

HINDUISM

Paper 2055/01

Paper 1

General Comments

The overall performance and answers of Candidates were of a commendable standard as they were able to provide correct information wherever required. It was a pleasure to observe Candidates' mastery of the topics/questions set. Most of the questions needed Candidates' interpretation of the major themes, concepts and topics prescribed in the syllabus. Coverage of the prescribed topics was relatively good in some areas of the syllabus. As highlighted in previous reports, the reproduction of study materials and School notes prevented some Candidates from scoring marks in the top band. In many cases, questions split into two parts were not properly answered as Candidates did not follow the instructions. For a competent answer, Candidates need to display the correct understanding of the text(s) as well as topics. They must also be able to express themselves clearly showing evidence of having mastered the topics/questions. Some Candidates were successful in showing an in-depth study, criticism and independent thinking with regard to the questions set this year. However others continue to write at length mythological / biographical details. Candidates are reminded that such accounts are not given credit unless they are asked to be outlined. They need to read the instructions well before they try to attempt any of the questions.

Specific Comments on specific Questions

Section A

Many Candidates chose to attempt two questions from this section.

Questions 1 and 3 were very popular among Candidates. Some answers were confidently written. It would seem that many Candidates had a thorough study of the portions prescribed in the Upanishads and the Ramacharitmanas. In some scripts, Candidates were able to provide clear reasoning and they even gave correct information about the stories. There were instances where the message/philosophy of the Kena Upanishad was well argued. Some Candidates spent too much time in the narratives rather than dealing directly with the demands of the questions.

Question 1

Describe and explain how each of the gods Indra, Agni and Vayu came to recognise a power greater than his own.

Most of the responses were well-argued. Candidates were well versed with the key issues of the Kena Upanishad as they were able to give an accurate description of the gods, the moral teaching behind the story and the reproduction of the Upanishadic wisdom. Many could have shown deeper understanding of the nature of Brahman, Urna and her Divine nature and the symbolism associated with her personality.

Question 2

Explain

(a) why Arjuna felt unable to do his duty as a Kshatriya on the battlefield.

and (b) why Hindus today might try to follow the advice of Krishna his charioteer.

Only a few Candidates attempted this question. Answers showed a fair understanding of the text. Precise details were not fully explored.

Part (a) was better answered than part (b). The key social schemes/ moral issues of the Bhagavata Gita deals with, such as swadharma, yajna, gunas, varnas, nishkama karma were rarely mentioned in the essays. Candidates gave very superficial reasoning for Arjuna's unwillingness to be engaged in war.

In part (b) there was hardly any relevant information on Krishna's advice.

Question 3

'Tulsidasa shows how god can be worshipped by all, whatever their birth or status.'

Discuss with reference to the passages of the Ramacharitmanasa which you have studied.

Some answers clearly showed that Candidates had a good understanding of Tulsidas's views on bhakti, the personality of Shabari as well as Kewat and the importance of Ramacharitmanas. Responses displayed Candidates' mastery over the set passages, expressing themselves confidently and with competence. This was the most popular question in the whole paper and many Candidates scored high marks in this Section.

Section B

Candidates produced good answers in this section. They could successfully express themselves on some of the aspects of the questions. It is important not to forget that attention should be paid to the requirements of the questions before embarking to answer any of them. However, many Candidates gave too many unnecessary details associated with myths and legends. Candidates could have examined the nature of nirguna and saguna aspects of the Ultimate Reality.

Question 4

Explain why the god Ganesha inspires his worshippers to ask for his help in their personal, business and social lives.

Candidates were able to give a good description of Ganesha. The stronger Candidates successfully supported their answers with relevant knowledge of the key features and attributes of Ganesha as Remover of obstacles, the first worship going to him and the devotion expressed for him by devout Hindus. They also highlighted the fact that Ganesha is important in developing intellectual capabilities. Some Candidates confidently outlined his importance in personal, business and social lives.

Question 5

'The festival of Divali /Deepavali reminds Hindus of their duties to God and to each other.'

Discuss.

