

ISLAMIYAT

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 2058/01

Paper 1

General comments

It was clear from the examination that most Centres had prepared their candidates thoroughly to answer questions in all parts of the syllabus. In particular, the comment questions, **Questions 1 to 3**, in **Section A** were generally well answered, and candidates appeared to have a wealth of knowledge to draw upon for answers here. This was usually evident in other questions as well.

If there was one noticeable weakness, it was in knowledge of the early history of Islam, which was tested in **Questions 4, 6 and 7**. Some candidates did not appear to know why, in **Question 4**, the Prophet was invited to Medina and why he accepted the invitation, or to know, in **Question 6**, the main events of Abu Bakr's caliphate, or, in **Question 7**, to know the aspects of the annual pilgrimage. This is an unusual feature of Islamiyat answers. In the past, Examiners have almost always noticed that candidates' factual knowledge was much greater than their evaluative abilities. However, both are important, and Teachers are advised to prepare candidates thoroughly – both in the **facts** they should know within the syllabus and in how to show the **significance** of the facts they are taught for Islamic beliefs and history.

Almost no candidates attempted **Section C**. There have always been fewer answers to the Shi'a questions than to the Sunni questions, but it was sad to see such a drastic drop in this examination. In the new syllabus that will be examined for the first time in the Summer of 2003, although there will be no separate Sunni and Shi'a sections, there will be opportunities for candidates to give Shi'a views in their answers, and some questions will contain Shi'a options. Both Teachers and candidates can feel sure that the Examiners will be prepared and ready to mark Shi'a answers, and expect both Sunni and Shi'a candidates to express their knowledge and views in full.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was generally well answered, and most candidates were able to identify main points in both passages from the Qur'an. One tendency that Examiners wish to discourage is simply to paraphrase the passage itself instead of commenting on it. Paraphrases do not show understanding of the passage and are not given marks.

- (a) In answers to this passage, the Examiners were looking for comments regarding context on the fact this it is concerned with Abraham and Mecca, and specifically with his dedication of the ka'ba as a place of pilgrimage. Regarding the main teachings, they were looking for comments on the elements of the pilgrimage which are mentioned and Abraham's association with the pilgrimage, as well as the significance of what will happen to those who disbelieve.
- (b) In answers to this passage, Examiners were looking for comments regarding context on the revelation of the Qur'an and the date and significance of this particular night. Regarding the main teachings, they were looking for comments about the part of Gabriel and the Prophet Muhammad in the first occurrence of revelation, the reason for the holiness of this night, and the significance of the angels descending.

Teachers should note in the new 2003 syllabus the slight change to the rubric of this question, and also to the list of passages from the Qur'an specified for particular study. English translations of the passages set will be given alongside the original Arabic on the Question Paper.

Question 2

Again, this question was generally well answered, and most candidates showed thorough knowledge of the passages set. One slight criticism is that some candidates tended to write rather general comments, rather than give points related specifically to the phrases set.

- (a) An example of a good answer with regard to 'Master of the day of judgement' in this passage might be that this indicates: that there will be a day when all humans are judged; that God alone will be judge; this is because God is supreme and there is no other with him; that resurrection and judgement is an article of faith. Since the passage refers primarily to God himself, comments about the events of the judgement and about human conduct meriting reward and punishment are not directly relevant.
- (b) The phrase 'Now throw down your rod' in this passage seemed to present more problems than others. Good answers to this would have commented on: the rod turning to a snake; this being a sign from God to Moses; its purpose being to show that God had chosen him; the miracle being performed by God and not by Moses. The point of this phrase in this context is to show that Moses was under God's protection, and answers should have focused on this rather than on making general remarks about the whole incident of the burning bush.

Again, Teachers should note in the new 2003 syllabus the slight change to the rubric of this question, to the number of phrases required to be answered, and to the list of passages from the Qur'an specified for particular study. English translations of the passages set will be given alongside the original Arabic on the Question Paper, with the particular words or phrases to be commented upon underlined and numbered.

