

ISLAMIC RELIGION AND CULTURE

Paper 2056/12

Paper 1

General Comments

Overall candidates' performance on this paper was good. Candidates are encouraged not to spend time writing out the questions and jotting down elaborate plans before beginning to write. To get a clearer picture of what is being asked it is advised that the question should be read a number of times before putting pen to paper.

All five answers should be attempted. Answers given in note form are acceptable if it is the last answer and it is obvious that the candidate has run out of time. If part **(a)** of a question has **(i)** and **(ii)** the answers must be given in the same way to gain marks for both parts.

The most popular questions were 1, 2, 3, 5, 10 and 11.

Key Messages

Candidates are advised to read widely for this paper. They are advised not to be judgemental and should read widely about the life of the Prophet (pbuh) and his attitude towards all those around him whether Muslim or not. His behaviour at the Conquest of Mecca is a case in point.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a)** There were many good answers where candidates wrote about the importance of the Ka'aba in Mecca associated with Prophet Ibrahim and Ismail long before the advent of Islam. With the vital water source of the Zamzam, Mecca became an important trading settlement on the crossroads of caravan routes. The Meccans benefitted monetarily from the taxes levied on caravans and pilgrims that came to worship the deities in the Ka'aba. Weak answers only wrote about the vices in Meccan society.
- (b)** Here there were some excellent answers recalling the unwritten chivalric code of the Arabs which guided their tribal life. Even the city dwellers had rules to contain violence such as special months when it was forbidden. Negative aspects were also written about such as feuds which carried on for generations. Some candidates were unable to write anything more than saying the tribal system was bad. They reiterated the same vices as they had mentioned in part **(a)**.

Question 2

- (a)** This was a popular question and generally well answered. Most candidates were able to recall how and why Khadijah employed Muhammad (pbuh), his interaction with people which impressed her and led to her proposal of marriage to him. Weak answers only mentioned Khadijah being a widow, his first wife and the mother of his children.
- (b)** Most candidates mentioned a difference in age should not be a barrier to a happy marriage. Good answers looked back at the relationship that Khadijah and Muhammad (pbuh) had. They wrote about their years together mentioning Khadijah's faith in the Prophet (pbuh) and becoming the first to believe in Islam. They wrote about the fact that she gave him a loving home and children, as well as financial support. On his part he was a loving husband and father, and did many household

chores. Some candidates wrote about respect, understanding, appreciation of each other and mutual support being vital in a relationship.

Question 3

- (a) Candidates were asked here to recall the importance of Umar and Ali in Mecca before the *hijrah*.
- (i) Good answers here spoke about Umar's conversion which gave the morale of the Prophet (pbuh) and the early Muslims a great boost. From then on he accompanied the Muslims as they went to pray within the precincts of the Ka'aba and no one dared stop them. Weak answers mentioned some of Umar's achievements when he became Caliph.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to recall that Ali was brought up in the Prophet's household, was one of the first Muslims and a scribe of the revelations. They went on to remember Ali had risked his life sleeping in the Prophet's bed the night of the *hijrah*.
- (b) This was well answered by many candidates. Muhammad (pbuh) was known and respected as a person long before the call of Islam. During the twelve years of persecution in Mecca Muslims got strength from listening to the revelations he received. The converts were people of stature as well as many who had been poor and slaves.

Question 4

- (a) Few candidates answered this question. Those who did made a reasonable effort.
- (i) There were some good answers here that recalled this happened in Medina where a companion related his dream to the Prophet (pbuh) about a man in green suggesting the actual words of what then became the *adhan*. It was to be said aloud for all to hear and come to pray.
- (ii) The change of the direction of prayer happened in Medina as well whilst the Prophet (pbuh) was leading the prayers. The Muslims were happy with this as Mecca was more sacred to them being the house of God, than facing Jerusalem.
- (b) This part had some thoughtful answers. Candidates mentioned the nature of the relationship between the Prophet (pbuh) and Muslims, which was based on his teachings. He had become their leader in every sense. They learnt from the revelations he received and from how he conducted his life. Key messages he conveyed were of cooperation as all Muslims were united by faith and brotherhood, everyone was equal in front of God, women had to be treated fairly and given respect.

