



General Certificate of Education

## Religious Studies 1061

RSS09      World Religions 1  
                 Buddhism  
                 Hinduism  
                 Sikhism

## Mark Scheme

*2009 examination - June series*

**This mark scheme uses the [new numbering system](#) which is being introduced for examinations from June 2010**

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## Examination Levels of Response

### Religious Studies (Advanced Subsidiary) AS Level Descriptors

Level	AS Descriptor AO1	Marks	AS Descriptor AO2	Marks	AS Descriptors for Quality of Written Communication in AO1 and AO2
7	A thorough treatment of the topic within the time available. Information is accurate and relevant, and good understanding is demonstrated through use of appropriate evidence / examples	28-30	A well-focused, reasoned response to the issues raised. Different views are clearly explained with supporting evidence and argument. There is some critical analysis. An appropriate evaluation is supported by reasoned argument.	14-15	Appropriate form and style of writing; clear and coherent organisation of information; appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility; high level of accuracy in spelling punctuation and grammar.
6	A fairly thorough treatment within the time available; information is mostly accurate and relevant. Understanding is demonstrated through the use of appropriate evidence / example(s)	24-27	A mostly relevant, reasoned response to the issues raised. Different views are explained with some supporting evidence and argument. There is some analysis. An evaluation is made which is consistent with some of the reasoning.	12-13	
5	A satisfactory treatment of the topic within the time available. Key ideas and facts are included, with some development, showing reasonable understanding through use of relevant evidence / example(s).	20-23	A partially successful attempt to sustain a reasoned argument. Some attempt at analysis or comment and recognition of more than one point of view. Ideas adequately explained.	10-11	Mainly appropriate form and style of writing; some of the information is organised clearly and coherently; there may be some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; satisfactory legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4	A generally satisfactory treatment of the topic within the time available. Key ideas and facts are included, showing some understanding and coherence.	15-19	A limited attempt to sustain an argument, which may be one-sided or show little ability to see more than one point of view. Most ideas are explained.	7-9	Form and style of writing appropriate in some respects; some clarity and coherence in organisation; there may be some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar adequate to convey meaning.
3	A summary of key points. Limited in depth or breadth. Answer may show limited understanding and limited relevance. Some coherence.	10-14	A basic attempt to justify a point of view relevant to the question. Some explanation of ideas and coherence.	5-6	
2	A superficial outline account, with little relevant material and slight signs of partial understanding, or an informed answer that misses the point of the question.	5-9	A superficial response to the question with some attempt at reasoning.	3-4	
1	Isolated elements of partly accurate information little related to the question.	1-4	A few basic points, with no supporting argument or justification.	1-2	Little clarity and organisation; little appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar barely adequate to make meaning clear.
0	Nothing of relevance.	0	No attempt to engage with the question or nothing of relevance.	0	

## **RSS09 World Religions 1 Buddhism OR Hinduism OR Sikhism**

### **Section A Buddhism**

**01 Examine the meaning and significance of the concept of samsara for Buddhists.**

#### **Meaning**

- Cycle of birth, death and rebirth through the law of karma.
- Means 'round and round' cycle of becoming.
- Various realms of rebirth may be referred to.
- Cyclic process in which endless cycle of rebirth into ignorance is perpetuated by human tendency to attachment grasping to material things and life of the senses.
- The forces of ignorance and delusion, greed and hatred are the cause of rebirth into the physical world in ignorance again.
- The law of karma critical element in explanation of samsara.

#### **Significance**

- Karma determines the physical and mental condition of both next karmic moment and long-term future destiny.
- Provides acceptance and understanding of the reasons for present conditions and suffering.
- Leads to the wish and intention to escape from the endless round of rebirths.
- Enables them to see the link between suffering and ignorance.
- To be determined to develop morality, meditation and wisdom, the Eightfold Path to ensure good karma for present and future life.

Allow for candidates to combine meaning with significance.

**(30 marks) AO1**

**02 'The Buddhist attitude towards life is pessimistic.'**

**Assess the truth of this claim.**

#### **In support**

Focus on suffering and inherent tendency of human nature towards greed, hatred and ignorance, as well as strong forces of samsara and difficulties of breaking the bonds of attachment lead to pessimistic outlook. Goal of nibbana so difficult. First two truths focus on suffering.

