

Examiners' Report  
June 2014

GCE Religious Studies 6RS04 1E

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## Introduction

1. The question in AO1 says, 'Examine the argument and/or interpretation in the passage.'

All the level descriptors in the mark scheme for AO1 and AO2 begin with reference to the passage. There are many techniques which candidates used to demonstrate their understanding of the passage and examiners were alerted to this range in order to credit various methodologies. The essential point is that whatever approach was adopted the passage must be central and pivotal.

Some candidates presented a basic summary of the whole article, in this case Smart, with only passing reference to the passage in the question. Where material was applicable, candidates were credited but in some cases the passage received only scant attention. In many other cases candidates used the passage as the focal point, analysing it further with reference to the overall article and this method, used correctly, may be seen as an example of good practice.

2. Candidates have improved in answering all the range of demands within AO2:

- Do you agree with the idea(s) expressed?
- Justify your point of view
- Discuss its implications for understanding religion and human experience.

In some cases candidates failed to address one or more of these requirements and presented partial answers and this was reflected on their level of achievement.

3. A feature of good practice was that most candidates made effective use of the synoptic requirements of this paper. In AO1 levels 3, 4 & 5 of the Mark Scheme there is reference to crediting answers that demonstrate the application of different elements of their course of study in this paper.

4. The question was divided into parts (a) and (b): AO1 and AO2 respectively. This was done to help candidates answer the whole question rather than bypassing elements within an assessment objective. Over the years most candidates have followed through the structure of the question but some have conflated these two parts and this has often affected the standard of the work where relevant material in AO2 has been omitted. Exceptionally, a few using this holistic approach have succeeded and produced good quality answers. There was some evidence that the quality of work was higher in AO1 compared to AO2.

5. A number of candidates developed commendable styles of writing including a commanding and confident tone with ownership of the text.

## **Question 1**

Good practice and areas for improvement

AO1 characteristics of good quality:

- well-informed answers focused on the passage
- comprehensive understanding of the passage
- reference to the article as a whole or to related ideas and managed effectively in order to demonstrate an understanding of the passage
- structured answers in a coherent manner
- effective use of scholarship

AO2 characteristics of good quality:

- effective use of argument and sustained debate
- material related to other anthology sources and to relevant material in the other three units
- explicit attention to the implications for an understanding of religion and human experience

AO1 work that requires improvement:

- not focused on the passage in an explicit and systematic manner
- basic and too short in the analysis of key points and ideas
- a generic account of the whole article or a general account of related teachings at the expense of a focus on the passage in the question
- scattered references to the names of scholars but without further analysis of their work

AO2 work that requires improvement:

- largely unsupported by evidence or argument
- limited explicit focus on the implications demands of the question
- poor paragraphing techniques that restricted the quality of evaluation

Observation from the content of the answers:

- many candidates were able to select and analyse the key themes in the passage
- there were effective links to the whole article
- many displayed a proficient use of technical terms
- some managed a commendable range of Hindu philosophical thought including comparative issues
- there was good use of scholarly opinion
- synoptic material included reference to the Gita and the Katha Upanishad
- some investigated notions about immortality of the soul and Plato and links with other traditions such as Jainism
- some scripts were short and this entailed a deficiency in their analysis of ideas

- AO2 material was characterised by range and breadth
- in the better quality answers attention was paid to the full demands of AO2
- this included discussions on implications including social justice and Hindu reformers.

To note:

A few scripts made extensive use of headings. There may be cases during an essay when limited use of heading may be useful. However, in some of these cases the extensive use of headings interrupted the flow of sustained exposition and reasoning.

In general, the following examples display good practice.

This candidate presented a clear and confident analysis of the passage. There was good attention to detail alongside wide-ranging material. There was an excellent understanding of some Hindu philosophical schools and some highly developed analysis of key contributors such as Ramakrishna.

AO2 displayed a coherent line of reasoning coupled with debates across a range of different positions.

In his text 'A companion to the Philosophy of Religion' Smart analyses how the religion of Hinduism ~~has developed~~ and its philosophies over time, using specifically the influence of spiritual texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, the Epics and then later, the reformed philosophies of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century under British rule.

Smart states that Hinduism is of great interest to Western thinkers because of the width of its philosophy. As Flood says 'there is no single orthodox Hindu view in regard to theology'. This complexity could be said to be because ~~there~~ there is no single founder or sacred text. Thus, the interpretation of the texts leads to a range of philosophies such as the one Smart recognises here: Shankara's Advaita Vedanta theory. In Hinduism 6 philosophical schools exist and they are put together in pairs. However ~~only two~~ one could say only 4 are truly relevant to Modern Hinduism.