Question 5

- (a) A good number of candidates chose this question and wrote well. Candidates began with the Banu Bakr attacking the Banu Khuza'ah because of which the Pact of Hudaibiyah was broken. They went on to speak about the Prophet's preparation of war as a consequence of this and Abu Sufyan's vain attempt to renew the pact. Excellent answers spoke of the Prophet (pbuh) camping in the hills around Mecca to make the Meccans believe the Muslims were in larger numbers than they actually were and how they marched into Mecca peacefully.
- (b) Weak answers here only mentioned the Prophet (pbuh) breaking the idols in the precincts of the Ka'aba. Better answers here recalled the humility with which the Prophet (pbuh) entered Mecca, not wanting any revenge (which would have been the usual thing to do for the Meccans) for the years of persecution and exile the Muslims had suffered. His magnanimity was exemplary as he forgave everyone.

Question 6

- (a) This was another popular question. Most candidates answered this confidently, relating the major happenings during Abu Bakr's two years as Caliph, beginning with the Muslim army being sent to fight under the leadership of the young Usamah, the Riddah wars and the false prophets. Weak answers were from candidates who only wrote about the compilation of the Qur'an during his reign.
- (b) There were many good responses here giving details of Abu Bakr's contribution to Islam before he became Caliph. Having been a childhood friend of the Prophet (pbuh) he became the first adult

male to accept Islam encouraging his friends to do the same. He paid money to free slaves who had become Muslim and supported the Prophet (pbuh) and other Muslims financially wherever he could. Excellent answers here recalled Abu Bakr was given the title of Siddiq by the Prophet (pbuh) being the first to believe in the *miraj*. Towards the end of the Prophet's life he was asked to lead the prayers. Crucially he held the Muslims together when the Prophet (pbuh) died.

Section B

Question 7

- (a) (i) There were some knowledgeable answers in both (i) and (ii). Candidates recalled revelations were received by the Prophet (pbuh) via Archangel Gabriel. At times these visible, audible and sensory reactions were witnessed by those around him. Revelations came unexpectedly and the Prophet (pbuh) would recite the verses to those around him.
- (ii) Many of the Prophet's literate companions were his scribes who wrote these down on whatever surface was available. Others memorised them immediately. The Prophet (pbuh) himself authenticated them and indicated in which Sura and where the new verses should be placed. Good answers mentioned the fact that the Prophet (pbuh) told his companions to ensure his words did not interfere with the revelations.
- (b) Candidates who answered this well were able to comment on the significance of the first five verses of Sura Alaq. These verses were the first divine revelation received by the 'unlettered' Prophet (pbuh) while he meditated in the cave of Hira during Ramadan. The message began in the name of the Creator who has given knowledge, spiritual and intellectual potential and the power to transmit what we know to others.

Question 8

- (a) This question was about the main teachings of Sura Fateha, something which is recited many times during prayer. Responses here were excellent giving a translation of each phrase of this Sura.
- (b) Many candidates did well in this part as well as the use of this term is commonplace and familiar as it is said when beginning any action to invoke the help and protection of God. Excellent answers were those mentioning this was the first description of God as the Compassionate (*Ar Rahman*) and the Merciful (*Ar Rahim*) which are the most frequent and recurring of His attributes.

Question 9

- (a) This was a popular question and candidates gave many relevant answers. Some candidates were unable to divide their knowledge between (i) and (ii) and wrote it as (a) and so did not gain all the marks available.
- (i) On the whole the narrative of God speaking to Musa was well written. Candidates knew about the signs he was given to convince Pharaoh. Good answers said Musa had asked God whether his brother could accompany him to which God agreed.
- (ii) Many details were covered when candidates wrote about Musa's encounter with Pharaoh. The message Musa carried was 'from the Lord of the Worlds' which was a challenge to Pharaoh as it was a position he thought he held. The magicians were called to counter the sign's God gave Musa but to no avail.
- (b) With the number of times Musa is mentioned in the Qur'an there are many lessons to be learned from this narrative. Excellent answers here made numerous connections between God and Musa: how God protected him after he was born, being brought up in Pharaoh's palace, God's forgiveness when he killed someone, God speaking to him directly, Musa's fear of returning to face Pharaoh and God giving him strength and faith. Above all Muslims need to remember that Jews and Christians are People of the Book (*ahl-e-kitab*) which is a special relationship that is to be nurtured in everyday life.

