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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

ISLAMIYAT

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 2058/01

Paper 1

General comments

In general, candidates seemed well prepared to answer all the questions set in this examination, and showed a good grasp of the basic facts required. Nearly all candidates were able to complete the examination paper, indicating that they had managed the time allowed well. A few candidates answered all the questions in the paper rather than choosing the options allowed in the paper, but these were very much in a minority.

Previous reports have identified a number of recurring mistakes in candidates' performances. Among these there has often been the failure to answer the questions as set in the papers. As teachers will know, questions are designed to test candidates' ability to present facts clearly and also to evaluate the importance of these facts. Questions never ask for a general account of a whole topic (e.g. the life of the Prophet, or the Pillars of Islam), but indicate precisely particular aspects of a topic (for example, the persecutions suffered by the Muslims while the Prophet was in Makka, the relations between the Prophet and the Jewish tribes of Madina, the distinctive elements of Friday congregational prayers, the major observances of the annual pilgrimage). And they nearly always ask for evaluative comments about the aspects already described.

This makes it extremely important for candidates to read the questions closely and to work out what exactly they are asking, which might well mean that candidates have to read a question a number of times in order to understand its wording. After they have done this, they should spend some time deciding what elements to include in the descriptive part and what to include in the evaluative part.

Teachers would be advised to spend time explaining the structure of the questions to their candidates in order to alert them to exactly how they can detect these different elements, and answer them properly. It might also help if teachers explained to candidates what is intended by terms that often appear in questions such as 'Give an account of' and 'Give brief descriptions of', on the one hand, and, on the other hand, 'Explain the importance of' and 'Explain the significance of'. 'Account', 'description' and 'outline' all indicate that the question is asking for a *factual* answer, which should be concise and accurate; 'importance' and 'significance' indicate that the question is asking for some *evaluation*. Candidates often lose marks by not showing they are aware of this distinction. For example, in **Question 3**, many candidates gave a descriptive account in answering part (a) and part (b), whereas in part (b) they should have concentrated on showing the *significance* of these events for the Muslim community.

It was clear from many scripts in this examination that candidates who had been taught these simple techniques performed best.

As with previous years, it has been noticed that many candidates from the same Centre will have rehearsed a set answer to each question. Whilst it is good practice to look at past papers and for candidates to learn examples for a topic, there are drawbacks to this type of learning where candidates learn a whole answer and apply it to whatever question comes up. Firstly, if an answer is pre-rehearsed it may not be answering the actual question being asked in this year's paper. For example, candidates may have learnt an answer about events before the *hijra*, but may not be answering the question relating the events *immediately* before the *hijra*. This means that candidates are likely to lose marks because their answer is too general. Secondly, using set answers tends to mean that if one person does badly in a certain question, or the whole paper, then the rest of the Centre also will have done badly on the same question(s).

Teachers should be aware of the following recent publications:

- David R Thomas and Mustafa Draper, *Islamiyat, a core text for O Level*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004, ISBN 0-19-597783-1, a textbook intended for candidates.
- David R Thomas and Mustafa Draper, *Islamiyat, a core text for O Level, Teacher's Guide*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004, ISBN 0-19-597784-X, a handbook intended for teachers who use the textbook.
- *Islamiyat 2058 General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level, Standards Booklet*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge International Examinations, 2004, a handbook containing comments on answers to questions set in recent examinations.

Teachers should also know about the on-line Discussion Group, hosted by the Principal Examiner, which provides an opportunity to discuss ways of teaching the syllabus and problems encountered in doing this. To join the Group, go to www.cie.org.uk, click on Syllabuses, then on Islamiyat, and follow the instructions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was generally answered well, with the best answers giving the overall theme or themes contained in the passages chosen.

The best way to answer this question is to identify the main teaching or teachings (there may be more than one) that each passage contains. The question was not asking for a commentary on each verse or for a paraphrase of the passage, but for statements about the main Qur'anic themes within them.

