

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

Cambridge Ordinary Level

MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2015 series

2055 HINDUISM

2055/01

Paper 1, maximum raw mark 100

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Section A

1 ‘Therefore, Indra surpasses greatly ... other gods.’ (Kena Upanishad 4.3)

From your study of this parable,

(a) explain why Indra is said to be superior to two other great gods [10]

and

(b) describe how the nature of the Absolute (Brahman) was revealed to Indra. [10]

For (a) candidates should show knowledge of the story in the set text of the Kena Upanishad. They should identify the other two gods as Agni and Vayu, selecting the relevant information (that Indra was the first of the great gods to learn about the ‘spirit’) rather than simply narrating the story.

For (b) they should show understanding of who Uma was, and what she revealed about the nature of Brahman. In either part, candidates will be credited for noting the ‘moral dimension’ – that the gods were boasting of their power, which was a barrier to knowledge of the Absolute.

2 ‘Verily, lady, whoever practises any one of these ... is my friend.’ (Ramacharitmanas: Aranya 34)

Describe, with reference to the set text, the nature of the *bhakti* (devotion) which led Lord Rama to consider this lady as his friend. [10]

Candidates should be able to show familiarity with the story of the Shabri in the set text, and be able correctly to identify some of the ‘forms of *bhakti*’ to which Rama is referring (not in any particular order). They should be able to show understanding of the important lesson of this encounter, that a woman of no education or social standing possessed all of the qualities which make the *bhakti* worship of God acceptable. Good candidates might note that the ‘friend’ aspect is even more surprising in view of Tulsidas’s declared recognition of the superiority of Brahmins, and his less than approving references to women in general.

3 ‘Everyone must act, but not all action leads to *moksha*.’

Explain, with reference to Krishna’s teaching in the Bhagavad Gita. [20]

Candidates should concentrate on Krishna’s advice to Arjuna without trying to give a long narrative about the adversaries and the battlefield. They should be able to identify the general topic as the ‘way of action’ set out in the BG, and the particular teaching that the only valid work is that which is carried out without attachment to its ‘fruits’ or results. They should explain why inaction is said to be impossible, but work should be done in accordance with one’s *dharma*. They should also show knowledge and understanding of Krishna’s teaching that he himself never ceases to work. Good candidates might know that the BG mentions people who no longer need to work, but recommends work as the norm for those seeking *moksha*.

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Section B

4 ‘Ganesha is worshipped only as a god of good luck.’

To what extent do you agree? Give reasons to support your views. [20]

Candidates should not simply accept the statement, but will be credited for examples from their reading and/or their own experience of how the image forms of Ganesha are given prominence, and prayers at his shrines offered, when, for example, an auspicious beginning for a new business undertaking, school examinations or artistic ventures is sought. They should show understanding that the worship of the god involves effort and commitment – mere superstitious attempts to acquire good luck are not valid. Good candidates might mention the concept of a god who tests people with obstacles, as well as removing obstacles from their path. Candidates might disagree with the quotation in the question, saying that many worshippers offer devotion to Ganesha without any self-seeking motive. It would also be acceptable to agree that the god is possibly invoked for good luck by many who avoid any deeper involvement in Hindu religious practice.

5 (a) Describe how Hindus might celebrate Maha Shivaratri. [10]

and

(b) Explain why Maha Shivaratri is a major festival for worshippers of the god Shiva. [10]

For (a) candidates should be able to put the festival in context of the worship of Shiva and describe (from their reading and/or own experience/knowledge of local customs, etc.) how worshippers might observe the festival night (by fasting, bathing, worship at Shiva-ling, etc.).

For (b) they should show understanding of the festival as an annual renewal of vows, and of dedication to Shiva and the moral values which the god represents.

6 Explain the significance for Hindus of worshipping Rama as ‘an avatara of Vishnu’. [20]

The concept of ‘avatara’ should be clearly explained, and the reference to Vishnu’s care for humankind in the BG should be known. Examples other than Rama are expected but candidates need not go into detail on the Puranic stories of all the major avatars. The role of Rama as both god (to be worshipped in the *bhakti* tradition) and human being with a ‘life story’ (to be a moral example) should be clearly explained.

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Section C

7 'Dharma is the only goal a Hindu needs to strive for.'

Discuss.

[20]

Candidates should be selective and not use the question to write all they know about the four purusharthas. They could agree in principle with the statement on the grounds that both *artha* and *kama* can only be proper goals if guided by *dharma*, and that *moksha* can only be achieved as the culmination of a dharmic life. They could disagree on the grounds that all four are proper goals, and that *moksha* is in fact the ultimate goal, in freeing the person from the cycle of birth and re-birth.

8 (a) Describe the traditional duties of the Hindu 'householder' ashrama.

[10]

and

(b) To what extent do you think these duties are still important for Hindus who are in the 'householder' stage of life? Give reasons to support your views.

[10]

For (a) the traditional duties, within a Hindu marriage, to gods, parents and the wider community, should be known and clearly described.

For (b) candidates should give a thoughtful response, showing that they appreciate how differing circumstances and economic forces might change people's ideas on their social responsibilities in this stage of life, but the spirit of the traditional ashrama idea might still have validity.

9 'It is necessary for Hindus to observe the traditional samskaras.'

To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give reasons to support your views.

[20]

Candidates should use knowledge and understanding of the samskaras they have studied to give reasoned arguments for and against retaining the traditional practices (e.g. as rites of passage, aiming to strengthen the community). Good candidates might note that the samskaras were rites to be observed by the 'twice-born', so were not democratic ceremonies available for all Hindus, as might be expected today.

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Section D

- 10 (a) Describe how Ramakrishna Paramhansa came to devote his life to God at an early age. [10]

and

- (b) Why do you think his teachings have attracted many disciples? Give reasons to support your views. [10]

For (a) biographical details of his youthful experiences are relevant, but should be fairly brief – the question does not ask for ‘the full story’.

For (b) candidates should give a thoughtful response based on knowledge that Ramakrishna was known to be saintly and that his thoughts and pithy sayings about how to live a loving and holy life have appealed to a wide range of people in his lifetime and since, many of whom have had no theological knowledge. Good candidates should know of Swami Vivekananda as the disciple who did most to disseminate Ramakrishna's thoughts (in lectures and in print, and in founding the Ramakrishna Mission, now of worldwide significance).

- 11 ‘The Arya Samaj was a more effective movement for social development than the Brahmo Samaj.’

Discuss. [20]

Candidates should show accurate knowledge of the founding and principles of both reforming movements without going into great detail or narrative. The major achievements of both should be summarised. Evidence for agreement with the statement could be that the Arya Samaj had a more widespread and popular appeal, and that its legacy (in education particularly) is stronger today. Ram Mohan Roy's outstanding contribution to social reform can perhaps be attributed to him personally rather than to the society he founded.

- 12 Describe the work of the 19th and 20th century reformers in their efforts to achieve the abolition of *sati*. [20]

Candidates who choose this question will probably want to include a range of issues, but the answer should concentrate on the topic of *sati*, showing understanding of how the place of widowed women in Hindu societies was a complex one, which could lead to tragedy and was not being tackled humanely by those who saw themselves as upholders of religious tradition. The work of at least two of the reformers studied should be described.