Question 10

- (a) (i) Good answers here spoke of the words of the *talbiyah* as a response to God when putting on the *ihraam* for Hajj. This refrain, said loudly and individually, acknowledges the Oneness of God and his blessings. It is a bond with all other pilgrims who are reciting the same. Weak answers were not able to remember the importance of the *talbiyah* and spoke about Hajj in general terms.
- (ii) This part had many good responses. Candidates knew that the '*wuquf*' is the vital part of Hajj. Pilgrims reaffirm their faith, asking for God's forgiveness. Excellent answers recalled this location as the place where the Prophet (pbuh) gave his Farewell sermon.
- (b) There were many excellent answers from candidates who went beyond mentioning that Hajj is a Pillar of Islam hence obligatory, the wearing of the *ihraam* signifying equality and sacrificing an animal following the Prophet Ibrahim. They mentioned Hajj demanding great sacrifice as it is the ultimate form of worship taking people away from their comforts. It is a spiritual re-awakening.

Question 11

- (a) This was a very popular question with candidates scoring high marks. Various stages in the *nikah* ceremony were covered, the signing of the contract with witnesses, the stipulation of the dowry and the *walima* celebrated the next day. Some weak answers expressed personal (negative) opinions of what should or should not be done at such a joyous occasion.
- (b) There were some perceptive answers here where candidates wrote about what marriage means in Islam and the kind of relationship that needs to be nurtured between a wife and a husband such as love, respect and kindness towards each other. Good answers mentioned both partners are equal in the eyes of God. Some wrote about the Prophet's relationship with Khadijah and later with his other wives recalling him sharing in the chores at home.

Question 12

- (a) This question was not a popular one. Those that attempted it demonstrated a fair amount of knowledge of the four main types of Hadith such as *sahih*, *hasan*, *daif* and *mauzu*. Weak candidates wrote about the various Hadith which were part of the syllabus such as the one on Tolerance, Love etc.
- (b) This question produced a few good answers which mentioned that the Qur'an, as the word of God, was best explained by the Prophet (pbuh) in the collection of the Hadith. They spoke about the Hadith being the second source of law in Islam. Details of many injunctions mentioned in the Qur'an such as praying, fasting or giving zakat are found in the Hadith therefore both are important.

ISLAMIC RELIGION AND CULTURE

Paper 2056/13

Paper 1

General Comments

Overall the performance in this paper was good with several outstanding answers.

Questions which average and better candidates found accessible (and often gained full marks) were 2 **(a)** and 10**(a)**. Other high scoring questions were 8**(a)**, 10**(b)** and 11**(a)**.

Teachers are advised to encourage candidates to read the question a number of times before attempting to answer. They need to be reminded that there are 10 marks for part **(a)** and another 10 for part **(b)**. Time allocated for each question should be utilised wisely, not writing too much in one part leaving no time for the other. If part **(a)** of a question has **(i)** and **(ii)** the answers must be given in the same way to gain marks for both parts. Some candidates did long drafts of their answers (shown on their papers) or wrote out the question itself, which wasted valuable time.

Key Messages

Candidates are advised to read widely for this paper. They are advised not to be judgemental and should read widely about the life of the Prophet (pbuh) and his attitude towards all those around him whether Muslim or not.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a)** There were many good answers here which focused on the importance of Mecca before the arrival of Islam. Candidates had read the question and focused on the social life of the Arabs. However, as usual with this question weak candidates used a hit and miss approach writing all they could remember of the different aspects of Arab life which were inaccurate and irrelevant.
- (b)** In general the performance in this part of the question was better than part **(a)**. Good answers suggested that change came slowly after the Prophet (pbuh) migrated to Medina and established a Muslim community. Candidates mentioned the revelations that the Prophet (pbuh) received giving guidelines of living as a Muslim. Some answers spoke of the establishment of brotherhood, the status of women and the importance of education.

Question 2

- (a) (i)** A fair number of candidates gained full marks here as they knew the importance of Khadijah in the life of the Prophet (pbuh).
- (ii)** Good candidates wrote he was one of the first who became Muslim and convinced many friends, freed many slaves who had become Muslim and was given his title of 'As Siddiq' by the Prophet (pbuh) after the event of the Night Journey.
- (b)** There were some thoughtful answers here that showed good understanding of the reasons for the antagonism of the Quraish towards the Muslims. Good answers mentioned the Quraish felt threatened by the new belief that the Prophet (pbuh) was speaking about of there being only One

God. This meant a total change in their belief system, their lifestyle, their prestige as keepers of the Ka'aba and the economic power that came with it.

