

ISLAMIC RELIGION AND CULTURE

Paper 2056/01

Paper 1

General comments

The performance of candidates was comparable to previous years. However, it is still noticed that questions are not being read correctly. Candidates who gained the highest marks were those who selected and applied their knowledge to fit the question.

Each question is divided in two parts carrying equal marks. Candidates who answered one part only missed out on 10 marks. It may be pointed out that the briefest answer may gain a mark.

In questions where two aspects are required e.g. role and importance, or describe and evaluate, candidates should remember to make points about both.

Valuable time should not be wasted writing out the question before answering it. Also, candidates are advised not to give their own numbers to questions but follow what is in the question paper.

Questions that were popular were 2, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 12 and were generally answered well.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This proved a difficult question for many candidates. Candidates wrote general accounts of the period which heavily stressed the undesirable features of belief and social practices. The important word in part **(a)** was 'continued'. There should have been a link between what candidates wrote about in **(a)** to how the Prophet changed these practices in **(b)**. Examples such as the importance of the Kaaba and *tawaf* around it, rites of pilgrimage to Arafat, sacrifice and loyalty to tribe could have been used amongst others. Marks gained in this question were generally low, often due to luck rather than judgement.

Question 2

On the whole, this question was well answered. Candidates were better able to provide factual details about Khadijah and Abu Bakr than comment upon their importance. Some went beyond the lifetime of the Prophet for Abu Bakr saying he was the first caliph of Islam. Others mentioned details of a snakebite in the cave of Thawr rather than the importance of this journey as the Hijrat of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina.

Question 3

Candidates who attempted this question generally chose **(a)** and **(b)**. More description than evaluation was evident in all four options.

- (a)** There were some good answers here.
- (b)** Mostly well done; weaker candidates confused Abyssinia with Medina.
- (c)** Mi'raj was well described.

- (d) Considerable confusion about which Pledge went with which visitation. Candidates stated that the Prophet was invited to go to Medina as arbitrator to solve the on-going conflict between the tribes there.

Question 4

Candidates did well in the description of pre-Badr events as well as evaluation of the consequences.

No credit was given to details of how the battle was fought, erroneous comments such as 'bodies were thrown into a well after the battle' or 'prisoners were obliged to accept Islam' or even for vague terms such as 'they continued to preach Islam' and 'many people became Muslim'.

Question 5

Candidates commonly addressed the factual and evaluative aspects of this question. Very few candidates mentioned Bait ar Ridwan in (a). The best answers in (b) showed awareness of the revelation declaring it a victory and that it led to the future Conquest of Mecca. Weaker candidates took Hdaybiya as the Conquest of Mecca itself.

Question 6

This was not well answered. In (a) candidates gained few incidental marks by writing about each Caliph in turn. Much of this information was inaccurate. In (b) there were some perceptive answers but most were brief and lacking in reasons to support their argument. Most candidates concentrated on honesty and caring for the poor, but the comparison between today and the past was not properly developed.

Question 7

This was a very popular question. Part (a) was generally well answered. Weak candidates confused Umar and Uthman. There was considerable uncertainty about events in Uthman's caliphate, but the majority candidates knew some if not all of the history of the Caliphs' role in the compilation. In (b) the best answers understood that the question was about a written sacred text which could be referred to and consulted and was available universally in its original form. However, there were a fair number of answers that concentrated only on the value of the Qur'an as a teaching, and therefore missed the point. Weak candidates thought the Qur'an describes the life of the Prophet.

Question 8

The story of the Prophet Nuh was generally well answered in (a). A good number of candidates gained full marks. However, there were problems in (b). The best candidates gained four marks simply by saying all the prophets were human, without sin, always obedient to Allah and that their message was the same.

Average and weaker candidates who had scored well in (a) failed to read the second line of the question and did not refer to the prophets at all. 'Discuss this statement' left them not knowing what to write.

Question 9

Candidates performed well on this question with many full mark answers. A marked difference was noticed in the answers given by boys and by girls. It seemed that the girls could not describe the sequence of *salat*. There was also some confusion about the requirement of *wudu* and *ghusl*. In (b) the term 'a focal point' was not understood. Candidates tended to write about the religious benefits of public prayer at the mosque rather than list the activities that take place there. Weaker answers suggested that it was compulsory for men to go to the mosque to pray five times however far one lived from it.

Question 10

The few candidates who chose to do this question had few ideas about the content or significance of each *surah* to the Prophet or to Muslims. While answering this question, some ignored part (a) completely and just wrote about (b), which they were able to do. Some gave the same answer to both parts. It was disappointing that candidates who chose this question were not able to answer it properly.

Question 11

This was one of the least popular questions. Questions on the rules for selecting Hadith have been set regularly in recent years. The rules seemed to be much less well known this year. Most answers were about the different categories of Hadith rather than the method of authentication. A significant number of candidates gave the answer to (b) in (a) and then wrote very little in (b). In (b) candidates performed better. Weaker answers only described the meaning of '*sunnah*' with no assessment of the way it helps Muslims in everyday life.

Question 12

This question provided a good opportunity for candidates to gain good marks. Birth ceremonies were more accurately described than marriage ceremonies. Part (b) proved to be more challenging. Attempts to evaluate the 'significance' of one of these were superficial. Those who chose marriage performed slightly better than those who chose the ceremonies conducted at birth. A general trend was that most candidates knew what happened but not why it was important. This could be said of all the (b) parts of the questions this year.