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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

Paper 2058/01

Paper 01

General comments

Candidates appeared in general to have been well prepared for this examination, with respect to both factual knowledge and examination technique, though Teachers are advised constantly to remind them of the need to approach the Paper with a number of considerations in mind:

- 1 The first is to write on the point of the questions rather than to put down all they know about a particular topic, a familiar failing in recent years (though not so evident in this Paper). Questions are intended to make candidates think, and they do this in two ways:
 - Firstly, usually in part **(a)** they ask about only one or a few aspects of a topic, and thus require candidates to select elements from the mass of knowledge they have about the topic as a whole. For example, **Question 4** in this Paper asked about the Prophet's experiences in caves, and so from all they had been taught about the life of the Prophet and his significance for Muslims, candidates had to remember the number of significant experiences of this kind he had and nothing more. They also had to decide how fully they would tell the stories, where to begin and where to stop.
 - Secondly, in part **(b)**, questions nearly always ask about the meaning of an event or importance of a character, and so they ask candidates to evaluate the facts they have learnt and decide about their importance. It is by giving good answers to the second parts of two-part questions that candidates can take their marks up into the higher grades. In the new form of Question Papers that will be introduced in the next examination this requirement will not change, and candidates should still be prepared to give clear and concise descriptive accounts and relevant evaluations of the significance of what they have written.
- 2 The second consideration, which is connected to this, is that they should read each question carefully and think a little about what precisely it is asking in each of its parts. The Examiners often noticed in answers to **Question 6** in this Paper that many candidates had not thought about this. The result was that they wrote about the importance of the Prophet's wives in part **(a)** and had to repeat themselves in part **(b)**.
- 3 The third consideration is to manage the time allowed properly. Some candidates in this Paper appeared to devote too much time to **Questions 1-3**, and let themselves down by not having time for the last few questions. In the new style of Papers to be introduced in May/June 2003, which are much shorter, they should still be able to give full essay answers as long as they manage their time carefully. Teachers are advised to explain how to use the time allocated to each Paper carefully, so that candidates are able to answer all questions properly.

As Teachers have previously been informed, in the new form of the Paper (from May/June 2003), there will no longer be special sections for Sunni and Shi'a students. However, some questions will have alternative parts that Sunnis or Shi'is may prefer to attempt. And in all questions the Examiners will be sensitive to interpretations given by Muslims of both traditions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates chose to answer passage **(b)**. Here they would have scored highly if they explained:

- the circumstances in which the Sura is thought to have been revealed, which was when the Prophet's sons had died and his relatives and neighbours mocked him for having no descendants
- some of its main teachings, such as what *al-kawthar* is, why the Prophet should persevere in prayer, and why his enemies would be *abtar*.

Many candidates made most of these points, and those who did not make them clearly often appeared not to have thought about the way in which they would present their answers.

In the new form of the Paper (from May/June 2003), this question will contain **three** passages from which candidates should answer any **two**, for 4 marks each (8 marks in all). They will be asked to comment on the main teachings of the passages, and not on their contexts. While passages will be set on the Paper in both Arabic and English, Teachers are strongly advised to ensure that candidates know the meaning of the Arabic and can demonstrate this by references in their answers. English passages will be taken from Yusuf `Ali's translation of the Qur'an (slightly amended to remove archaic words), which necessarily gives only one interpretation of the original text, and should be supplemented in teaching by thorough study of the Arabic.

Question 2

While there were some very good answers to this question, others made it clear that candidates did not know what some of the underlined words meant. A common mistake was to identify "I am a messenger of your Lord" in passage **(a)** as the Prophet Muhammad. Another was to read "who belies religion" in passage **(c)** (one of Yusuf `Ali's archaisms) as "who believes religion". Good answers identified the word or phrase in its context and commented on the significance it has in that context.

In the new form of the Paper, passages will appear in both Arabic and English with **ten** words or phrases underlined. Candidates should choose any **seven** and comment on their meaning and importance, for 2 marks each (14 marks in all). With regard to the meaning, they should identify what the word or phrase is usually understood to be in this context. To take an example from this Paper, the meaning of "I am a messenger of your Lord" in passage **(a)** is that this refers to the angel Jibril who has been sent to announce to Mary the birth of a son. Its importance is that this angel was normally sent to prophets and so his appearance signifies a momentous event. In preparing candidates for this question, Teachers are again strongly advised to ensure that they have studied the Arabic and can demonstrate this by references in their answers.

Question 3

This question was generally well answered, and the great majority of candidates were able to identify the Hadiths and discuss their significance. The one criticism that may be offered is that many answers tended to be too short. In past years the Examiners have occasionally commented on answers being too long, but here the opposite was the case, and candidates often did not write fully enough to express their views clearly.

