



## RS.IB12 Barzakh and the Bridge of Sirat: The Journey After Death

AQA 8062 • Calculators not allowed • about 60 minutes

Total Marks

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

**Answer ALL questions. Show all your working.**

- 1** This multiple-choice question checks basic vocabulary about the Islamic intermediate state called Barzakh, in the context of beliefs about life after death.

- ☐ A, the final Day of Judgement when all souls are raised
- ☐ B, the period between a person's death and the resurrection
- ☐ C, another name for Paradise, the reward for the righteous
- ☐ D, a ritual washing of the body before burial

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

- 2** Give two things Muslims commonly believe happen to the soul during Barzakh, the intermediate state after death, in the Islamic tradition.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

- 3** Explain two reasons why Muslims believe the deceased are questioned in the grave by the angels Munkar and Nakir, referring to the purpose of this trial in Barzakh.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

- 4 Explain two beliefs about Al-Mizan, the weighing of deeds, as understood within Islamic teaching. Refer to the Quran or another source of wisdom and authority in your answer and give the reference.

(Total for Question 4 is 5 marks)

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- 5 Give three physical or symbolic features commonly associated with the Bridge of Sirat (As-Sirat) that every soul must cross in Islamic tradition, as taught in many hadiths and theological descriptions.

(Total for Question 5 is 3 marks)

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- 6 Explain two ways belief in the Bridge of Sirat might influence how a practising Muslim chooses to behave in daily life.

(Total for Question 6 is 4 marks)

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- 7 Give three examples of actions that might help a Muslim be confident of crossing As-Sirat, based on common Islamic teaching about deeds and faith.

(Total for Question 7 is 3 marks)

- 8** Explain two contrasting Muslim views about whether Al-Mizan is a literal weighing of deeds or a symbolic representation of divine justice. Refer to scripture or tradition in your answer.

(Total for Question 8 is 5 marks)

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- 9** Explain two possible experiences of a soul on As-Sirat according to Islamic tradition, and link each experience to a feature of the persons life.

(Total for Question 9 is 4 marks)

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- 10** Explain the importance of the stages Barzakh, questioning in the grave, Al-Mizan and As-Sirat for Muslims today.

(Total for Question 10 is 6 marks)

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- 11** Explain two reasons why Muslims might disagree about the exact nature of Barzakh and what happens there, referring to sources of authority or scholarly interpretation.

(Total for Question 11 is 4 marks)

- 12** Evaluate the statement, 'Belief in the stages Barzakh, questioning, Al-Mizan and As-Sirat is the most important reason Muslims try to live a good life.' In your answer you should give reasoned arguments to support this statement, give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view, refer to religious arguments and reach a justified conclusion.

**(Total for Question 12 is 15 marks)**

# Mark scheme · RS.IB12 Barzakh and the Bridge of Sirat: The Journey After Death

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## Question 1

- **B1** correct option B, Barzakh is the period between death and resurrection, cao
- **Answer: B, the period between a person's death and the resurrection**

## Question 2

- **B1** the soul awaits resurrection in a state of comfort, oe
- **B1** the soul may await resurrection in a state of suffering, oe
- **Answer: The soul awaits resurrection in comfort or in suffering, depending on the persons deeds and faith.**

## Question 3

- **B1** point 1: the questioning tests the persons faith and core beliefs, oe
- **B1** development: this shows that holding correct belief in Allah and the Prophethood matters after death and affects the persons state in Barzakh, oe
- **B1** point 2: the questioning examines the persons sincerity and practice in life, oe
- **B1** development: truthful and sincere answers are believed to bring peace to the grave, while failure results in discomfort or punishment, oe
- **Answer: E.g. the questioning tests belief and examines sincerity of practice, linking a persons life choices to comfort or suffering in Barzakh.**

## Question 4

- **B1** belief 1: Al-Mizan is understood as a weighing of good and bad deeds to help decide a persons destiny, oe
- **B1** development: some Muslims interpret Quranic references to scales as meaning deeds are measured and compared literally on the Day of Judgement, oe
- **B1** belief 2: others see Al-Mizan as symbolic of Gods just judgement rather than a physical weighing, oe
- **B1** development: this view emphasises Allahs fairness and mercy, and that the scales represent moral balance rather than a mechanical process, oe
- **B1** a correct reference to scripture or authoritative source, for example Quran 21:47 or Quran 101:6-9, oe
- **Answer: E.g. Al-Mizan as a literal weighing of deeds or as a symbolic representation of Allahs just judgement; see Quran 21:47 or Quran 101:6-9.**

## Question 5

- **B1** it is described as a bridge laid across Jahannam, oe
- **B1** it is described as very narrow or sharp, like a sword or thinner than a hair for some people, oe
- **B1** it is crossed quickly and safely by the righteous but is dangerous or collapses for wrongdoers, oe
- **Answer: Any three: bridge across Jahannam; very narrow or sharp like a sword or thinner than a hair; crossed easily by the righteous but dangerous for wrongdoers.**

## Question 6

- **B1** point 1: belief in a dangerous crossing motivates people to follow moral teachings and avoid major sins, oe
- **B1** development: fear of failing to cross As-Sirat may encourage repentance, charity and obedience to Allah, oe
- **B1** point 2: the promise that the righteous will cross easily encourages positive actions such as prayer and good deeds, oe
- **B1** development: hope of ease on the bridge can lead to increased worship, kindness and care for others, oe
- **Answer: E.g. motivation to avoid major sins and repent, and encouragement to perform prayer and good deeds to be among the righteous who cross easily.**

