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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

Papers 2058/01 and 2058/02
Paper 1 and Paper 2

General comments

These comments apply to both paper 2058/01 and paper 2058/02.

It was clear that the majority of candidates were well prepared for this examination. They were able to answer questions on most of the topics set from the syllabus, with a few exceptions that will be noted below, and had a good factual grasp of the information required. But while candidates were often able to give full answers to the factual parts of the questions, usually part **(a)**, far fewer were able to put this knowledge to use in answering the evaluative parts, usually part **(b)**, where they were required to demonstrate their own judgement and evaluative ability. Teachers would be advised to give attention to this challenging element of every Islamiyat examination, and think how they can help candidates to go beyond learning facts to seeing their significance in the life of the Muslim community and in their own lives. The recently published textbook for the syllabus and the accompanying Teacher's Handbook, both published by Oxford University Press (Karachi), give some guidance on this.

The main common failure in answers to both papers was that many candidates did not seem to read the questions closely. Teachers who have seen past Reports on the Examination will know that the Examiners look for accurate answers that respond to what is asked in the questions. So it is extremely important for candidates to read the question repeatedly until they understand what it is actually asking. Many candidates could have done much better than they did if they had read and thought about questions, rather than launching into answers that were not being asked for.

An example will make this point clear. In Paper 1, **Question 3 (a)** asked candidates *to write descriptive accounts* of two Articles of Faith, and **3 (b)** asked them *to explain the importance* of two Pillars of Islam. The wording in these rubrics alerts candidates to the fact that different kinds of answers are looked for in the two parts of the question. Despite this, in their answers to **3 (b)** a number of candidates gave descriptive accounts of the two Pillars and said nothing about their importance. Although some answers to this part were nearly two sides long, no marks could be given because they were not related to the question. Teachers are advised to make this point clear to candidates: it is extremely important to read and understand the question and to answer exactly what it is asking, because marks can only be earned for relevant answers.

Failure to read what is on the question paper led some candidates to answer more questions than required. When they are telling candidates about how to approach the examination, teachers should emphasise that there is a choice of questions available and what this choice allows.

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 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

2058/01

Question 1

- (a) Good answers to this question would have commented on such points as: Abraham (and Isma'il) repaired (or built) the ka'ba; Makka became a place of security for all; the Makkans had to rely on faith rather than their origins for salvation; and this passage refers to the annual pilgrimage.

A number of candidates wrote nearly half a page on events in Abraham's life leading up to the point mentioned in the passage. These were not asked for and no marks were given for these comments.

- (b) Good answers would have included: the Prophet was taken from Makka to Jerusalem in one night; the verse is usually understood to refer to the Prophet's ascension to heaven; there he was instructed by God about prayer; the verse explains why both Makka and Jerusalem are important to Muslims.

Many answers mixed up what this verse itself teaches and what later Muslim tradition has added to it. Thus some commented only on the *mi'raj*, going into great detail about hell and heaven, but saying little or nothing about the *'isra* itself. It is important to make a distinction between what the passage itself actually contains and what has been built upon it by Muslim commentators.

Some very good answers commented on the importance given to Jerusalem here as the centre of the three monotheistic faiths.

- (c) Here a good answer would have referred to: the centrality of *tawhid* to Muslims; the uniqueness of God; his having no parents or children; nothing can be compared with him.

While many answers referred to these points, many others introduced elements about belief in God that this passage does not include, such as his being the all-powerful Creator. Again, as with passage (b), it is important to distinguish what is included here as opposed to what other parts of the Qur'an such as Sura 2.155 say about God.

Candidates should aim to make their answers to each part of this question about half to three quarters of a side long. If an answer is longer than a side, it is likely to contain material that is not directly relevant to the question.

Question 2

- (a) This part was generally well answered.

Nearly all candidates gave full accounts of the Prophet's failure in al-Ta'if, though some thought he went there from Madina rather than Makka, and some thought he went with an army to conquer the town.

Most candidates also gave full accounts of the Prophet's conquest of Makka, explaining why he gathered an army against it, how he approached the town, and what he did when he got there.

Some candidates gained full marks for their concise and full answers to this part.

- (b) This more challenging part was on the whole not answered so well. Good answers would have commented on the Prophet's reaction of forgiveness in al-Ta'if to the people's rejection and his refusal to allow revenge; also his peaceful approach to Makka, his willingness to allow his enemies every chance to abandon their resistance and his concern to instate Islamic practices. And they would have made links between these examples from the Prophet's life to their own lives.

While a number of candidates did exactly this, many more made general comments about the Prophet being a perfect example of forgiveness without showing how this quality was brought out in the two stories in (a), and without making links with contemporary situations. It is important in this part to be specific in identifying precise elements in the Prophet's conduct, and showing exactly how these can be applied in actual situations today.

Question 3

This was by far the more popular of the two optional questions, though it was only answered well by a handful of candidates.

- (a) Many candidates wrote well about angels, making some general points about their nature, and adding details about individual angels and the duties they perform. However, few candidates wrote accurately about God's predestination and decree. Some mistook this article of faith for belief in the oneness of God, *tawhid*, and others mistook it for belief in final judgement. Good answers described the all-powerful and all-knowing character of God, which means that he controls and knows beforehand all that happens in the created world. They went on to talk about human responsibility and the consequences of human actions.
- (b) This part was not well answered. Candidates were asked to explain the importance of Friday prayers and alms-giving, but many simply described what is involved in the observance of these Pillars of Islam. Good answers explained how congregational prayer brings Muslims together, enables them to learn from the sermon and allows them to discuss matters of common concern; and how alms-giving reduces inequalities in wealth, ties givers and receivers to one another and reminds Muslims that they are responsible for one another.