#### **Against**

Buddhist path offers a clear and definite way to overcome the force of samsara through the middle way. Not difficult as based in morality and living a good life. The promise of freedom from suffering and attachment just as strong as the dangers of the focus on suffering. It is within human capacity to control own destiny, not dependent on priests or other supernatural forces.

**(15 marks) AO2**

**03 Examine the teachings about nibbana in Buddhism.**

Many approaches.

- It is linked to the Four Noble Truths.
- Freedom from the cycle of rebirth.
- The unconditioned.
- Extinction or quenching of the fires of anger, greed and delusion, of desire and craving.
- Destruction of the defilements / cankers of greed, hatred and delusion - nibbana during life as a transcendent timeless experience.
- Can be experienced fully in the present life as well as in the future or beyond this life (paranibbana).
- Descriptions stress the otherness of nibbana. Beyond limited concepts and ordinary categories of thought, beyond mind and body, beyond the four elements.
- The stopping or cessation of dukkha.
- The unborn, the unbecome, the unmade, the unconditioned and the deathless.
- Emptiness leading to Mahayana notion of sunyata.
- The further shore beyond this world with its inherent suffering.
- The highest bliss.
- A transformed state of consciousness.

**(30 marks)**

**AO1**

**04 'Nibbana is an unattainable goal for most Buddhists.'**

**Assess this view.**

**In support**

The discipline and commitment to in-depth meditation and mental training seems too much for most. The high level of consciousness requires morally pure life and to some extent withdrawal from worldly life, which is beyond most people's capacity.

**Other views**

Glimpses of nibbana happen all the time.

Everyone making progress towards it.

It is attainable in this life even if not full nibbana various levels, e.g. stream enterer, once returner, never returner.

**(15 marks)**

**AO2**

**05 Explain the teachings on right mindfulness and right concentration in the Eightfold Path.**

**Right mindfulness (Sati)**

Four foundations of mindfulness, body, feelings, thoughts and consciousness.

Present moment awareness.

Developing a calm, still mind, which recognises the true qualities of all observed and experienced phenomena.

Keen awareness of mental and physical phenomena as they arise within and around one.

**Right concentration (Samadhi)**

- Ability to fix the mind on a single object.
- One-pointedness of mind.
- Leads to supra-mundane consciousness.
- Various levels of deep calm known as jhanas.
- Rupa jhanas in 4 stages, including bliss and equanimity.
- Arupa jhanas (formless jhanas) leading to infinite consciousness.

Maximum Level 5 (23 marks) if only one dealt with.

**(30 marks)**

**AO1**

**06 'Meditation is the essential basis of the Buddhist way of life.'**

**Assess this view.**

**In support** of the view

Need to train the mind in meditation in order to have deep understanding of dhamma and to remove defilements and hindrances in order to practice morality and attain higher state of consciousness.

**Other views**

All 3 aspects of the Eightfold Path are essential. Morality can be the essential basis as it is universal.

**(15 marks)**

**AO2**

**07 Examine the role and importance of the lay community in the Buddhist Sangha.**

Lay community important; they form the majority of people in society and their level of morality and adherence to Buddhist values affect everyone in that society.

Lay rulers, e.g. royal families, have considerable influence on social stability and harmony.

Lay community support the monastic community by producing the material needs, providing physical dwelling, looking after the viharas.

Merit-making is basis of the Buddhist culture.

Generosity of feeding monks and providing physical requisites on kattina days enables them to gain merit and good karma.

Maximum Level 5 (23 marks) if limited description of role.

**(30 marks)**

**AO1**

**08** 'The lay community is more important than the monastic community in Buddhism today.'

**Assess this view.**

**In support**

Lay community are the mainstay and the monastic community is dependent upon them. Ruling authorities are lay. Lay support enables monasteries to exist. Today many leading meditation / teachers are lay as well as monastic.

**Other views**

Monastic Sangha is distinctive of Buddhist culture. In some countries all men become monks for some time in their lives. They uphold Buddhist values in an impressive way. Their teaching of the dhamma and spiritual guidance ensure the moral calibre of society.

