

HINDUISM

Paper 9014/01
Paper 1

Key Messages

For **Section A**, all three of the Vedic gods Agni, Indra and Varuna should be studied, so that comparisons can be made, if this is what the question requires. Good translations of Vedic hymns to these gods are widely available and should form a sound basis for answers to any questions on these particular gods.

For **Section B**, the stories of the main characters in the epics must be studied in relation to principles such as *dharma*, as indicated in the Syllabus. 'Telling the story' on its own is not sufficient for the award of good marks.

For **Section C**, candidates should have read a selection of the poetry of the Alvars, Tulsidasa and Surdasa, in order to answer questions about the *bhakti* of these saint-poets. Good translations of these works are widely available and are the only way to provide insight into the authors' devotion to God. Candidates should avoid phrases such as '*bhakti* is a means and an end'; unless they can show that they understand what is meant by this.

In all answers candidates should avoid introductory general paragraphs which are not required such as explanations of what Upanishads are, or what the Mahabharata is about.

General Comments

Some very good answers involved candidates demonstrating a clear, in-depth understanding of what the question was asking of them. Candidates who did well were able to include their own opinion and expand on their own, personal views. Most candidates seemed to have prepared adequately for the examination and tackled it confidently.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Those candidates who were able to include a reference to *ṛta*, gained the higher marks. There were very few references to the Vedic hymns in which Varuna is invoked by worshippers – it is worth noting that these are important passages which should be included in answers to gain marks. It is also important to note that those candidates who took time to read the question and digest what was being asked of them did better. Candidates would benefit from practising past questions in a classroom environment to become familiar with what is being asked of them. Again those candidates who were able to make a comparison with Agni and Indra did well. Candidates should be careful not to confuse Varuna with Vayu.

Question 2

Most candidates who attempted this question had some knowledge of the set text and were able to refer to the main ideas such as *tapas*. Those candidates who were able to confidently reference the important 'agnostic' element which makes this a 'creation' sukta of outstanding interest did well and generally gained higher marks. Some candidates effectively contrasted this passage with other creation narratives such as the idea of the Purusha as creator. This demonstrated sophisticated answers.

Question 3

This was the most popular question in **Section A**, with many candidates showing the ability to discuss the main religious ideas in the Katha Upanishad rather than only telling the story. There were some excellent responses. Those candidates who scored more highly were able to engage with the question and appreciate the significance of Nachiketas as a seeker after truth. Candidates could, for example, have discussed the significance of his youth, his mature insight, his spiritual awareness, and his persistence in asking Yama the difficult question concerning the soul's journey after death.

Section B

Question 4

Those candidates who were able to go beyond simply giving a narrative of the events did better than those who simply gave a story of events. Responses who were mainly narrative could have improved by including moral concepts such as truth-telling and promise-keeping. Candidates who demonstrated their understanding of the principles of *karma* and *dharma* earned marks. Some answers were very insightful, showing appreciation of the Ramayana characters' moral dilemmas, and of the 'ripple effect' resulting from their actions and decisions.

Question 5

The majority of candidates concentrated on describing Draupadi as a 'feisty' feminist. Many answers appeared to be reproducing prepared material comparing Draupadi with Sita and could have gained more marks by expanding and giving their own opinion. There was reference to the *dharma* of Draupadi in some answers and those who were able to elaborate on gained the higher marks. Some candidates made a stronger case by showing when and how Draupadi followed her *dharma*.

Question 6

Candidates seemed to have a relatively good understanding of the set text of the Bhagavad Gita. Those candidates who focused too much on the narrative concerning the battle and/or paraphrasing of quotations (of Krishna's teaching), which were correct, achieved marks but needed to deviate from simply giving a story. It was noticeable that a number of candidates spent a large amount of time writing about the concept of soul/body. Most were able to show understanding of, for example, *swadharma*, *nishkama karma* and *adharma*. Some reference could have been made to Chapter 9 on *varnadharma*. Those candidates who could demonstrate an understanding of Krishna's teaching that love for him can lead to acceptance even when a person falls short in the fulfilment of *dharma* gained marks.

Section C

Question 7

There were some excellent answers, where candidates showed that they had studied the Alvars and other medieval bhakti saints with care, and with knowledge of the outstanding themes of their songs and poetry. Those candidates who were able to achieve the higher marks went beyond simply referring to Tulsidasa and Surdasas and were able to discuss, in detail their ideas and teachings. Candidates could go beyond the two poets and consider others thought of as bhakti saints.

