not be double credited for the same area, such as Syria and Damascus, as they refer to the same region or area.

(b) This question required candidates to choose two areas. Some wrote about 'Umar in general, which meant that only two ways could be credited. Therefore, those answers tended to do less well as candidates spent too much time writing about a whole range of other areas that were mostly irrelevant. Others wrote about 'Umar's humility, but this needed to be applied to maintenance of the caliphate. It could be done so by referring to how 'Umar paid money to help the poor instead of taking extravagances himself. 'Umar maintained the caliphate through governorship. Some gave

details of this, and some chose to write about financial matters. Details about the new tax (*ushr*) for farmed lands were mentioned by some.

(c) Candidates might improve their answers here by improving their knowledge of the early history of Islam. Gaining a sense of how Islam developed and expanded from the prophetic period to the period of the Four Pious Caliphs, and then the subsequent caliphates and development of Hadith collections and law schools may help candidates understand the importance of the contribution of each Caliph. Many candidates gave vague answers here, but some were able to identify and evaluate some points, such as expansion which helped put Islam on a firmer footing.

Question 2

(a) This was not a very popular question. Candidates were required to describe two expeditions only, not more. Some provided general comments only. Successful responses identified by name or area the expedition and then developed it with a sentence or two about what happened there, for example: 'Abu Bakr sent forces to Bahrain, Oman, Yemen and other parts of Arabia, to strengthen and expand the areas Muslims held.' Military expeditions against the false prophets and those who did not pay zakat were also credited here.

(b) The best responses gave details about what Abu Bakr did and specifically related these details to how they maintained the caliphate. Consultation, military expansion, taking land, organising the army; combatting the false prophets and enforcing zakat were all relevant points. The effects of all these were to strengthen the caliphate because they supported the position of the Caliph, the Islamic rules in the case of zakat, and the fair and just government of everyone. Some candidates perceptively pointed out that Abu Bakr was keen to follow and preserve what the Prophet (pbuh) had put in place: he never claimed such a title for himself and kept everyone united by focusing on Muhammad (pbuh) and his example.

(c) Some candidates argued that as first Caliph, Abu Bakr set up a consultative council (*shura*) which was also used by his successors. Also, the army and provinces setup provided a model for 'Umar and 'Uthman. A different perspective was that Abu Bakr was following Muhammad's model, not making his own. A further line of argument was that the Four Caliphs together might be seen as providing a model, taken as a whole. Good responses mentioned some of these ideas and discussed them. Weaker responses listed ways in which Abu Bakr's actions might be copied.

Section B

Question 3

(a) This was well answered, with many candidates gaining full marks. Prayer, giving to charity, performing pilgrimage, telling the truth and speaking to others kindly are all examples of what was written and credited. More detail was not necessary. Specific actions such as prayer or general approaches such as telling the truth were both acceptable. The question did require actions, not general beliefs.

(b) Most candidates chose Zayd bin Thabit and 'Uthman. Zayd gathered fragments, asked witnesses and led a committee of Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) (*sahabah*), to find and verify fragments of the Qur'an on bones, papyrus and so on. 'Uthman ensured the correct version of the Qur'an was preserved. Candidates tended to be stronger in their knowledge of 'Uthman, and detailed knowledge of Zayd bin Thabit, including examples of his work in the collection, could be improved.

(c) Most candidates answered this with regards to care and accuracy to tell the truth, be careful to follow Islamic commands thoroughly and accurately, such as praying in the correct manner. Some mentioned scholarship and how it was important to check sources that are being used, especially in this day and age when the internet can sometimes be used without sufficient verification. The importance of authentic Islamic knowledge was well understood by most candidates. Some referred back to 'Uthman's enforcement of an official version of the Qur'an in support of their answers.

Question 4

(a) This question was very well answered, with many candidates gaining full marks. There were many signs that candidates mentioned: the sign of Musa's staff turning into a snake; the river Nile not providing flood water causing crop failure; locusts decimated crops; famine and disease; the land was filled with frogs; the Nile water turned red with blood and so on. Some candidates seemed to have confused the lack of flood with a flood and wrote that people found themselves under floodwater – this was not correct.

(b) This was well answered, with most candidates giving excellent accounts. Some added quotations showing in depth knowledge and understanding of the interactions between Musa (AS) and Pharaoh. There are two main sections of the Qur'an which some candidates referred to: Musa (AS) explained to Pharaoh that there was only one God, which Pharaoh disagreed with. This story is referred to in Qur'an 26:18 – 31. The Pharaoh's magicians and Musa (AS) challenged each other to prove their case with miracles. The Qur'an 20:58 – 76 describes their conversations. Other candidates gave an account of the whole story of Musa (AS), covering most of his life. This included large amounts of irrelevant material that could not be credited. It also took away time that candidates could have spent more usefully on other parts. Candidates are reminded to focus on the specific question asked.

(c) Good responses drew out lessons to be learned such as clear explanation, steadfastness and patience when dealing with others and so on. Some mentioned modern-day situations of conflict where these could be applied. Weaker responses wrote little about the modern-day and repeated lessons from the time of Musa (AS).

Section C

Question 5

(a) This was a popular question and generally well answered. It required two aspects: functions and character. The best responses addressed both and did so clearly, such as by writing an extended paragraph on each. Answers which wrote generally about prophets without specifically addressing character and function did less well. Characteristics mentioned included humility, patience and steadfastness as well as perfection; the best answers gave examples illustrated by the occasional quotation. Where candidates could develop their responses further is through more detail, such as by adding specific examples and adding quotations. Generalised answers tended to be insufficient to reach the highest level of response.

(b) Many candidates gave examples of things Muslims could do to follow the character of prophets. The best responses discussed to what extent this was achievable. The prophets were regarded as perfect whereas no one today can consider themselves as perfect as a prophet, putting a limitation on the extent to which Muslims can follow. However, that does not mean Muslims should not try and make an effort in all walks of life. Some candidates made this point and wrote that although times have changed, prophet's gave examples which might be applied in many different walks of life nowadays. There might be some difficulty in deciding what prophets might have done with matters such as use of technology, a limitation pointed out by some candidates.

Question 6

(a) Fewer candidates chose this question, but those who did performed equally well. Jihad can be characterised in different ways, such as the greater and lesser jihad; the jihad of the word, heart or sword; or as here, the physical, mental and spiritual Jihad. Here, the focus is on mental and spiritual. Good responses clearly focused on these two categories and wrote clear paragraphs on each, giving details, restrictions and adding the occasional example or quotation. Many good responses could be improved by demonstrating more in-depth knowledge, for instance by adding two or more specific examples or quotations. Quotations should only be included where relevant.

(b) Candidates made the point that Muslims today face temptations, a kind of mental Jihad. The temptation to stay in bed instead of getting up for the pre-dawn prayers; the temptation to eat whilst fasting in Ramadan and so on. Spiritually, a Muslim might practice Jihad against their ego in order to purify their minds and feel closer to God. When the devil is perceived, possibly through a situation of temptation, it can be a spiritual Jihad to resist the temptation and read du'a prayers to

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ward off evil. Good points were made by candidates who could clearly apply these ideas with reference to modern day situations and specific examples, whereas weaker responses wrote generalised accounts without giving detail or example.