Teachers should note that comments about the Sura and verse numbers and whether the passage was revealed in Makka or Madina are irrelevant (the question paper actually identifies the passage). Candidates who write about these are wasting time.

- (a) Here, a good answer would have referred to God's total control of the events, that the victory of the Muslims had already been decided by him. Some of the best answers included the key points that God made both armies look small in each other's eyes and his reasons for doing this.
- (b) Here, a good answer would have included reference to the piety and purity of Mary, and talking about the power of God.

Some excellent answers made distinctions between the power of God in general and the fact of Jesus' birth being a miracle from God in particular. Also, the best answers were careful to avoid paraphrasing the translation which is given in the examination paper.

- (c) Here, a good answer would have referred to the blessings granted to the Prophet in heaven (the river in paradise) and the blessings on earth (numerous miracles and an abundance of followers).

Some excellent answers talked about the Prophet remaining steadfast despite his troubles, and related this as a general message for all believers to remain pious and self-sacrifice for the sake of their Lord, which would grant them blessings in this life as well.

Question 2

- (a) This part was answered very well by many candidates, though some answers started their discussion of the *hijra* from the beginning of revelation. In descriptive questions, the Examiners look for accuracy and completeness, and candidates often lose marks by getting basic facts wrong, leaving out altogether or even starting their answer from too early a point. This results in the answer being more general than specific to the question. The need for planning answers is paramount. There were a few candidates who wrote about the events in Madinah immediately after the *hijra*, which again emphasises the need for the candidates to read the questions properly.

Overall, those candidates who answered this question well showed accurate details of the events, particularly those relating to the Pledges of al-'Aqaba.

- (b) Most candidates were able to give some general comments stating the reasons the Prophet moved from Makkah to Madinah. However, Examiners were looking for some elaboration on these points for candidates to be able to earn the full six marks. Also, some candidates simply repeated comments made in part (a) in this section. There were some good answers to this part where candidates expanded on the basic points, e.g. explaining that the Prophet's small group of followers had faced lots of persecution which was a threat to the development of a Muslim community in Makkah.

Question 3

This was by far the more popular of the two optional questions.

- (a) As said above, in descriptive answers candidates should be accurate and complete. It is very easy to lose marks by leaving out a basic fact or putting something wrongly. Here, many candidates scored highly, but a noticeable minority lost marks in section (ii) by writing only about the judgement people will face and the chaos that there will be on this day, without mentioning anything about the resurrection and the blowing of the trumpet.

Overall this section was very well answered, particularly section (i).

- (b) This part proved less easy than (a) because it asked for some evaluation. Again, most candidates gave a descriptive account of what happens in a mosque, and in particular how to pray in a mosque, and during the annual pilgrimage. The purpose of this part of the question was to encourage candidates to think about the ways in which going to the mosque or for Hajj is beneficial to the wider community. Good answers are always those that are able to relate the experiences to current events or personal experiences.

Some of the best answers gave accounts of equality, unity and education being promoted at the mosque, and how the annual pilgrimage brings Muslims together where they learn about each other and strengthen their faith which encourages them to return to their communities with the aim of educating and helping others.

Question 4

- (a) Most of the relatively few candidates who attempted this question either answered the question really well, or not well at all. The question asks for a description of the four main sources of legal thinking in Islam, and so candidates should be taught that the marks for this part will be split equally for each source. However, many candidates spent more time describing the Qur'an and Sunnah rather than *ijma'* and *qiyas*, or vice versa. A few candidates also only talked about the period, means and place of the revelation of the Qur'an and the different books of the Sunnah.

The best answers gave equal time to each source, giving an explanation of the importance of the sources, when they are used and their relation to each other.

- (b) The mark scheme allowed one mark for candidates attempting to give a possible example of *ijma'* and *qiyas*, and a full two marks for explaining how the source is used and its result. Many candidates, however, simply explained once again what *ijma'* and *qiyas* were, rather than giving examples, and from those who did give examples, few were able to give full explanations of the use of these sources and what the result will be. Teachers might be advised to ensure they cover this part of the syllabus thoroughly.