**(15 marks)**

**AO2**

## Section B *Hinduism*

### 09 Examine the nature and role of goddesses in Hinduism.

3 main ones designated, (Lakshmi, Durga and Saraswati) and / or a generic understanding of 'shakti'.

All goddesses are the creative and life-giving energies of shakti, the activating force which enables male deities to exert their power.

#### **Lakshmi**

Consort of Vishnu. Associated with prosperity and beauty. Goddess of good fortune. Main focus of Divali bringing gifts and happiness to home and family.

#### **Durga**

Consort of Shiva. Many hands to destroy evil. Protector of children.

#### **Saraswati**

Goddess of wisdom. Consort of Brahma. Qualities of intellectual knowledge and understanding of the sacred scriptures. Artistic accomplishment.

Role models. Protective mother, provider of nurture in the home, and qualities to aspire to.

Maximum Level 5 (23 marks) if both nature and role not addressed.

**(30 marks) AO1**

### 10 'In Hinduism, goddesses have more importance than male deities.'

**Assess this view.**

#### **In support**

High regard for female aspects as mother brings new life into the world. Unique aspect of Hindu understanding of deity.

#### **Other views**

Male deities more prominent and more often object of devotion. Both are interwoven and equally important.

**(15 marks) AO2**



**11 Examine the nature of atman and self-realisation in Hinduism.**

**Atman**

An in-dwelling, eternal, immortal, indestructible essence, true self, which transmigrates from one physical life to the next. The same reality as ultimate, all-pervading supreme reality of Brahman. This is part of the ultimate reality underlying all creation and identical to the true self in all living beings. 'Thou art that'.

**Self realisation**

The unique insight that the inner-self is the same reality as the transcendent reality Brahman.

Merging and oneness of both.

Experience of bliss and knowledge.

Recognition of the underlying oneness of all living beings.

No distinction between atman and Brahman.

Saccinananda. Sat (truth), Chit (consciousness), Ananda (bliss).

Reference to the relationship between atman and Brahman (varying forms) is relevant here.

Maximum Level 5 (23 marks) if only one aspect covered.

**(30 marks)**

**AO1**

**12 To what extent is self-realisation an impossible goal for most Hindus?**

It is impossible because it requires complete devotion to spiritual life and is incompatible with daily living in a practical sense.

Self-realisation the goal of those Hindus who devote themselves entirely to the spiritual path, sometimes involves renunciation of worldly responsibilities. Requires development of mind and heart, usually meditation and contemplation of the meaning of sacred scriptures.

Most Hindus follow the worldly life and incorporate their faith into a way of life.

The Hindu tradition offers many ways towards self-realisation through various yogas to suit different personality types and temperaments.

Self-realisation always possible in varying degrees.

It is possible / the goal of the 4<sup>th</sup> stage of life.

**(15 marks)**

**AO2**

**13 Examine the various forms of worship which take place in Hindu temples (mandirs).**

This can include puja, haven and yajna, but also accept various other forms of worship

**Puja**

Offerings to chosen deity or deity of the temple involves making offerings and arti ceremony.

**Havan.**

Fire sacrifice offerings of rice and ghee to god Agni. Connected to purification and various rites of passage.

**Yajna**

Public worship by making an offering to the gods to ensure prosperity, well being and offspring as well as to sustain the gods in their continuous task of maintaining the world in existence. Parallel the process of the first cosmic sacrifice. Offerings made to deceased relatives to sustain them in their afterlife.

**(30 marks) AO1**

**14 'Temple worship is an essential part of the Hindu way of life.'**

**Assess this view.**

**In support**

Essential for public ceremonies and festivals.

Sacred places for devotion to deities.

Centre of life in villages.

Dependency on the favour of the gods.

Place for priesthood to preserve teachings and perform essential rituals.

In Britain, temple worship in local mandirs is essential to preserve religious traditions.

**Other views**

Practice of devotional acts just as easily done in home.

In villages, small shrines rather than temples.

Many natural phenomena given status of sacred place or temple, e.g. banyan trees, mountains and rivers so do not need temple buildings.

