

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 2058/01

Paper 1

General Comments

The candidates were not as well prepared as those who took the paper in the summer, although there were some Centres which did very well. Part **(b)** of most questions can be improved upon, more time needs to be spent in the classrooms teaching them the art of evaluation. It should be emphasized here that candidates must be encouraged to take time to read the questions carefully and answer what is being asked e.g. for **Question 3** candidates were asked to describe two events from the life of the Prophet that illustrated the way he treated non-Muslims. Some went on to write about three or four incidents, albeit, briefly. Even though the two incidents were given there was not enough detail provided as time was spent on writing more than the required number of events. Reading the question and planning an answer before putting it down on paper could help the candidates to get better marks. Also, candidates from some Centres are still writing in bullet points, answers need to be written in continuous prose.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

Three passages were given in this question from which the candidate had to choose two. Part **(a)** of the answer was knowledge based and the candidates had to write about the main teachings given in the selected *suras*. Part **(b)** was asking for a bit of reflection on these *suras* and there is more than one way in which this could have been done. Candidates could have discussed the themes of the *suras* in a particular manner or they could have reflected upon their meaning to Muslims.

In some of the answers given by the candidates there was a lot of paraphrasing e.g. in sura 2.30-37, some simply rewrote the *sura* in their own words, that is not what is required. In answering part **(a)** for all three *suras* the candidates need to focus on what is being taught or said to Muslims/humanity by Allah. Taking the *sura* mentioned above as an example, it could be said that the verse describes the divine scheme of the creation of Adam, prostration of the angels before Adam and the defiance of Iblis. It further tells us about Adam's stay and exile from heaven...Allah finally pardoned him and warned him about the trials and responsibilities of worldly life. In sura 5.110, it was important to discuss why Allah gave Jesus the miracles rather than listing the miracles as they were there in the passage. The third *sura* was well attempted by most candidates, some however failed to link the *sura* to the Prophet and the event when it was revealed.

In Part **(b)** many struggle with what is being asked and because of it go on to repeat the answer they have already given in Part **(a)**. There is a specific requirement of each part of the answer and that is what the candidates must address in their answers. One way of gaining marks in part **(b)** is by comparing the *sura* being answered to other *suras* that deal with a similar theme. Some candidates did do that and discussed how *Sura Kausar* and *Sura-al-Duha* were revealed to the Prophet in similar conditions, i.e. when his enemies were mocking him. A good evaluation from this point of view helped these candidates in getting to a higher level.

Question 2

In Part **(a)** of this compulsory question the majority gave a detailed account of the first revelation and a few of the physical changes that the Prophet experienced when receiving revelations. It was an account of these together with incidents cited by the Prophet's wives or companions regarding them that took the marks up within levels. It was important to also discuss the Makki/Madani *suras* along with an account of the content of these *suras*. A few mentioned them but did not go on to elaborate what the Makki *suras* dealt with and what the Madani *suras* focused on. There were some very able candidates who did do just that. Revelations came at different times in the Prophet's life and the majority mentioned the revelation at Arafat during the last sermon but very few went on to discuss how the revelations provided answers to situations

happening in his life at that time. Clues in some of the passages and work of later Muslims make it possible to link the revelations to events in the Prophet's life e.g. Sura al-Anfal is linked with the Battle of Badr.

In Part **(b)** there was a lot of repetition from Part **(a)**. Some went on to give the account of the first revelation all over again and at times in greater detail. Candidates could have given some insight into the revelations, written about the Prophet's surprise and drawn parallels with the experiences of other prophets e.g. Moses' first revelation was a great surprise to him and it frightened him as did Prophet Muhammad's.

Question 3

There was a plethora of examples that candidates could have chosen from for this question. However many in Part **(a)** discussed more than one event and wrote about several events from the Prophet's life rather sketchily. Two events which clearly showed his attitude with non-Muslims discussed in detail would have enabled the candidates to reach a higher level. The examples from the conquest of Makka and the Taif incident were two well known and good events to use as was the event of the Charter of Medina. Some candidates wrote about Abdullah bin Ubbay, he was a hypocrite, not a non-Muslim. This was a question attempted by a vast majority of candidates and there were some very good answers. In giving answers to questions such as this one the candidates should be told that it is a detailed and accurate discussion that will enable them to get top marks and not just mentioning the incident and giving little elaboration.

Part **(b)** of this question had to be answered keeping in mind the examples given in Part **(a)**. Some candidates went on to write about examples not related to the events they had discussed in Part **(a)**. It must be stressed that questions have to be read carefully and the candidate needs to answer what is being asked and not what he/she has prepared or thinks will make a good answer. On the whole a satisfactory response was achieved by the majority in this part of the answer. To get to higher levels a clear parallel should have been drawn between the Prophet's example and situations today, and perhaps specific examples could have been given to support the evaluation.

Question 4

Quite a few candidates did not know enough facts about 'Uthman's conversion for this question. Some candidates got the details mixed up between the personalities and some focused on their contribution to Islam in general rather than what was being asked of them. As compared to 'Uthman's conversion, there was a lot more material that could have been written about Umar, candidates must keep this in mind and write relevantly and in detail about those that have more material instead of trying to write equally about all. It is the overall quality of the answer that is given the mark.