### Question 7

- **B1** performing the five daily prayers regularly, oe
- **B1** giving zakat or charity to those in need, oe
- **B1** showing sincere repentance and following the teachings of the Prophet, oe
- **Answer: Any three: regular prayer, giving zakat/charity, sincere repentance and following the Prophets teachings.**

### Question 8

- **B1** view 1: some Muslims take the Quranic imagery of scales literally and believe good and bad deeds will be weighed exactly, oe
- **B1** development: this position refers to verses such as Quran 21:47 to support a literal weighing, oe
- **B1** view 2: other Muslims interpret the scales as symbolic of Gods just assessment rather than a physical weighing, oe
- **B1** development: this view highlights theological points about Allahs justice and mercy and the limits of human understanding of the afterlife, oe
- **B1** a correct reference to scripture or authoritative source, for example Quran 21:47 or Quran 101:6-9, oe
- **Answer: Contrast: literal weighing supported by Quranic imagery (e.g. Quran 21:47) versus symbolic reading emphasising Gods justice and mercy rather than mechanical measurement.**

### Question 9

- **B1** point 1: the righteous may pass over quickly and safely, oe
- **B1** development: this is linked to sincere faith and good deeds in life, such as prayer and charity, oe
- **B1** point 2: wrongdoers may fall from the bridge or be delayed, oe
- **B1** development: this is linked to a life of major sin without repentance, showing the moral consequences of actions, oe
- **Answer: E.g. righteous pass quickly due to faith and good deeds; wrongdoers fall or are delayed because of unrepented major sins.**

### Question 10

- **Level 3** (5-6): A detailed, well-organised answer that explains several reasons why these stages are important for Muslims today, supported by accurate reference to Islamic teaching and/or scripture or tradition, with clear links between beliefs and practical effects.
- **Level 2** (3-4): An answer that explains some reasons for the importance of these stages with some supporting detail, though links between belief and practice may be limited.
- **Level 1** (1-2): One or two relevant points are made about the importance of the stages with little supporting detail or explanation.
- **Level 0** (0): No relevant content.
- **Indicative content:**
  - These stages teach moral accountability, showing that belief and actions have consequences after death and so encourage ethical living.
  - Questioning in the grave highlights the importance of correct belief and sincerity, which can shape daily religious practice and lifelong commitments.
  - Al-Mizan emphasises divine justice and the idea that good deeds matter, motivating acts of worship, charity and repentance.
  - As-Sirat underlines both fear of punishment and hope of reward, producing both deterrent effects and positive encouragement to follow Allahs commands.
  - Belief in Barzakh provides comfort to some believers that the soul is in an intermediate state and links death to eventual resurrection, affecting attitudes to death and bereavement.
  - Different interpretations within Islam, literal or symbolic, influence how individuals prioritise ritual, ethics and personal relationship with God.

### Question 11

- **B1** point 1: differences in interpretation of hadiths and their authenticity can lead to varied beliefs about detailed events in Barzakh, oe
- **B1** development: scholars may accept some narrations and reject others, producing differing accounts of comfort or punishment in the grave, oe
- **B1** point 2: theological emphasis differs between groups, for example on literal versus metaphorical readings, oe
- **B1** development: some schools stress literal details while others focus on the moral or symbolic meaning, leading to disagreement, oe
- **Answer: E.g. disagreements arise from varying acceptance of hadith reports and from differing theological emphases on literal or metaphorical interpretation.**

### Question 12

- **Level 4** (10-12): A well-developed, balanced evaluation that offers clear reasons for and against the statement, refers to Islamic beliefs and teachings, engages with different religious arguments, and reaches a justified conclusion.
- **Level 3** (7-9): A clear evaluation with some balanced argument, reference to Islamic beliefs, and a supported conclusion, though coverage may be less thorough.
- **Level 2** (4-6): A partly developed argument offering reasons for or against the statement, with some reference to religious belief, but limited balance or depth.
- **Level 1** (1-3): Simple, short responses that make one or two basic points about the statement with little development or reference to religious teaching.
- **Level 0** (0): No relevant content.
- **Indicative content:**
  - For: belief in these stages provides a clear framework of accountability after death, creating strong motivation to avoid sin and perform good deeds because consequences are taught to be experienced after death.
  - For: specific features such as As-Sirat and Al-Mizan personalise the afterlife and make divine judgement feel imminent, encouraging continuous moral behaviour, prayer, charity and repentance.
  - For: religious teachings and hadiths describing the grave trial and the bridge create fear of punishment and hope of reward, which are powerful behavioural motivators.
  - Against: other reasons also motivate Muslims, such as love of Allah, desire to obey out of devotion, community and family expectations, and striving for spiritual closeness rather than fear of punishment.
  - Against: some Muslims emphasise God's mercy and compassion as the primary motive for good behaviour, not fear of post-death stages; theological views that stress intention and inner faith may downplay literal stages.
  - Against: social, cultural and ethical reasons, including upbringing, law, education and empathy, also influence moral behaviour independently of specific eschatological beliefs.
  - Conclusion: a judgement weighing the strength of afterlife-based motivation against other religious and social motives, recognising diversity within the Muslim community and the role of both fear and love in ethical life.