Vedanta is a school of thought which addresses the link between the atman and Brahman and their relationship with prakriti. In this extract, Smart describes the Advaita Vedanta philosophy which ~~is~~ Shankara put forward in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century. It could

be described as no a sort of non-personalism or non-dualism. Shankara believed that ~~the~~ only one principle exists and that is the Spirit or Brahman. He said that atman and Brahman were one in the same; permanent and eternal and 'is not born, does not die'. This is in ~~contrast~~ contrast to ~~the~~ prakriti or the material world which is completely impermanent so it is always changing which confuses our senses into believing it is real. Shankara said that the atman was embedded in prakriti, which is in fact an illusion or 'maya', and that moksha would occur when ~~we~~ one realises that ~~the~~ the atman or Self is in fact Brahman and they should be reunited. This is in direct contrast to Ramanuja's Visishtadvaita vedanta.

This ~~was not~~ philosophy was not founded until the 12<sup>th</sup> Century when Ramanuja dismissed the idea of a distant, non-personal Brahman nirguna and instead said that God was indeed very personal and loving towards humankind. He ~~believe~~ saw the cosmos and God's body, one he controlled and created, including the atman and prakriti. Ramanuja's aim was still to reunite with Brahman but not to merge

together, as Shankara said, because he considered that to be an annihilation of the self. Instead moksha was when you devoted yourself and loved God in return so that the atman could rejoin Brahman as an individual consciousness in a state of loving bliss. He saw the Bhagavad Gita as a text for Brahmins who devoted themselves to Brahman saguna or ~~Krishna~~ in this case, Krishna who said 'Worship Me'. Shankara believed that the Bhagavad Gita was for jnanins, those searching for knowledge and truth about the atman so they could understand how to release it from prakriti and merge with Brahman 'like pure water into pure water'.

This leads on to ~~the~~ another school of philosophy and that is ~~Sam~~ Samkhya with Yoga. This ~~the~~ philosophy is closely linked with Vedanta as ~~it is~~ Samkhya 'is theory' and talks of how Purusha is embedded in Prakriti and needs to be released, as Shankara suggests. However, it is paired with Yoga, which 'is practise'. Yoga is the method in which you release the atman. Patanjali put forward the 8 yoga sutras which describe how one must remove all desire as it links you to prakriti and then



control your body and mind in order to distinguish the Self from prakriti. Some schools of thought such as the ISKCON ~~movement~~ ~~belief~~ believe that moksha is possible during life because of yoga and deep meditation. Some yogins are said to be searching for 'tapas' or the heat of the universe which as Smart talks of in the ~~passage~~ extract, is in search of powers such as 'telepathy and the ability to read others' mind'.

~~Smart, in the rest of his text 'Companion...' goes further and debates the topic.~~

While ~~&~~ Samkhya is linked to Yoga, Vedanta is linked to Mimamsa. Mimamsa is an atheistic belief which follows the Vedas but ignores the mention of God. They also use yoga but do not believe this leads them to a god or deity. As Smart says here ~~also~~, this is very similar to the Buddhist belief that there is only emptiness and nothing is truly real. Yoga and meditation leads to Enlightenment and release from the illusion. They, however, dismissed the Vedas as a ~~form~~ sacred texts because of its theistic focus.

In the rest of his text, Smart takes his discussion on philosophies a bit further as to ask the question of how theistic Hinduism really is. The Western philosophers are completely baffled by the pluralistic theism that Hinduism has as it ~~is~~ completely contradicts the Abrahamic view of the one and only God. ~~They~~ The ~~West~~ West saw Hinduism as idolatrous as they did understand philosophies such as pantheism and henotheism. These two theories ~~together~~ are also ~~entirely~~ interlinked ~~with~~ with the philosophical systems of Vedanta and ~~&~~ Samkhya yoga. Pantheism is what Ramanuja argues, that we are all part of Brahman as we have an atman as well as everything - God is everything and everywhere. In a different way this also supports Shankara's ~~the~~ theory - there is only one absolute - Brahman.

Henotheism is the idea of there only being one God in different forms. The Brahman saguna belief is of a personal God that ~~one~~ one can worship and devote oneself to. ~~As~~ However, all the different forms of God, whether you are a Shaivite or a Vaishnavite, they are all one reality which is Brahman. As

Ramakrishna, a true devotee of the goddess Kali, ~~said~~, suggested, God is like the sea; from afar it looks a deep, solid blue but as you get closer you realise it is actually colourless. He went on to say that as you get closer to God you could see the true form of Brahman. He warned that if one became transfixed on the form ~~you~~ in which you see God, you will never see ~~the~~ the deity ~~behind it~~ behind it.

Ramakrishna was also of the opinion that if all forms of God are equal then all religions must be true. As Gandhi said 'all sparks of the same fire', meaning that if the atman is in everything and we all ~~have~~ 'share the same Self' as Smart says, then we are all equal and God, ~~loves~~ in whatever shape or form, loves us all equally. This is the same for Christianity, the idea of a loving God and through returned love and devotion you can have a relationship with Him.