As said above, teachers should help candidates to understand the difference in the wording of the two parts of questions such as this, so that they can know how to answer them properly.

Question 4

This was much less popular than **Question 3**, though it produced a few good answers.

- (a) Many answers to this part said little about the collectors of the six Sunni canonical books of Hadith, but discussed the role of the Prophet and his Companions, about whom the question asked nothing.

A few very good answers described how al-Bukhari and his contemporaries scrutinised both the *isnad* and the *matn* of Hadiths, and the principles they applied to ensure authenticity. However, too many answers described how the Hadiths were divided into strong, weak, etc. categories. This cannot be an answer to the question, because it describes the result of the work of the collectors rather than the methods they employed.
- (b) There were some accurate discussions here of the relationship in legal thinking between these two bases of law, and some excellent examples of how Muslims turn to the Hadith to find amplification of teachings in the Qur'an.
- (c) Again, there were some very good answers here, especially the ones that gave detailed examples of how analogy is employed. But many answers simply said that *qiyas* is employed when the Qur'an and Hadith are silent on a point, omitting to mention the role of *ijma`*.
- (d) Sadly, there were very few answers to this part, and candidates who attempted it seemed to know very little about this Shi'a legal principle. Some talked in general about Shi'a Islam about which the question did not ask.

2058/02

Question 1

In each answer to this question, candidates are asked to make two points, one about the meaning of the 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 mentioned the battle of Badr and the inequality of the two forces, and would have gone on to explain how God made the Makkans appear to the Muslims fewer than they really were in order to encourage the small force of Muslims.

There were a number of common mistakes in answers.

In **(3)** only a few answers linked the general maxim to the events of Badr.

In **(4)** many answers went into long details about the biography of Moses rather than concentrating on the specific event involved here, and saying what 'it' (the bush) was.

In **(8)** only a few answers identified these people as the hypocrites whom the rest of the sura condemns.

In **(9)** only a few answers explained why refusing to feed the poor is a mark of hypocrisy.

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.

Question 2

In this question, candidates are asked to identify teachings on belief and action in the seven chosen Hadiths. Therefore, good answers will consist of brief remarks outlining these two features, rather than general accounts about the Hadith. Careful planning is 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 and left their answers at that. 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 person is judged by other people and by God by what he meant more than what he actually did, and it teaches that a person should act according to a pure intention.

Question 3

Most answers to this question showed that the candidate had not really thought about what to include. Many answers gave obvious facts about the position of women but failed to show how these facts were relevant to their answer. For example, in part **(a)(ii)**, nearly everyone quoted the Hadith 'Paradise lies at the feet of mothers', but very few commented on how this explains the importance of women as mothers. Maybe some candidates thought the question was very easy and so hurried at it rather than planning (passed reports have stressed the importance of planning questions). The outcome was that they often failed to gain points that a little thinking would have brought.

- (a)(i)** There were many good answers to this part, with the best describing how wives and husbands are equal, how women have independence within marriage and have the right to divorce. But a number of answers were written from the husband's point of view, that he should treat his wife well, and so on. The way in which husbands should treat their wives was not asked for in the question.
- (ii)** Many answers to this gave little more than the well-known Hadith about mothers and the story about a mother being three times as important as the father. While these are good as supporting illustrations, they cannot stand alone as answers without full comments about their significance as teachings about the importance of women as mothers.
- (iii)** Good points made here included the equal importance of daughters and sons, the right of daughters to an education, to choose their husbands and to an inheritance from their parents. Many candidates answered this part well.
- (b)** Again, there were some good points here, including comments about how unmarried men and women should conduct themselves when in each other's presence and how wives and husbands should act as partners. But many answers tended to be descriptions of what happens between men and women, without explanations of the principles that underlie the teachings about relations between them.

Question 4

This was a popular question, and it brought some very good answers, though there were also some common errors.

- (a) Most candidates were able to describe the two parts of Abu Bakr's career very fully. The best answers included the following points: he brought others to Islam, he accompanied the Prophet on the *hijra* (this is referred to in the Qur'an), he remained loyal to the Prophet at all times, during his caliphate he fought against the apostate tribes and against the false prophets (three marks were allowed for details of this point, and some candidates gained them by naming the four best-known false prophets and saying a little about them), and he arranged a collection of the Qur'an.

Some candidates seemed to mix him up with 'Umar, and so wrote about his financial arrangements for the empire, and about conquests that were made not under him but under his successor.

- (b) Few candidates answered this part well. While many explained how he earned the title Saviour of Islam by his quick actions to put down dissent and opposition to the young state, very few linked the title al-Siddiq with his unhesitating expression of belief in the Prophet's Night Journey, though some linked it with his general character of trustworthiness.

Question 5

While this was not as popular as **Question 4**, most candidates who attempted it did very well.

- (a) Most were able to identify Abu Talib as the Prophet's uncle, and to say how he took a part in training the Prophet as a merchant. Fewer commented on how he shared the hardships experienced by the Prophet and his followers in Makka, and even fewer explained how under the clan system of the time he was able to protect the Prophet from harm.
- (b) Most answers were complete, commenting on Bilal's early conversion and the tortures he incurred because of this, and his task as first muezzin of the community.
- (c) Again, answers to this part were mostly very full, commenting on Abu Sufyan's hostility to the Prophet, and his eventual conversion. The best said how his caravan had been the cause of the Battle of Badr, and how he had been a leader of the Makkan force at Uhud.
- (d) Many answers to this part lacked the crispness of the other parts, maybe because candidates were by now running out of time. Most identified the Ansar, but said little about their importance as helpers and brothers to the migrant Makkan Muslims, their most important function in early Islam.