Some Candidates expressed themselves confidently on the meaning of Divali and the legends associated with it. The stronger Candidates addressed its religious and spiritual significance. They also discussed how and why Divali is celebrated in Mauritius without missing its place among Hindus over the world. Higher marks could have been obtained had Candidates given greater details on the following aspects:

- victory of light over darkness
- devotees seeking the blessings of goddess Lakshmi
- Divali ushering a new spirit among the devotees.

Question 6

(a) Describe ways in which worshippers show respect before the murti of a Hindu god or goddess.

and (b) Do you agree with those who say that idols and icons are unnecessary in worship?

Give reasons to support your views.

Part (a) Candidates answered with confidence and shared their views about the different ways devotees show respect before murtis. They discussed important details on the issue of idol worship/murti, showing their competence to deal with the topic.

Part (b) there was some good answers but the discussion on the importance of idols and icons was weak although attempts were made to argue in favour or against it. Candidates could have referred to reformers who reacted against it (**Section D**) to explore the question in thoughtful way.

Section C

All the questions set were popular but the question on varna was not of well answered. Candidates displayed good understanding of **Questions 7** and **8**.

Question 7

‘Without the goals of kama and artha, no human society can make true progress.’

Discuss with reference to your study of the Hindu purusharthas.

Candidates displayed good knowledge of the Purusharthas. Responses showed a relatively good understanding of kama and artha but in many cases, they did not confidently respond to the demand of the question. They could have explored the various views of Hindu philosophers/commentators associated with both of these ends as outlined in Hindu scriptures. Candidates could have added some of the following relevant ideas:

- elderly persons get support, care and affection from the householder
- artha is managed in the business world as well.

Question 8

(a) What were the duties of the Candidate in the traditional Brahmacharya ashrama?

and (b) Do you think the values of the Brahmacharya ashrama are important for Hindu Candidates today? Give reasons to support your views.

Part (a) was attempted with greater confidence than part (b). Candidates showed their competence in explaining the life-style of the Candidate in the Brahmacharya ashrama. They outlined relevant information but some more details were missing.

Part (b) the arguments put forward by some Candidates were quite interesting. But the values associated with the Brahmacharya ashrama in the modern context were missing.

Question 9

‘People should not be valued according to their name or their birth.’ Discuss with reference to your study of the varna system in Hinduism.

Candidates failed to show some understanding of the varna dharma. Most of the answers produced skeleton information about varna. Answers did not show good level of judgement and mastery of the topic. If Candidates had taken recourse to the term Dwija, the difference between varna and jati and the specific duties assigned to each of them, they could have earned some marks.

Section D

All the questions set in this section asked Candidates to show the various changes that took place in the history of Hinduism and the challenging opinions brought forward by the reformers they have studied. It was quite disappointing to note that very few answers were of a good standard. Commendable answers came only from part (a) of **Question 11**.

Question 10

Give reasons why the experiences and teachings of Ramakrishna Paramhansa led his followers to regard him as a saint.

The religious experiences of Ramakrishna were outlined correctly but how those experiences helped him to be considered as a saint was left unattended. Some Candidates could have referred to his experiences showing universality in his teachings together with his advaitic experience which has relevance even today.

Question 11

Outline the moral and social principles which led the Hindu reformers to campaign for

(a) banning the practice of sati

and (b) improving the lives of widows in India.

Part (a) of the question was answered fairly well. The details provided were reasonably developed. Some answers contained praiseworthy materials in connection with the contributions of Roy with reference to the other reformers. The works of the reformers in improving the status of women was satisfactorily highlighted and some of the historical details were accurate.

Part (b) responses did not show sufficient information about the contribution and the works of the reformers in empowering women, for example: widow re-marriage, the distaste of reformers for child marriage, their support to women in their fight for equality and his concept of basic education, among others.

Question 12

'My life is my message.'

Give reasons why this saying of their 'Bapu' was important for the followers of M.K. Gandhi.

It seemed that the term 'Bapu' was not understood by many of the Candidates. The question was not attempted by many but those who did, referred to some superficial or key aspects of M.K. Gandhi's life. Many of valuable points related to Gandhism were missing. Candidates could have referred to some of Gandhi's select but bold initiatives in order to influence all the spheres of life, both inside and outside India.