**(15 marks) AO2**

**15 Examine the role and importance of ashrams in Hinduism.**

**Role**

- Ashram the dwelling place of a swami or learned teacher and philosopher.
- Ashrams offer opportunities to withdraw from worldly life to study, meditate and live a simple and austere life.
- Ashrams provide retreats for vanaprasta stage of life.

**Importance**

- Essential to fulfilling dharma in retirement - vanaprasta stage.
- A goal for Hindus is to find their own guru or teacher and become shisha or disciple while in brahmacharya stage.
- Many gurus or swamis or rishis have become internationally famous and offer spiritual retreats to practice various forms of yoga and chance to gain liberation moksha.
- Ashrams are common features in holy cities of Varanasi and Rishikesh.

No more than Level 5 (23 marks) if only role or importance is dealt with.

**(30 marks) AO1**

**16 'The home rather than the ashram is the best place for learning about the Hindu way of life.'**

**Assess this view.**

Role of mother to teach children basics of Hindu way of life.  
Puja in home introduce family to the meaning and importance of deities.  
Domestic ritual demonstrates the form and structure of them.

Ashrams offer specialised training and the insights from learned teachers.  
Best place because whole way of life dedicated to spiritual development.

**(15 marks) AO2**

## Section C *Sikhism*

- 17 Explain how the teachings of Guru Nanak arose out of the religious and social conditions of his time.

No more than Level 3 if only teachings are presented. Level 5–7 if teachings are directly linked to religious and social conditions of his time.

### **Social and religious conditions**

- Originated in the Punjab.
- Religiously diverse so many influences on Guru Nanak.
- Hindu caste system.
- Mogul rulers. Some evidence of oppression.
- Hindus worshipped Vishnu and Shiva. Much devotional worship based on personal relationship with the deity and expressed in hymns.
- Guru Nanak born into a Hindu middle class family; father kept accounts for Muslim landowner.
- Sufi Muslims more mystical and devotional.
- Sunni Muslims more powerful in Muslim courts.
- Naths: another sect who believed that release from round of rebirth (samsara) could be found through yoga and asceticism.
- The Sant tradition. Various forms: way to union with God open to all, no need for intermediary or avatar. Included famous mystical poets such as Lalla, Kabir and Namdev who preached the possibility of release through ‘the nameless one within.’ Considerable influence.
- Different religious groups making different claims theological controversy as well as simple devotion.

### **Guru Nanak’s teachings**

- Nanak had first-hand knowledge of both faiths Hinduism and Islam and so called to worship one god and not be over-concerned with outwards religious rites.
- He rejected caste.  
Nanak taught that worship insufficient – must be accompanied by selfless service and honest living.  
In Hinduism, religious authority of a teacher lay in membership of brahminical caste. Nanak changed this to be the spiritual qualities of the guru.
- Encouraged women to join in worship and use of Punjabi language not Sanskrit or Urdu.

Maximum Level 5 (23 marks) if only one aspect covered.

**(30 marks)**

**AO1**

**18 'Guru Nanak founded a new religion.'**

**Assess the truth of this statement.**

**In support**

Original features in combining the oneness of God with idea of universal spirit.

Challenge to caste and founding of the new institution of the langar.

Very saintly and the inspiration for his teachings was a unique revelation which was the source of the whole tradition.

Distinctive teachings compiled into special collection of hymns and songs.

Unique teaching about becoming God-centred, Gurmurkh.

Special role for gurus as teachers.

**Against**

Very much like the Sants at the time but had more appeal.

Strong critique of idol worship and unnecessary ritual from Islamic influences as well as opposition to caste.

Retained notions of re-incarnation and karma.

Concept of God built on both Islamic and Hindu ideas.

**(15 marks)**

**AO2**

**19 Explain the nature and meaning of the festival of Diwali for Sikhs today.**

**Nature**

Originally a Hindu festival but developed by Guru Amar Das.

Guru Hargobind was released from Gwalor Gaol. He agreed to accept freedom only if their captors liberated.