Paper 2058/02**Paper 2****General comments**

This paper produced some of the best answers seen by Examiners in recent years. They showed all the qualities that are looked for: concise descriptions, incisive judgements, use of suitable illustrative quotations from the Qur'an and Hadiths, and above all answers that are relevant to what the questions actually asked. These candidates, who gained above 45 marks, and in some excellent cases above 50, should feel very satisfied, and their teachers are to be congratulated for preparing them so well for what is a searching examination.

The quality of many scripts was higher this year than in the recent past. Candidates seem to have learnt that on the whole quantity in answers does not make up for quality, and also that they must read the question and think about the best way to answer if they are to use their time most effectively.

This was not the case in a noticeable number of scripts, however, where candidates appear to have written all they knew about a topic rather than about what the question was asking. In **Question 3 (a)**, for example, where they were asked about modesty between oneself and God, many simply listed the main requirements of Islamic belief and observance rather than giving anything more precise. And in the three parts of **Question 4**, many found themselves repeating facts about the life and caliphate of 'Ali because they had not thought about the question and planned their answers. Candidates fail to gain many marks by not heeding the advice to read the question thoroughly, maybe a few times over, to think about what exactly it is asking, and to plan their answers. The absence of any rough plans or notes in most scripts is a clear indication that they are not doing this (if a candidate uses one side, maybe the last or first in a booklet, for rough work and then cancels it out the Examiner will not read this). But if they did, the candidates whose marks hover around 20 would maybe find they had results up with the very good candidates who have been mentioned above.

Teachers will hopefully be aware of the various publications that have appeared in the last few years to help with teaching this syllabus. Among them are:

- David R Thomas and Mustafa Draper, *Islamiyat, a core text for O Level*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004, ISBN 0-19-597783-1, a textbook intended for candidates.
- David R Thomas and Mustafa Draper, *Islamiyat, a core text for O Level, Teacher's Guide*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004, ISBN 0-19-597784-X, a handbook for teachers who use the textbook.
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Comments on specific questions

Question 1

In each answer to this question candidates are asked to make two points, one about the meaning of words underlined (not their English translation, but who or what might be referred to, or who might be speaking), and the other about the importance of what is said here (what wider significance may be involved). So, for example, a good answer to (1) would have commented firstly on how these words give insight into the nature of God as a compassionate and forgiving being, or how the repetition of the related forms *rahman* and *rahim* emphasise his merciful nature, and secondly on how they are recited whenever a Muslim begins an action to ask for a successful outcome.

There were a number of common errors in answers:

In (1) some candidates said that the phrase begins every sura in the Qur'an, but, of course, as others pointed out, it is not found at the start of sura 9.

In (3) some answers focused on the Day of Judgement and what it brings rather than on the fact that God alone is judge on that day.

In (6) only a few answers identified 'We' as God and 'it' as the Qur'an.

In (7) many answers suggested that the revelation of the Qur'an was completed on this night rather than begun.

Many of the best answers were less than half a side long, but in that short space they had given their answers accurately and concisely. Candidates should be told that since they can only gain 2 marks maximum for answers to any of the seven phrases they choose, they should try to make the two main points asked for, and then get on with the rest of the paper.

Question 2

In this question candidates are asked to identify teachings on 1. belief, and 2. action in the seven chosen Hadiths, so good answers will consist of brief remarks outlining these two features, rather than general accounts about the Hadith. Careful planning and some precise thinking are very important in this question if candidates hope to do well.

While a number of candidates identified the two required elements in the Hadiths they attempted, many tended to paraphrase the Hadiths or to give the translation provided in the question paper. When covering this topic, teachers would be advised to help candidates to understand what beliefs and actions each of the Hadiths teach. For example, Hadith (a) teaches the belief that a Muslim does not threaten danger to other Muslims, and teaches that in their actions Muslims should show care and loyalty to other Muslims in both what they say and do.