Question 8

Candidates usually had a general understanding of Tulsidasa's aims and his devotion to Rama. It must be noted that those candidates who were able to go beyond simply reiterating the basic information about the teachings of Tulsidasa gained the higher marks. Those candidates who discussed both the central and very

individual approach to worship (the efficacy of the Name of Rama) which appears so vividly, particularly in the Ramcaritamanas, a text widely accessible to all candidates gained the highest marks

Question 9

Answers to this question were often good. Candidates needed to get directly to the question. Candidates could have improved needed to remember not to spend too much time discussing stories of Surdasa's life and/or repeating their notes on the poet's work in general. The best answers were those which showed ability to select material on being 'friends' with God. Candidates did especially well when they showed that they had read some of Surdasa's poetry rather than confining their study to notes about his *bhakti*.

Section D

Question 10

There were some very good answers in the sense that some candidates had excellent knowledge of Rammohan Roy's biography and his reforming interests. Those candidates who were able to reference the practices and worship of the Brahma Samaj did well. This institution showed that Roy had very clear ideas about how and why God should be worshipped, though arguably his zeal for social reform was uppermost in his thinking. It is important to note that candidates who spent time reading the question and understanding what was being asked of them did the best.

Question 11

There were some very good responses and those candidates who were able to move beyond the repetition of class or textbook notes gained the highest marks. The best answers recognised that Dayananda's work, preaching and writings, though very influential in their time, had also been controversial and remain both influential and controversial among Hindus today. Those answers that could give more than one perspective and consider conflicting opinions tended to gain more marks.

Question 12

This question was not as popular as some other questions. Some candidates did exceptionally well and it was those answers who gave an array of differing perspectives which achieved the best marks. Candidates needed to show recognition of the importance of the outstanding personality of Ramakrishna, in his reported sayings and in his continued legacy as promoted by disciples such as Vivekananda.

HINDUISM

Paper 9014/02
Paper 2

Key messages

Candidates who took time to read the question before attempting to answer it gained the most marks. It was clear when candidates rushed in to answering a question

Candidates who were able to give their own opinion and go beyond simply relaying a narrative tended to do better than those candidates who didn't

Candidates who presented more than one argument and showed examples of more than one argument scored marks.

General comments

The standard overall was good. There was a clear distinction between those candidates who simply repeated rehearsed answers and those candidates who could independently present arguments that were original and answered the question directly. Too often candidates wrote what they had rehearsed and didn't necessarily answer the question asked of them. Therefore candidates should be encouraged to practice past questions in order to grasp an understanding of what is being assessed and not what they assume.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The majority of candidates were able to apply key terminology in their answers. Candidates who could demonstrate a thorough understanding of Samkhya gained the highest marks. There was much discussion about 'causation' with candidates who mentioned the first cause gaining marks. The three Gunas were usually mentioned and candidates emphasising their importance gained the higher marks. Those candidates who mentioned the key role of Purusha and made a valid comparison, using the imagery of 'seed or tapas', from their set text, the Nasadiya Sutra (in Paper 1) did well. Outstanding candidates were able to include other views of causality like that of Om or Brahman indicated in the Mandukya Upanishad.

Question 2

Candidates who were able to not only outline the eight limbs but show their relative importance of attaining the final goal of Kaivalya earned marks. It is also worth noting that candidates who were able to refer to modern scholars tended to achieve higher marks. Most candidates understood the eight 'limbs' and the basics, often with more elaboration on Yama and Niyama (sometimes also on dhyana and Samadhi) from better candidates. Candidates who picked up on the term 'pathway' (to achieve health benefits) clearly understood what the question was asking of them whilst other candidates could improve by reading the question properly. Some candidates referred to the modern attractiveness of yogic techniques which earned marks.

Question 3

The Advaita question was largely treated as if it were simply an essay on Sankara, or even on Sankara versus Ramanuja, although there were some excellent exceptions. Candidates were required to place the Advaita Vedanta in context, especially for example the teachings of the Upanishads, or with reference to the actual lives and work of Sankara, and Ramanuja, which might provide a base for understanding their

intellectual and spiritual perspectives.