In the new form of Paper, **ten** Hadiths will be set in both Arabic and English, from which candidates should choose any **seven** and comment on their teachings about what Muslims should believe and act, for 2 marks each (14 marks in all). They should be able to show knowledge of the Arabic in their answers.

Question 4

Most candidates answered this question reasonably well, identifying the cave on Mount Hira' and the cave of Thawr as the two places associated with the Prophet.

- (a) Marks were given for concise and accurate accounts of the experience of the Prophet in each, and candidates were faced with having to decide the point at which to begin and end their description. The best accounts began with the Prophet's retreats in the cave of Hira' in his middle age and ended with his return to Khadija, and then with his departure from Mecca and after three days his onward journey to Medina, and covered the main incidents between each. Marks were particularly given in each case for relevant quotations from the Qur'an.
- (b) Marks were given for such comments as: Muhammad's experience on Mount Hira' was the beginning of his career as a prophet; this was the first revelation of the Qur'an; his experience in the cave of Thawr showed that God was with him; his survival there meant that the growth of Islam went ahead.

The main difficulties candidates appeared to encounter were concerned with having to decide what points to put in part (a) and what to put in (b). In questions such as this, it is generally safest to give only descriptions in (a) and explanatory comments in (b).

Question 5

While there were very good answers to this question, many candidates failed to earn marks by keeping their comments to generalities rather than discussing the three specific ways in which Muslims should try to show modesty. The Examiners were looking for examples in each case, and candidates who could support their general comments with references to these did well.

- (a) Comments about Muslims being aware of God's presence at all times, and obeying the laws of the Shari'a with respect to worship, food, hygiene, etc. were credited.
- (b) Comments about proper dress, unmarried men and women not mixing, and proper partnership within marriage received marks.
- (c) Comments about friends helping one another and not looking down on those from other social classes were credited.

The Examiners particularly liked the comments in parts (b) and (c) that some candidates had evidently based on their own observations. These included some remarks on the ways in which fathers and daughters and mothers and sons should treat one another kindly, and the ways in which work colleagues should not try to cheat one another. These comments indicated that the candidates had paused to think about the question and had connected it with their own experiences.

Section B

Question 6

- (a) It was surprising how many candidates did not seem to have much more than basic information about the wives of the Prophet. With regard to `A'isha, few referred to her involvement with Talha and Zubayr against `Ali; with regard to Khadija, many wrote more about her first marriages than her life with the Prophet; and with regard to the third wife, many seemed to know little more than her name.
- (b) The importance of `A'isha and Khadija seemed to be reasonably well known, though the third wife was treated less fully. Candidates tended to make general remarks about her piety, services to the poor and reputation within the community (these could apply to all the Prophet's wives), rather than precise comments about her as an individual.

One of the main challenges in this question was to select a third wife about whom enough can be said to gain marks. Many candidates wisely chose Sawda, Hafsa or Mariam, though even with these they often omitted the most obvious comments – for example, about Hafsa's involvement with the *masahif* of the Qur'an, or Mariam's giving birth to a male child. In what was a relatively straightforward question, many candidates missed the opportunity to score well.

Question 7

Most candidates who attempted this gave a good account of the events that immediately followed the *hijra*, including the building of the first mosque and the Prophet's provision for the Emigrants by pairing them with Helpers. The challenge to candidates was to decide the meaning of the term "immediately" in the question – what events followed immediately after the Prophet's arrival in Medina? Most decided that it meant the arrangements he made in the first year or so. But some ignored the term and went on to describe Badr and other battles. Some candidates clearly failed to read the question properly, because they described the events leading up to the *hijra*, rather than those that followed it.

A common mistake in many answers was to say that the Prophet made a treaty with the Jewish tribes in Medina. It would have been more accurate to say that he made a treaty for the whole town, Muslims and others (not all the Arabs became Muslim immediately) and these included the Jewish tribes who were treated similarly to everyone else.

There were some very good answers to part (b), referring to the need for cooperation between Muslims, both individuals and nations, and the example of treating non-Muslims with consideration. The Examiners were very pleased to see that many candidates were able to draw principles for the present from these past events.

Question 8

- (a) Surprisingly, this part was not generally well answered. Many candidates wrote more about those who are excused from fasting and the penalties for missing a day than they did about the requirements of fasting and the actual fast itself. The Examiners were looking for accurate and clear accounts of what happens through a typical day of Ramadan from the time of getting up through to the evening, including *sehri* in the morning and the *tarawih* prayers. But few candidates gave all the daily observances in a clear order, and so missed the chance of easy marks.
- (b) This part was generally better answered, and most candidates included references to the spiritual good it does to the individual and the social good it brings as those fasting become aware of the plight of others.

Section C

There were few answers to the Questions in **Section C**, though the Examiners were ready to credit comments arising from the Shi'i tradition – for example, in **Question 9** with regard to the relationship between `A'isha and `Ali.