Question 3

- (a) (i) Many candidates attempted to answer this question and wrote about the reason why the Boycott happened. Good answers mentioned the Quraish felt it necessary to show their displeasure over the rising number of Muslims in Mecca. They signed a covenant saying that no contact was to be made with the Muslims, no trade, marriages etc. Weak answers only wrote about the suffering experienced there.
- (ii) Candidates needed accurate information about the visit to Taif to answer this question well. Some good candidates recalled this happened after the Boycott (after which both Abu Talib and Khadijah had died). The Prophet (pbuh) hoped to get support from there. The chiefs mocked him and he was injured by stones being thrown at him and Zayd. He prayed for God's protection and forgiveness towards the people of Taif.
- (b) Candidates made a reasonable effort to answer this part of the question which asked about the significance of the *hijrah* of the Prophet (pbuh). Some answers were too brief and lacked sufficient information. Others were able to recall that *hijrah* was an irrevocable step taken by the Prophet (pbuh) and other Muslims, trusting God and leaving behind everything that was familiar in Mecca to go to live in a new environment, but still remaining faithful to the teachings of Islam they knew.

Question 4

- (a) (i) There were good answers here with most candidates recalling the causes that led to the Battle of Badr. The small Muslim community in Medina lived under constant threat of attack by the Quraish who were angry that the Prophet (pbuh) had been given shelter there and had become leader. The Muslims wanted to do something to make up for all they had left behind in Mecca. Abu Sufyan's caravan returning back from Syria was too good to ignore. Abu Jahl had mustered an army to defend it even though the caravan returned safely and marched towards Medina
- (ii) The details of the battle were well known by all candidates especially the inequality of numbers on both sides. The Prophet (pbuh) prayed for God's help, then duels were fought before the actual battle began. The Muslims were victorious.
- (b) Most candidates showed some understanding of the reasons why the Battle of Badr was a turning point that determined the future of the Muslims. Better responses were able to explain the Muslims were fighting for their very existence. After all the years of being passive in Mecca they were now given an opportunity to act. They fought with confidence against great odds and won with God's help. Victory consolidated the power of the Prophet (pbuh) and the prestige of the Muslims in the eyes of surrounding tribes.

Question 5

- (a) A minority of candidates answered this question but those who did were able to demonstrate their knowledge of this Treaty. They wrote about the Prophet's dream about visiting the Ka'aba, his journey there with 1400 other Muslims in pilgrim dress and not being allowed into Mecca by the Quraish though this was the legitimate right of all Arabs. The Prophet (pbuh) sent Uthman to intercede. When he did not return they took a pledge to avenge his death. On his return a Quraish emissary came to negotiate with the Muslims which resulted in signing a 10 year truce which was known as the Treaty of Hudaibiyah.
- (b) There were some satisfactory answers here. Most candidates did not understand the question and focused only on the good qualities of the Prophet (pbuh). They ignored the fact that on this occasion his leadership and decisions had been questioned vehemently by his companions. His attitude was always to listen, be patient and open to advice. The Muslims generally were disappointed by the outcome of Hudaibiyah.

Question 6

- (a) (i) This was answered by few candidates. Some only remembered the occasion when Umar became a Muslim which was not the point of the question. Others knew the Muslims were empowered with Umar's conversion and were able to pray at the Ka'aba when he accompanied them. The Prophet (pbuh) gave him the title of 'Al Farooq'.
- (ii) Few candidates had knowledge of this important event in Umar's life when the Muslim army besieged Jerusalem. The Patriarch of Jerusalem said he would only surrender to the Caliph. Umar travelled there to meet him, gave guarantees of civil and religious liberties in exchange for tax (*jizya*). Jews were allowed back to live in Jerusalem after 500 years.
- (b) Candidates attempting this part of the question were confused about what was required here. Most ignored the instruction to give two examples of principles followed by the Four Pious Caliphs and write how governments in Muslim countries today could learn and implement them. Good answers here mentioned having a *majlis-e-shura* to advise on all administrative matters, ensure human rights and religious freedom for all citizens, Muslim and non-Muslim alike and that government officials should treat their positions as one of trust, not their right.