Part **(b)** was answered well by most candidates, they understood the question and were able to answer coherently giving valid points.

Question 5

For this Part **(a)** answer an account had to be given about events before the Prophet migrated to Madina, not the actual journey. Some candidates did make the mistake of writing the latter in great detail. Very few discussed the point that the migration to Abyssinia gave the Prophet and Muslims in general the encouragement to make the greater migration to Madina. Even from those who mentioned the migration to Abyssinia, many failed to point out the link that its success encouraged the greater migration. Candidates should be encouraged to think for themselves and link answers to the question being asked. Also, in this answer the Pledges of Aqaba had to be discussed in detail to get good marks. The question was well done on the whole by those who attempted it.

In Part **(b)** of this question many focused on writing a detailed account of the Pledges of Aqaba (even if they had not done so in Part **(a)** where it would have earned them marks) which was not what was being asked. Good answers needed to talk of the Prophet's vulnerability at this time and the difficulties he was facing due to lack of tribal support and how, due to the pledges, the Prophet found support and protection from a different but willing source.

ISLAMIYAT

Paper 2058/02

Paper 2

General Comments

The paper was well attempted by the candidates though **Question 4** seemed to be a challenge. From all the candidates who attempted this question it was the more well prepared and able ones who managed to secure good marks in it. The popular questions from the optional ones were **Questions 3** and **5**. The compulsory questions were attempted by almost all the candidates and it seems that both the teachers and the candidates are now familiar and comfortable with the new syllabus and the new levels system of marking as no candidate appeared to have been disadvantaged by the changes that were introduced in the summer. I would like to reiterate here that in the levels marking system it is the level of discussion, the writing of relevant details with perhaps dates/quotes where appropriate and the way in which the answer is structured that helps to take it up within the level or to the next level. To move up within the level it is the quality of the answer that is looked at.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

This question was well answered by a good majority of the candidates. When answering Hadith (i) some were even able to discuss its deeper teaching, the good candidates wrote about how final authority lies with Allah and is given from Him to the rulers as a trust. Some went on to astutely state that in speaking to Abu Musa and Mu'adh Ibn Jabal the Prophet was in reality addressing rulers in years to come and leaving a message for them as both the men mentioned in the Hadith were pious companions of the Prophet and well trained by him in the art of governance. However, the teaching in the third Hadith was not too clear to the candidates. Many chose to attempt it but few were able to bring out the salient point of this Hadith which is that when a person embraces Islam he submits to the will of Allah and shuns all pride. Hence, faith and pride cannot co-exist in a true Muslim. In Hadith (iv) the majority of the candidates focused on just 'intention'. Intention is an important element of this Hadith but not the only element for discussion. In part **(b)** candidates e.g. could have discussed how Muslims should be interested in good conduct and not in possessions. They could have given examples of acting with sincerity. On the whole this was a well answered question. There was some overlap between parts **(a)** and **(b)** answers. Candidates should be encouraged to think for themselves and express their own opinions as to how they can put the teachings of the Hadith they have studied into practice. Each answer can therefore be different to the other but correct in its own right.

Question 2

This compulsory question was also well done by most. However, there was some confusion, unfortunately some of the candidates did not read the question carefully or perhaps misunderstood it and went on to write about the different types of Hadiths or about the main compilers. Some even wrote detailed accounts of the six *sahi* Hadith books. The answers that these candidates wrote were of a good standard but did not answer what was being asked of them. I cannot stress the importance of getting them to read the question carefully and encouraging them to write relevantly even if it is an answer they are not very confident about. If they stick to answering the question being asked even ones they are not well prepared for, they may manage to get a few marks whilst writing a really good irrelevant answer gets them no marks!

Part **(b)** posed no problems and was well answered.

Question 3

This was the most popular of the optional questions with good responses for both parts. The candidates confidently wrote about the false prophets and Abu Bakr's activities against them. Here I would again add that candidates should be encouraged to write relevantly e.g. in the case of the false prophets there was a lot more to write on Musaylima than the other three. Candidates however went on to write reams on the other three as well which was not necessary. Their understanding and knowledge about the apostate tribes was, in comparison to the false prophets, not thorough. Also, very few gave dates in their answers to this question.

Question 4

This question surprisingly posed a problem to the candidates. It was either answered very well by some or quite poorly by many. Many candidates when answering part (a) of this question lacked the knowledge of the special features of the Friday (*juma*) prayers. Some wrote about aspects of offering the daily prayers in congregation rather than writing about the *Juma* prayers. The purification aspect was ignored by many altogether and some even went on to write that it substituted *Asr* prayers. Basic knowledge about *Juma* prayers seemed to be lacking in the answers given which was disappointing. Part (b) of this question was done more successfully, however some wrote about the importance of Friday rather than the Friday prayers in their answers.

Question 5

The answers were very mixed, some explained the main events of the annual pilgrimage really well whilst there was confusion in the minds of others about the itinerary of the Hajj. When writing about Arafat a large majority did not write about the importance of Arafat in the Hajj. The sermon delivered there by the Imam from the Mount of Mercy and the performance of *Zuhra* are part of the main events of Hajj which should have been written about. Candidates however did reasonably well in this question and it was a popular question. There was a lot of information that could be written and was written for part (b).