

HINDUISM

Paper 2055/01

Paper 1

General Comments

Questions 1,2,4,5,7 and 10 were quite popular among students. Candidates who scored high marks did not only pay attention to the questions set, but their answers have proved to be both analytical and coherent. A significant number of candidates have shown mastery of the main themes/concepts/topics and the key ideas found in the set texts of the prescribed syllabus. Some very interesting personal responses were noted in some answer books, as a result of which the students scored some additional marks in the top band. Those who attempted questions with two parts sometimes ignored one part of the question. Some candidates did not score high marks because they preferred to give lengthy narratives and biographical accounts. In some cases a list of ideas was given without any sustained arguments.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

This was a popular question from this section, where candidates were able to develop the main theme and concept from the set text, thus enabling them to score high marks. Most of the answers showed that the meaning of parable was clear. Candidates were expected to explain the nature of Brahman by referring to two parables: one from the Chandogya Upanishad on 'salt and water' and another allegory from the Kena Upanishad. It is important for students to refer to specified areas of the set text and drawing on the other analogies like 'bee and honey' was not necessary.

Question 2

Most of the answers did refer to the set text, Ramacharitmanas, on the meeting of Kevat and Lord Rama. Candidates showed a clear understanding of the humility and devotion of Kevat. Both his faith in Lord Rama and his 'fear' of losing his means of living were clearly explained. Candidates tended to lay more emphasis on the spiritual rather than the material side of Kevat. Those who tackled the question without any narrative scored high marks. The other part of the question regarding the reward from Sita was well articulated by a large majority of candidates.

Question 3

Answers to the question demanded a synthesis of karma and jnana. Those candidates who attempted the question were coherent in their answers. Candidates successfully highlighted Arjuna's duty as a Kshatriya and the spirit with which his teacher, Lord Krishna, taught him to fight with the knowledge of nishkama karma.

Section B

Question 4

The best answers would have made reference to Durga's victory over Mahisasura and the other demons in order to describe her warlike and destructive power to maintain justice. Among those who did well, some lacked details on her iconographic features and her god-given weapons. Some neglected to write on her vahana and its significance. Durga's calm and shining face blessing her devotees with new life during the popular Navaratri festival ought to have been included.

Question 5

This was a rather popular choice from this section. Those candidates who gained high marks included in their answers the god's appearance, his vahana and its significance. Few candidates, however, described Kartikeya as a member of Lord Shiva family. The second part of the question was about his worshippers, who, with great enthusiasm, fervour, and discipline are involved during the Cavadi festival, this was an aspect which only the best answers addressed.

Question 6

This question was about Lord Shiva seated in Mt Kailash (Shiva meditating, the Maha Yogi, as Dakshinamurti); the teacher, his dancing posture (Tandava Nritya that brings about all the creation together with the sound of the damaru); Shiva as Nataraj. Some candidates just mentioned the Tandava dance without explaining its significance. Many candidates gave a detailed account of the various iconographic features of Lord Shiva without really referring to the demand of the question. Those who scored good marks were those who showed the opposing attributes of Lord Shiva.

Section C

Question 7

Money (Artha), parallel to Kama, is regarded as one of the most important purusharthas for a Grihasthi. As long as it is guided by dharma, it is the legitimate goal of a householder. This question was rather well-answered by some candidates, who made the effort to write on the forms of Artha, at the same time referring to the sinless acquisition of that wealth which is the socially approved one.

Question 8

The question had to do with both the preparation and actual attainment of Moksha during the vanaprastha and the sanyasa ashramas respectively. Candidates were expected to shed light on how the elders feed back to society by their spiritual achievements and findings. Some candidates did write that the values of these ashramas are not followed by all Hindus. Candidates could have been rewarded by mentioning that the promotion of welfare among elderly people in the modern era can be extended by opening care centres, by providing free medical treatments, by honouring the good things they have done while employed, or by giving them access to new communication devices like the internet, etc. Good answers referred to all those facilities that are already being given for the benefit of the elderly people in Mauritius.

Question 9

Candidates showed a clear understanding of the four varnas. They were expected to write on the origins of the varnas by laying emphasis on their character, conduct, duties, gunas, etc. An individual may be born in any of the Varnas but, due to the dominance of one of the three gunas, he is bound to change his varna. Somebody may be born of a Brahmin couple but his varna is determined by his predominant qualities. Gunas are flexible and dynamic and there are also instances in the scriptures which show that belonging to a certain Varna group depends on how he conducts his life. Only the best candidates were able to show the difference between Varna and jati. Answers to this question were general rather than argumentative.

Section D.

Question 10

Swami Dayananada's motto was "Back to the Vedas". This was the platform for his rejection of idol worship, polytheism and condemnation of other rituals and superstitious beliefs. Weaker responses involved narrating the life of Swami Dayananda, rather than concentrating on his stand against the worship of a personal God or idol worship and the various socio-religious reforms which he carried out for the benefit of the society. Education could have been the prime mover for the rejection of blind faith. Few candidates referred to the setting up of the Kanya Maha Vidhyalaya, as well as the condemnation of the malpractices originating from the caste system. Elaboration of many other issues which were holding Indians back socially was absent.

Question 11

Candidates showed a clear understanding of M.K.Gandhi's truth, non-violence and Satyagraha, even though these terms were not used in an interrelated fashion. Gandhi was a man of both precept and example, because he practised his principles in his life. Among his opponents were the British, the high castes and some political parties within his own society. Mention could be made of his Satyagraha Ashram, where his

community promoted cottage industries such as spinning, his passive resistance, the Salt March, non-cooperation movement, fasting of Gandhi and the various other activities he organised from his ashram at Sabarmati.

Question 12

The need for improved education would imply two main aspects: that the Indian reformers were not against the teachings of the classical schools or the Gurukula System and that the reformers had faith in the acquisition of the bulk of knowledge found in the shrutis and the smritis. But they wanted to revolutionize their local system by keeping pace with the modern system of education offered in other developed countries.

Candidates' were expected to include in their answers the educational reforms/activities of at least two reformers. R.M. Roy, Swami, Dayananda Saraswati and Mahatma Gandhi were the three most important proponents of educational reforms for the removal of illiteracy. Education was to become the property of all, irrespective of caste, creed, colour and gender. Some of the following examples could be highlighted: Introduction of Western/scientific education for both boys and girls, opening of Kanya Vidhyalaya and a number of DAV schools going beyond the gurukula to enable Indians to cope with the challenges of the 19th and 20th centuries.