

ISLAMIC RELIGION AND CULTURE

Paper 2056/01

Paper 1

General comments

The overall performance of candidates was similar to last year.

Candidates made good use of their time and were able to answer five questions adequately.

However, candidates must read questions carefully to be able to answer what is asked. They need to look at the allocation of marks and balance what they write in their answers accordingly. They are reminded not to waste time writing out the questions before answering them.

Questions 1, 2, 3, 8, 9 and 11 were the most popular. Part **(a)** of **Question 4, 6 and 7** was answered well although part **(b)** was disappointing in all three. **Question 5** was attempted by few candidates. Many chose **Questions 10 and 12** but the answers on the whole were below average.

Comments on specific questions

Part 1

Question 1

Part **(a)** was generally well answered.

Candidates needed to read the wording of part **(b)** 'Adapted' seemed to be a difficult word for some candidates. They read it as 'adopted' and wrote very firmly and at length that the Prophet had not 'adopted' any of the practices of pre-Islamic Arabia, for virtually no marks. Examiners were prepared to credit comments that the Prophet corrected the idea of believing in Allah as the One God to be worshipped, and the Kaaba as the symbolic house of Allah. Candidates need to remember that the *tawaf* around the Kaaba is not just during Hajj but all year round, all the time except during the five times of prayer.

Question 2

This was popular question with well known material and well written answers. In part **(a)**, some candidates included events in the cave of Hira which was unnecessary. Some wrote only about the first revelation.

Candidates found part **(b)** more difficult than part **(a)**. Many were unable to write enough explanation of his character and relevant events to get above 5 marks. They needed to remember that the Prophet's life from earliest times was exemplary and that he was given the two titles long before he received the first revelation. Some mentioned people giving their belongings to him for safe-keeping when they were leaving Mecca, without adding that they took them back on their return, hence linking this with his title, Al Amin (the Trustworthy).

Question 3

This was another popular question with generally well written answers.

In part **(a)** candidates needed to remember the Prophet encouraged Muslims to migrate though he himself waited till Allah revealed to him he should do so.

In part **(b)** few candidates mentioned that the Quraish found it difficult to accept that a prophet would come who was a poor person and an orphan.

Question 4

Few candidates attempted this question. Those that did were not able to score many marks.

In part **(a)** they wrote about the achievements of Islam in general and the battles that were fought while Medina rather than, for example, the Prophet laying the foundation of a Muslim state, Medina would be a city of peace and the treaties concluded with Jews and Christians.

In part **(b)** many candidates missed the point that the question was asking about the revelations that influenced the life of the Muslims – e.g. permission given to fight in self defence (the lesser jihad), or no compulsion in religion (so no forced conversions).

Question 5

Some candidates did attempt this question but it proved to be difficult.

In part **(a)** they needed to look at the wording of the question carefully and accurately answer about the Jews. They were expected to mention the people of Medina accepted the Prophet as their leader, his own conduct of humility and compassion was towards everyone, even the Jews as he knew they believed in One God.

Part **(b)** was better known, though candidates concentrated on the strategy of the Prophet and his supporters in digging the defensive trench rather than the duplicity of the Jewish tribes.

Question 6

This was a popular question. In part **(a)** the story was well known and the answers were generally clear and concise. A significant number of candidates confused the Caliphate of Umar with that of Uthman.

In part **(b)** the achievements of Umar covered conquests of Muslim armies as well as administrative achievements such as the establishment of the *Majlis Shura*, the judiciary and the Hijri calendar, to name a few.

Part II

Question 7

Most candidates performed to a satisfactory standard. In a fair number of cases, this question was chosen when there was nothing else left and was therefore a weak answer.

In part **(a)** the role played by the different people and an accurate order of events was evident in most answers. There was some confusion between what is credited to Umar and later to Uthman. Hafsah was mentioned as the custodian of the *Mushaf Hafsah* during the time of Abu Bakr rather than after the death of Umar.

In part **(b)** it seemed as if the candidates missed writing the obvious reasons of the importance of the Qur'an such as it is a source of divine knowledge, a complete code of life for Muslims and that verses from it are used in daily worship.

Question 8

In part **(a)** Surah Alaq was described accurately by most candidates.

In describing the teachings, some candidates repeated the same information several times and again in part **(b)**. As in **7(b)**, many candidates missed the obvious – for example, these were the first verses revealed to the Prophet and that Muslims are reminded that all knowledge comes from Allah

Question 9

Part **(a)** was well answered by many candidates. Some wasted precious time writing more than the two stories that were required.

(b) Good answers commenting on the significance of Prophet Ibrahim's life for Muslims were given. Some mentioned doing *tawaf* around the Kaaba as he did, Muslims praying two *rakats* at *Maqam Ibrahim*, that he was a *hanif* believing in Allah, and the fact that Muslims pray for him and his family in each of the five daily prayers. Most candidates, however, only mentioned how the attempted sacrifice of his son is remembered annually at Eid ul Adha.

Question 10

(a) Most candidates had a good knowledge of the main stages of Hajj. Those who were not sure gave confused and sketchy accounts mixed with unnecessary details of not cutting nails etc.

(b) Some candidates were not clear about the *full* importance of wearing *ihram*. Although there was some relevant mention of equality and humility before Allah, there was little about a Muslim being in a purified state. Likewise, some candidates gave only brief answers on the importance of the *wuquf* at Arafat, even though this is the main part of the Hajj.

Question 11

(a) Candidates who attempted this question gave good answers on the whole, though some invariably described the five Pillars instead. Other candidates thought that belief in Allah was the whole *kalimah shahadah* rather than *Tawhid*. The concept of *qadr* also proved difficult for some.

(b) This part was no problem for those who performed well in part (a). Candidates gained only minimum marks if they replicated points made earlier.

Question 12

Although this was a popular question, candidates had difficulty in answering it.

In part (a) many wrote about how the Hadith were compiled, which was not what was asked. In good answers candidates mentioned in detail that the Prophet had taught Muslims how to pray, how to do *wudu* and that following his *hadith/sunnah* is the next most important source of guidance for Muslims.

In part (b) there was better awareness of what was required. Candidates were able to gain credit for some knowledge of Hadith 16 and references to 'do not be angry' etc. Some were able to explain the need for patience, and the importance of speaking good or remaining silent.