Question 3

There were some very good answers to this question, but also many that were lacking in precision and focus. Here, the Examiners are looking for comments that show candidates understand what the Hadiths teach about proper belief and action. Candidates may sum this up in a few sentences, they may give examples from everyday life, or they may quote other Hadiths that exemplify the same point. All are acceptable as long as they show clearly and concisely the main teachings of the Hadith.

Maybe some of the most insightful comments were given in answers to Hadith (g). Candidates wrote about the common failure of people to remember God when things are going well, and their tendency to pray when they are in trouble, but that the appropriate way is to be aware of God at all times.

Teachers should note in the new 2003 syllabus the change to the rubric of this question, and also that the number of Hadiths to be commented on has increased.

Question 4

This question asked candidates to think about the reasons for the *hijra* as well as its main events. Surprisingly few candidates were able to give more than one or two reasons why the Medinans made their invitation to the Prophet or why he accepted. Also, not many candidates gave all the main events of the *hijra*, including the incidents on the night of the Prophet's departure from Mecca, and his refuge in the cave of Thawr and what happened there.

- (a) Good answers to this part would have referred to the Medinans making their pledges to the Prophet and their desire to have him among them as a teacher, their need for a leader who could settle differences in their town, and their awareness of the predicament facing the Muslims in Mecca.
- (b) Good answers to this part would have referred to the hardships experienced by the Prophet at Mecca, the persecutions of his followers, his attempts to gain acceptance elsewhere, his desire to put his teachings into practice, and his knowledge that God had commanded him to migrate.

Question 5

Many candidates did not seem to read this question closely. It asked specifically for answers based upon the Qur'an and life and teachings of the Prophet. Good answers included references to what the Qur'an teaches about relations with the other people mentioned, to Hadiths that shed light on this and to incidents

from the Prophet's life that give examples of his relationships. Some candidates thought that general statements such as 'The Prophet loved children' would bring marks. However, the Examiners were looking for more precise comments than this.

There were some particularly good comments about the treatment of enemies. Candidates referred to the Qur'anic principle of fairness, and gave examples from the treatment of Quraysh prisoners following the battle of Badr and of the Meccans following the Muslims' capture of the city. Precise comments of this kind are exactly what the Examiners welcome.

Question 6

The two parts of the question test the candidates' **(a)** knowledge, and **(b)** understanding of an aspect of the history of the early Muslim community.

- (a)** Most candidates gave a general account of Abu Bakr's brief rule, and made some references to the Ridda Wars, false prophets, expeditions into Byzantine territory and written compilation of the Qur'an. However, few gave precise details about these, while some seemed to confuse Abu Bakr with `Umar. A point that raised some concern was the form in which the Qur'an was collected under Abu Bakr. Some candidates seemed to think that it was collected at this time in the same way as under `Uthman. Such ideas contradict the best Muslim historical accounts, and Teachers are advised to ensure that candidates are given accurate information about the process in which the Qur'an was compiled.
- (b)** In answers to this part, many candidates summarised Abu Bakr's main achievements, while some introduced details of his early life. The best answers explained the importance of such events as his rallying of the Companions after the Prophet's death, and of punishing the false prophets, and showed how these activities kept the community together, and allowed it to develop.

Question 7

This popular question asked for both descriptive and evaluative comments on aspects of the annual pilgrimage. The majority of candidates were able to say something about each part, though not all appeared to know their significance.

Better answers explained in **(a)** how *ihram* is a sign of the pilgrim entering a period of certain privations, in **(b)** how the *wuquf* is the high point of the observances, how in **(c)** stone throwing symbolises rejection of evil, and how in **(d)** the hair cutting ends the duties of the pilgrimage.

Question 8

Answers to this question generally covered all the main points.

- (a)** Candidates explained the central significance of the Qur'an and its absolute authority, and the importance of understanding the principles it imparts.
- (b)** Candidates explained how the Sunna gives detail to these principles and enables believers to see how they are to be followed practically. There were also some well worked examples of how a saying or action of the Prophet embodies a principle of the Qur'an. The highest marks were given to answers that showed clear thinking and definite knowledge of the relationship between the Qur'an and Sunna.