In other words, Hinduism is really a culmination of several philosophies including from Buddhism, Jainism

and Christianity, and Islam. Both Islam and Christianity have a loving God who reveals himself to help humanity such as through prophet Muhammed and Jesus.

~~Judaism~~ b) Jews believe they are the Chosen People who to whom God gave the Torah and taught them how to live in His World.

b) In my opinion, the many, diverse philosophies in Hinduism allow for any believer to attain moksha and have a relationship ~~the~~ Brahman or not, if atheist. ~~However~~ Without the ~~the~~ variety we would have to follow one as many other religions do and for me this would not work.

For example, if Shukra's theory were true and prakriti were an illusion that would mean that society, people, nature do not exist and therefore why are we here? He says that society does not matter and we should all work to separate our atman from prakriti but this would lead to a selfish world where no-one cared about society and only meditated individually to attain moksha for themselves.

Society would fall and there would be no point to life. Ramanuja's theory is more likely as it leads to a loving God who created and loves us and we have a responsibility to help society and care for the world. In the Katha Upanishad it says that everyone should work and 'fit their cog with the turning of the wheel'. The Bhagavad Gita also identifies those who ignore society as selfish and only taking from the world.

Furthermore, ~~and~~ the idea of merging with Brahman and disappearing does not appeal to me. With the aim of moksha, or even heaven in Christianity, means that people have an objective to work towards and a reason to live and be morally good, depending on what that means to your religion. With Judaism and Christianity, there are the 10 Commandments and the Laws of the Torah and Covenant, given by a loving God who gives guidance on how to live. In Hinduism, ~~there~~ there is dharma, given by God to each individual so that they have a place in society and a role to play.

With Shaker's theory, a god who doesn't care would lead to loss of ethics and aim in life.

For many the idea of God is an assurance that there is a point to life and that evil and suffering are part of the plan. However, I do believe that a predestined plan also gives ~~people~~ believers no responsibility for their actions. If everything is predestined then nothing is anyone's fault. In Christianity the idea of a loving God is a gift of free will and the ability to make decisions for themselves.

Disasters such as the Holocaust ~~was~~ made ~~the~~ it so very difficult for religious people to make a case. ~~It~~ Some believed that a loving God had a plan and that this was a test of strength and was supposed to happen. Others lost their faith as they could believe a God who loved could do such a thing especially for the Jews who are supposed to be the Chosen People. Personally, I think people need a loving God who cares about humanity in order to survive.

On the other hand, maybe a God isn't necessary? If the beliefs about 'all sparks of the same

'fire' ~~is~~ is true then with or without a God we are all equal. This encourages tolerance towards others and lead to beliefs like ~~the~~ 'neo-vedanta' supported by Vivekananda and Radhakrishnan. If we are all equal then social justice must prevail over everything. Without <sup>philosophies</sup> ~~beliefs~~ such as Vedanta these teachings may not be so wide-spread.

For ~~the~~ devotees in Hinduism, a non-personal God or Brahman nirguna would defeat all theories of the gods and goddesses which make up <sup>a</sup> large part of Hinduism today. Although ~~Dayananda~~ reformers such as Dayananda ~~says differently~~ dismiss Brahman saguna, the Bhakti movement is still the most popular in Hinduism today. Without it ~~the~~ temple worship, festivals and other rituals would be null and void. Even in Christianity, Christmas and Easter are for thanking God for Jesus Christ and without the theology behind it there is no point. Christmas is a time of helping the ~~people~~ poor and ~~homeless~~ homeless because it inspires hope and kindness <sup>in communities.</sup>

Overall, I agree with Smart that the different philosophies in both Hinduism and other religions are vital for society and Hinduism. The Vedanta philosophy covers a lot of Hinduism and is also very interesting for western philosophers. As Flood says, "a dialogue between Western and Indian philosophy has occurred" and this has had a big impact on religious thought today, both in the West and the East.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This answer contained a wide range of material with a good focus on key issues. The candidate selected significant topics for further analysis such as karma and the division between the permanent and the impermanent.

A02 contained ample discussion set against a consistent line of reasoning in support of Smart's account of atman.