Question 4

There were many excellent responses which tackled the question on Sankara and Ramanuja with great maturity and understanding. It was good to see most candidates knew the basics on Ramanuja and those candidates who achieved high marks clearly understood the context of the teachings. Those candidates who were able to show the similarities and the difference between the two ways gained marks. Candidates might have shown awareness that Sankara, with his many hymns like 'Bhaja Govinda' and his famous insistence on caring for his own mother's funeral showed a strong devotional side as well.

Question 5

Many candidates who answered this question did it well and were able to include accurate and relevant material. Candidates who were able to argue there many similarities between the two teachings but the fundamental difference in that Jainism assumes a multiplicity of souls, whereas in upanishadic Hinduism Atman is one, and not different to Brahman did well.

Candidates could improve by ensuring they do not simply conclude, too hastily in a final paragraph. Candidates who left the subject of moksha to a final paragraph and tended to ignore the differences between Jainism and Hinduism did not achieve high marks. .

Question 6

Thoughtful answers that were able to discuss the relative importance of the Eight-fold path earned marks. It was apparent that candidates could improve by having the confidence to include their own opinion on the answer as opposed to simply reiterating information they had learnt. Candidates really can improve by providing thoughtful discussion and by showing awareness of the unique nature of Theravada Buddhism. Candidates might explain both the four noble truths and the three marks of existence showing what they believe to be the relationship between them. Candidates needed to demonstrate an understanding of the concepts taken from Theravada Buddhist.

Question 7

This question was not a popular question however those candidates who did answer it did exceptionally well and implemented excellent discussion. Students might discuss the essential points of similarity between the Upanishadic teaching and that of the Buddha as well as the major differences showing their awareness of different views among scholars on this view. Candidates should have pointed out that in some of his teachings he even comes across as hostile to the concept of the Self. Candidates needed to show clear awareness of these differences & similarities between Upanishadic Hinduism and the teaching of the Buddha.

Question 8

Candidates who decided to answer this question responded with some very good, in-depth answers. Candidates needed to discuss the apparently contradictory qualities of Shiva reflected in his names and support their comments by reference to known iconographic feature and or literary references in the Vedic and post Vedic literature. Those candidates who could establish an argument using evidence from accurate Vedic stories gained marks. Candidates who identified that those apparently contradictory qualities are in fact reconciled in this one Shiva, gained marks.

Question 9

Candidates who decided to answer this question responded with some very sensitive and mature answers. The depth of unsentimental devotion to Hanuman was evident, as shown for example in references to the Hanuman Chalisa as well as some understanding of the deep advaitic implications of the question. Candidates needed to show awareness of Hanuman as a Hindu god and a devotee of Rama that he

embodies the ideal qualities of a devotee or bhakti. Candidates might argue that Hanuman's special nature is demonstrated not only by the profound understanding this quotation reveals but by the fact that he is the embodiment of total service and devotion to God Rama.

Question 10

The question on 'the one and the many' was answered by few candidates, some with very considerable maturity of understanding. However it was evident that some candidates had prepared for a 'murti' question so tended to write this answer anyway. Again it would be advantageous for teachers and candidates to work through past paper questions to ensure the question is understood as opposed to assume. Those candidates who were able to demonstrate their understanding of the deep implications of 'God hidden in the heart of all' earned marks.

Question 11

This question, when answered well made a clear acknowledgement of the significance of the universe being Brahman. The standard descriptive answer on varnas was almost universally given. Those candidates who were able to show the distinction between 'Shudras' 'Dalits' and 'untouchables' gained marks. When the views of Gandhi and Ambedkar were quoted accurately and it was given credit with those candidates who unpicked and demonstrated a critical understanding of the quotes gaining higher marks. Candidates who left quotes without critique tended to not do as well.

Question 12

This question was extremely popular and there were varying degrees of breadth and depth demonstrated by candidates. Those candidates who were able to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of Manu as a source of the formulation tended to earn more marks. Candidates were required to explain how this highly systematic ordering of human life, when followed can lead to great harmony, peace and understanding, all of which is highly relevant to in an increasingly uncertain and troubled world. Candidates needed to be wary of giving sensationalist descriptions of modern life as corrupt and materialistic with little or no evidence to back up their opinion.

Question 13

The question on the law of karma was largely answered in a thoughtful and mature way. In general most candidates were on fairly firm lines as regards Hindu teaching. Candidates needed to discuss this quotation, showing detailed knowledge of the three concepts of sancitta, prarabdha and kriyamana karma, and the view that present action dissolves samskara. Candidates needed to demonstrate, in their answers, awareness of the theory of karma and its profound significance in Hinduism.