There were a number of common mistakes in answers:

In (c) many candidates were unable to explain the logic of this Hadith, simply saying that respect for mothers leads to paradise. Marks were given for comments that linked respect with the pains and sacrifices undergone by mothers in giving birth and bringing up children, or that explained how mothers can guide children to good or bad because they are their first teachers.

In (f) some candidates thought that God is the speaker here not the Prophet, and one said that this is from the Qur'an.

In (h) candidates tended to comment on the importance of reading the Qur'an rather than on this as a communal activity among Muslims.

In general, it was good to see how many candidates used quotations from the Qur'an and Hadiths to illustrate their answers, though it is important to remember that the relationship of any quotation used to the Hadith being answered must be made clear.

Question 3

While there were some very good answers to this question, many showed that the candidate had not thought about what to include. Many candidates simply talked about what it means to be a good Muslim and how a Muslim should treat others properly rather than what it means to be modest towards others. Answers to this question provide prime examples of the lack of reflection and of planning that is referred to above.

In (a) the best answers referred to the Muslim belief in the oneness of God having the meaning that he alone should be served and his authority should be acknowledged in all aspects of life. Some candidates said how Muslims should act in an upright way even when they are alone because God is always with them.

Too many answers, however, simply detailed general Muslim beliefs about God without reference to the aspect of modesty in his presence.

(b) was generally the best answered of the three parts. Many candidates talked of the separation of the sexes in Islam, and how men and women should dress modestly and conduct themselves with reserve in one another's presence.

If there is any criticism to be made of this part it is that answers tended to be too long and repeated the same points a number of times.

(c) seemed to cause most difficulty, and many candidates simply talked about aspects of friendship. The best answers included the following points: Muslims should be considerate towards others; they should not use abusive language or allow it to be used; they should regard others as their equals.

While there were signs of thoughtfulness in some answers, many wrote without reference to modesty in relationships.

Question 4

This proved a challenging question, and while it brought a few very good answers, there were also some muddled answers, in which the Battles of the Camel and Siffin were mixed up, or the achievements of 'Ali and 'Umar or even Abu Bakr were confused.

In (a) most candidates were able to describe the two parts of 'Ali's life in full, particularly his youth during the lifetime of the Prophet, though there was confusion over the events of his caliphate. In this latter part, extra marks were allocated to detailed accounts of the Battles of the Camel and Siffin, though few candidates gave these, particularly the indecisiveness of Siffin and the arbitration that ensued. It appears that the facts of this part of 'Ali's life were not clear in most minds, and future candidates would benefit from fuller explanation.

For (b) most candidates were able to make factual points about Mu'awiya's insistence that 'Ali should punish the assassins of 'Uthman, and his own self-interest in holding on to the governorship of Syria. But very few were able to use these to explain, as the question asked, in what way these contributed to the governor's opposition.

In (d) very few candidates attempted this part, and those who did often talked about 'Ali's descendants rather than the Imam himself. Marks were allowed for the special regard in which the Prophet held 'Ali, the significant statements he made about 'Ali's relationship to him, and his closeness to 'Ali through Fatima. But few mentioned these significant points.

Question 5

This was the more popular of the two optional questions, and most candidates who attempted it did very well indeed. They clearly knew the Ten Blessed Companions and were able to write about them in detail.

In (a) most were able to give the ten names, and so they obtained full marks for this part. A few candidates wrongly included the names of Hamza, Abu Hurayra and Zayd Ibn Thabit.

Most answers to (b) included the reference that the Ten were promised paradise in their own lifetime, though the significant implication of this that they would be spared the final Judgement was not mentioned.

Answers to (c) were usually full enough to gain the two marks allocated for each Companion, and many candidates obtained full marks for this part. Candidates who talked about the Companions in general terms as good men and upright Muslims but did not mention anything specific about each were not given credit.