Commemorates the martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh. In 1738, Mani Singh obtained permission from the Governor of Lahore for a Diwali celebration in the Harminder on condition that he paid a large sum. He was unable to pay this from the anticipated offerings as the Sikhs were prevented from coming. Consequently as he refused acceptance of Islam and he was tortured to death.

It is celebrated with lighting of diva lamps – on new moon in October. Festivities include exchanging of presents, sweets and fireworks. There is story telling about Sikh history. The Golden Temple at Amritsar is filled with lights and many Sikhs visit the city.

**Meaning**

Importance of valour, compassion for others, equality and readiness to be a martyr for the faith and emphasis on unjust persecution.

Bravery and courage in face of persecution.

No more than Level 5 if both aspects not addressed.

**(30 marks)**

**AO1**

**20** 'The celebration of Diwali has more social importance than religious meaning for Sikhs today.'

**Assess this view.**

**In support**

- Reference to communities in India, UK and throughout the world.
- The message of Diwali is centred on the moral values and social importance of generosity, courage and responsibility for challenging injustice.
- Diaspora Sikhs will need such an occasion to affirm their identity and community and this may be its main purpose.
- Diwali commemorates a historical event based in liberation from persecution and oppression – rather than religious teachings.

**Other views**

- Social and religious aspects cannot be separated especially for festivals.
- It has religious meaning as its celebration includes diwan at the gurdwara and readings from holy scriptures.
- It strengthens faith and religious devotion.
- This is a very religious occasion because reminds Sikhs of the nature of their commitment as Sikhs.

**(15 marks)**

**AO2**

**21** **Explain how the Guru Granth Sahib is used by Sikhs.**

- Guru Granth Sahib is regarded as a living presence amongst God's people.
- It is the focal point in the gurdwara.
- Vak Lao. Sikhs open the Guru Granth Sahib at random to ask God's advice regarding a particular difficulty. Sometimes daily activity in the home.
- Daily practice prescribed in Rahat Maryada for consulting the scriptures.
- It is read at diwan services and at times of celebration and guidance, e.g. marriage and death.
- It is present for all rites of passage.
- Used for recitation of prayers, chanting and source of hymns.
- Continuous reading at festivals. Akhand path.
- Used as basis for sermons in gurdwara.

**(30 marks)**

**AO1**

**22 'The Guru Granth Sahib is listened to but not understood by most Sikhs.'**

**Assess the truth of this claim.**

**In support**

It is written in gurmukhi script so most young Sikhs not able to read it. Still much value and importance in reciting it and singing hymns from it as the general meaning can be understood. It is a devotional act to recite it and listen to it. Understood in a poetic and devotional way.

**Other views**

Many translations available and often used. Sermons and lectures based upon it at diwan in gurdwara.

Guru Granth Sahib has wider significance can than just to be understood. It is a living guru.

Initiated Sikhs (amritdhari) and others do study the Guru Granth Sahib and use it as a daily guide in their life.

**(15 marks) AO2**

**23 Explain both how the langar was established in the past and how it is practised today.**

**Instituted in the past**

Free kitchen established by Guru Nanak as a means of challenging the Hindu caste system.

Also at Kartapur community it was helpful and necessary for travellers making special visit, for those working near by to hear his teachings.

Examples of generosity and to provide for those in need.

Practical example of belief in everyone's equality in the sight of God.

His disciples always provide hospitality in the dharmsalas.

Gurus served their followers in the langar.

**Today**

It is a way of practising sewa and developing spiritual qualities conquering ego.

The langar is referred to in the Rahit Maryada as the 'laboratory of sewa'.

It brings the community together as people of all ages and gender serve on the langar.

It demonstrates how the Sikhs are egalitarian. Enables non Sikhs to be welcome.

Maximum Level 5 (23 marks) if only one part answered.

**(30 marks) AO1**

**24 'The langar is even more important today than it was in the past.'**

**Assess this view.**

**In support**

Today, for Sikhs in India, it has more religious importance, as they are still a minority culture. Still meets needs of those who are in need. In UK, very important for community cohesion and communal events.

**Other views**

It was really important in the past as a direct challenge and contrast to prevailing cultural norms had much more impact and significance. Much less significant today as other ways available to feed and house those in need.

**(15 marks) AO2**