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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.**

ISLAMIC RELIGION AND CULTURE

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 2056/01

Paper 1

General comments

The overall performance of candidates was similar to last year. However, in **Questions 1 (a), 6 (a), and sometimes 7 (a)**, many candidates did not answer the exact question set. As in previous years, candidates tended to be better at describing events than at commenting on them. Examiners often look for five comments or applications in part **(b)**, whereas candidates tend to provide three or less. On the more positive side, candidates often achieved full marks for factual knowledge of Adam's life and of the Battle of the Trench.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

In part **(a)**, marks were divided equally between social life and economic life. Many candidates wrote exclusively about religious practices and so received no marks for this part. In **(b)**, the Examiners were prepared to credit comments upon individual religious practices and upon pre-Islamic religion in general. A concise, but perceptive, survey of the comparative popularity of religious practices from animism to pure monotheism might lead to the conclusion that religion was very important to the Arabs, but that it was an essentially self-interested religion that most of them followed. The Examiners were prepared to accept any conclusion from very important to very unimportant, provided that the conclusion had been consistently argued.

Question 2

This was another popular question. In **(a)**, candidates were often able to briefly describe a wide variety of the pressures upon both the Prophet and his followers which led to the Hijra. In **(b)**, few candidates could point to five important results of the Hijra, but most could mention two or three.

Question 3

An encouraging feature of recent years has been the increased knowledge shown of the Prophet's major battles. 2004 was no exception. Candidates frequently scored very good marks for their descriptions of the Battle of the Trench. In part **(b)**, they were usually able to gain about half marks by indicating two or three important results of the battle.

Question 4

Few candidates attempted **Question 4**. Against the trend of recent years, candidates who did this question showed a decreased knowledge of the Farewell Address. In consequence, the answers to **(b)** were non-existent or pedantic. For example, candidates tended to say: "*Muslims today should not demand interest*". They seldom went on to suggest a truly modern application of the teaching, e.g. "*Muslims today should refuse credit cards which encourage the interest system*".

Question 5

In **(a)**, a more satisfactory knowledge of the election process was demonstrated than in previous years. In **(b)**, candidates were expected to mention problems such as nepotism, the vastness of the empire, the burning of defective Qurans, the Ridda and Abdullah bin Saba. Extra weighting was given to the Saba Problem since it was a persistent problem with many serious aspects. Overall, marks for **Question 5** were satisfactory rather than good.

Question 6

This question required candidates to refer to any five of Abu Bakr's military victories and any five of Umar's. Instead, many candidates wrote almost exclusively about Umar's non-military achievements. This meant that many answers to **(b)** were irrelevant or missing.

Question 7

Candidates who correctly named the Five Pillars, and gave a brief but accurate description of them, frequently obtained full marks for **(a)**. Unfortunately, a surprisingly high number of candidates partly or totally confused the Five Pillars with the Six Beliefs. Candidates who were excellent in **(a)** tended to be merely satisfactory in **(b)**. Candidates who did badly in **(a)** also fared badly in **(b)** because they were commenting on irrelevant information.

Question 8

In **(a)**, many candidates provided a good description of the celebration of Id-al Adha outside Saudi Arabia, but said nothing about its celebration on Hajj inside Saudi Arabia. Few candidates in **(b)** were able to point out more than two reasons for the celebration of the festival.

Question 9

Part **(a)** was very well answered by many candidates. Full marks were quite common. This confirms a pleasing trend towards greatly improved knowledge of the lives of the major prophets that has been evident over the last few years. In **(b)**, the most commonly perceived morals were complete obedience to God and the reality of Satan, Hell and divine forgiveness. Seldom perceived teachings were the equality of women, the equality of all humans, human stewardship over creation, the work ethic and the dangers of Shirk.

Question 10

In **(a)**, the rules for fasting were less well known than had been anticipated. In addition, many candidates included the spiritual beliefs of fasting in **(a)**, where they were not relevant. Conversely, the rules for fasting often appeared in **(b)** instead of **(a)**. Part **(b)** asked candidates to describe a mixture of community benefits and personal benefits. Many candidates described only one of these two types. Because of all the above reasons, answers to **Question 10** tended to be mediocre rather than good.

Question 11

This question was poorly answered because candidates seldom knew more than two appropriate quotations from the Quran or Hadith.

Question 12

This was not a popular or well-answered question. Most candidates could name the four types of Hadith, but could not clearly describe how they differed. In **(b)**, they struggled to produce more than two good reasons why Muslims need the Hadith.