Section B

Question 7

- (a) This was a popular question and generally well answered. Candidates described two ways in which the Qur'an was recorded by the scribes during the Prophet's lifetime. They wrote more at length and accurately about the compilation during the time of Abu Bakr.
- (b) The focus of the question here was why the early Muslims felt the necessity to preserve the Qur'an and the importance of doing so for the growth of Islam. Weak answers here explained the importance of the Qur'an to Muslims today which was not what was asked. Good candidates however said the message of Islam was better collected and conveyed, far and wide, as a book before the revelations were lost or corrupted. The companions of the Prophet (pbuh) knew the importance of doing this as the Qur'an was an infallible guide for Muslims and the foundation of Islam.

Question 8

- (a) Quite a few candidates answered this and the performance generally was good. Some weak answers misquoted the text. Others included extra explanations of the verses which would have been better placed in part (b). Candidates who gained good marks wrote the translation of each verse and a brief description of what it meant.
- (b) Answers here were long and sometimes repetitive. Candidates who scored well wrote about these verses being the first that were revealed to the Prophet (pbuh) when he was called to receive God's message. This first communication from God was about the importance of knowledge that He has granted human beings plus the unique ability to record and transmit it by the use of a pen.

Question 9

- (a) This was a popular question. Some weak candidates wrote long descriptions of the incident with the idols but did not include much else from Ibrahim's life. The best answers were from candidates who had learned the events as they appear in the Suras rather than as a 'story' of his life from beginning to end. They mentioned Ibrahim's dream about sacrificing his son Ismail. Both Ibrahim and Ismail raised the foundations of the Ka'aba, and Ibrahim prayed to God that a prophet should come from his descendants.
- (b) Most candidates knew the belief in all prophets is one of the Articles of Faith. Better answers spoke of twenty five being mentioned by name in the Qur'an but there were countless more. Some were prophets and others were messengers endowed with scriptures. They said all were human, obeying God's commands. The Prophet (pbuh) was the last in the line.

Question 10

- (a) Another popular question in which the majority of candidates gained good marks recalling what needs to be done before Muslims begin to pray. Some even mentioned the mind to be clear so that a Muslim is able to concentrate on what is being said. A few weak answers only spoke about *wudu* and how it is done.
- (b) Most candidates knew what the essential functions of a mosque are and wrote about them at length. Good answers said it was a place of communal activity, both religious and social. People often go to the mosque five times a day on hearing the *adhan* as well as on both Eid days and during Ramadan. Classes are held for children and adults to learn to read the Qur'an.

Question 11

- (a) (i) Many candidates who answered this part were able to write about God as One, Unique, Compassionate and Merciful. Mention was made of Him as the Creator and Master of the Day of Judgement. They also wrote about His 99 names. Weak answers here seemed to concentrate on different types of *shirk* which gained only one mark.
- (ii) Candidates wrote about angels being made of light, and that they followed God's commands acting as His messengers. Mention was made of the duties of the four Archangels, the special one being Jibril who brought the revelations of the Qur'an to the Prophet (pbuh).
- (b) There were adequate responses here. Weak answers were repetitive and seemed to concentrate only on punishment and Hell. They described the Last Day and predictions about it but were unable to explain how this might affect the life of a Muslim. Good answers spoke of God granting all human beings free will to choose their direction in life. They are responsible for their actions and need to remember the difference between good and evil. God will be the Judge and will determine the outcome.

Question 12

- (a) Most answers here contained four or five good points about the role of the Hadith such as it is the second source of guidance for Muslims. Many things are mentioned in the Qur'an but details are found in the Hadith. The Qur'an itself reminds Muslims that they have a good example in the Prophet (pbuh) to follow. Excellent answers went further suggesting the Prophet's life was keenly observed by his companions who wanted to emulate him. All his actions and sayings have provided a cultural framework for Muslims.
- (b) In answering this part of the question the Hadith was accurately quoted. Some candidates gave further advice the Prophet (pbuh) had given on anger. Usually one or two consequences of not controlling anger were mentioned. Good answers here demonstrated a personal insight into the benefits of tolerant behaviour but on the whole the performance was mixed.