

HINDUISM

Paper 8058/01

Paper 1

Key Messages

- In order to gain the highest marks, candidates should address the *specific* topic given in each question. Answers which only deal with a topic in general terms cannot gain the highest marks, even if the answer is detailed and factually correct.
- Candidates should study the *specified texts* and not depend solely on general information *about* the texts taken from textbooks or class notes.

General Comments

There was a wide range of response to the questions. Some outstanding work was presented, showing detailed knowledge and intelligent engagement with all aspects of the syllabus. There were a number of candidates who were unable to demonstrate sufficient knowledge of syllabus topics and it would benefit candidates to focus and address the specific wording in the question rather than writing more general responses. It is also important that candidates are able to demonstrate evidence of research or independent reading in their responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most of the answers to this question were fairly well-informed, detailing aspects which could be called 'beneficial' or 'destructive'. Very few candidates, however, noticed the vital word 'only', which invited discussion of the more 'religious' elements in the hymns to the Vedic gods, such as petitions for forgiveness of sins to Varuna.

Question 2

Some candidates did not know what the Brahmanas, as a body of literature, are and what they contain which affected their ability to make a comparison on the theme of 'sacrifice'. The majority of candidates could therefore only be credited for their knowledge of the Purusha Sukta. In these cases marks for this question tended to be low.

Question 3

Answers to this popular question tended to be good or very good, since most candidates were able to discuss the Upanishadic advice to avoid the temptations of 'materialism'. Weaker answers were prone to general statements which tended to ignore well-publicised examples of (individual and group) donations of money and charitable action, for example following a natural disaster. The actual meaning of 'covet' was often misunderstood as 'steal'.

Section B

Question 4

Comparatively few candidates tackled this question, although those who chose it generally produced good answers. The best responses were able to give evidence of having thought about how the teachings might be applicable in contemporary life.

Question 5

This question was popular and in many cases well done. The most perceptive answers identified from the epic's many strands, that jealousy, greed, desire for power, revenge etc. are all perennial causes of conflict. Weaker answers gave too much narrative, which was not required.

Question 6

The question was easily understood as far as the narrative was concerned, but there were few very strong answers. The reason was that usually no 'significance' was identified, except that 'Rama could not go back on his promise to his father'. Certainly some candidates showed that they understood Jabali's comments to be shocking, but often they did not develop their explanations.

Section C

Question 7

A few candidates had studied the Alvares in detail, knowing their names and quoting from their works, so gained high marks. Some of the answers were very thin, however, and showed less evidence of the detailed study of the topic required to achieve the higher marks.

Question 8

Most answers made a good attempt to engage with the question, and showed good understanding of Tulsidas's devotion to Rama. In some cases more could have been said about the power which he attributed to devotional actions, such as repeating the names of Rama.

Question 9

This was a popular question, enabling candidates who had studied the poetry of Surdasa, and understood his devotion to Krishna, to gain high marks. Weaker answers contained general information on Surdasa without considering the main theme of the question.

Section D

Question 10

Although a few candidates were very well-informed, many answers demonstrated that there was little detailed knowledge demonstrated, with some answers based on one or two unsatisfactory sources. Answers would benefit from evidence of good research, preferably from the reformer's own work or at least from a reliable commentary.

Question 11

Answers to this question were similar to question 10, in that whilst there were some very well informed responses, the majority were too general in nature to access the higher marks. More detailed knowledge of the work of Swami Dayananda needed to be demonstrated, alongside a focus on the specific wording of the question. Material for these topics has to be well researched, preferably from the reformer's own work or from a reliable commentary.

Question 12

Too few candidates answered this question for a report to be produced.