This extract is taken from N. Smart's *Hinduism*, a text in which Smart discusses notions of God, the self, key concepts including karma and moksha, and reformers, such as Gandhi. It can be seen ~~that~~ thus that Hinduism is "kaleidoscopic in its variety" (Sharpe) and that "there are no dogmatic affirmations." (Jainison)

a) The first key idea in the passage is that "every living body is matched by a soul." This is demonstrated in Hinduism in the Upanishads, where the atman ~~is~~ is described: as ~~the~~ "he kills not, is not killed." (Katha) The indestructible nature of the atman is likened to the western notion of a 'soul', as Jainison ~~describes~~ describes the atman like "the driver of a car"; the atman is the driver who is "unaffected by what happens to matter." (Sharpe) Smart's key idea is also shown in the Gita, where Krishna counsels Arjuna and lays aside his fears about fighting by teaching him about the nature of the atman which is matched to his body: "Never can this embodied soul be slain", and thus tells him that ~~there is~~ "no contingent being vast than any cause for sorrow", as ~~the~~ bodies may be destroyed but the atman, or 'soul', cannot be killed. Finally, Smart's idea is also shown

by the clothes analogy in the Gita: ~~and~~ ~~the~~  
= Just as ~~a~~ ~~a~~ man casts off his worn out  
clothes <sup>and takes on other new ones</sup> so does the embodied soul cast off ~~its~~ its  
worn-out bodies and enters others new." Thus  
this shows ~~that~~ Smart's point that "every living  
body is watched by a soul."

This idea is also seen within other  
religions and a wider context. For example,  
in Christianity, there is the notion of the  
immortality of the soul, a belief which is stated  
in the creed: "I believe in the immortality of the  
soul and in life everlasting." ~~It can~~ It can  
also be ~~shown~~ demonstrated in philosophy, for  
example, Plato argued that the body was  
"brutally irrational" and therefore suggested  
that ~~it~~ it is the soul which must provide our  
identity, ~~as it is this~~ as it is this  
which Plato argued strived towards perfection.  
~~Similarly, Smart's idea is also shown in~~

Another key idea in this passage is that  
there is "karmic linkage between lives." This  
~~idea~~ idea ~~is~~ is demonstrated in Hinduism, as  
the notion of karma is that ~~it~~ it "is intrinsic  
to the life of the individual" (Smart), and  
that "what you do shapes what you will become"  
(J. Smith) For example, the better man in the Katha

Upanishad gains good karma and thus "is freed -- from the jaws of death" as he is able to withdraw his senses from the world and focus on the truth of the "Brahman-atman synthesis" (Zachner) - expounded in the Karma Upanishad. ~~But~~ The agreeable man "accumulates bad karma however, and thus his karma is linked to what he will be reborn as: "Again and ever again they fall into my hands" - Yama <sup>suggests</sup> that ~~the~~ agreeable man's karma is linked to samsara, and thus this is the linkage between the two concepts. This ~~key~~ key idea can also be seen in the Vedas, ~~where~~ as the Aryans believed that ~~gaining~~ gaining good karma would allow them to provide the link to moksha: "A person who performs karma maya is always held in high esteem." (Rig Veda) A final area of Hinduism which demonstrates "karmic linkage" is the link between dharma and karma, as shown in the Gita when Krishna says that ~~by cutting off both~~ "by cutting off both honour and duty, ~~that~~ that will bring evil on thyself", thus this 'evil' could be interpreted as <sup>a link to</sup> constant rebirth.

This ~~key~~ key idea of karma is not ~~seen~~ <sup>seen</sup>

in <sup>many</sup> other religions, ~~but~~ but the similar ideas of actions and consequences are. For example, in Christianity, the story of the Sheep and the Goats in the Bible teaches Christians that God will judge between those who have performed ~~right~~ good deeds, and thus ~~leads to~~ the Bible states: "the righteous (will go to) eternal life;" (Matthew) & thus good deeds, ~~will~~ <sup>now</sup> have the consequence of ~~going to~~ heaven. In ~~the~~ Jainism, the idea of karmic linkage is shown, as Jains believe that every action & accumulates karma and thus & they try to break it down and cast it off: ~~by good deeds~~. So "karma could be gradually broken down and dissolved by ascetic discipline." (King). This key idea is also demonstrated in the wider world, for example, ~~the~~ the slogan on the entrance to Auschwitz Concentration Camp reads "work will make you free", thus this ~~and~~ demonstrates Smart's notion of a linkage of good deeds <sup>with</sup> freedom.

A final key idea in this passage is that there is an important ontological divide between "the permanent and the impermanent." This is illustrated in Hinduism, for example ~~used~~ through Nirguna and Saguna Brahman.

Nirguna Brahman is permanent as this being is described as "endless, beginningless, soundless, intangible," ~~for~~ (Katha Upanishad) whereas Saguna is impermanent, as Saguna is a physical manifestation of God ~~which~~.

~~which is not~~ which does not possess permanence: "Age after age I came into being to ~~re~~reestablish virtue and destroy evil." (Gita)

Also in Hinduism, ~~the~~ the interpretation ~~is~~ in this passage is shown as ~~the~~ Yama tells Naitetas that ~~so~~ "with riches a man never be satisfied" (Katha), and thus ~~is~~ such things are impermanent, whereas ~~the~~ performing selfless action to gain moksha is a <sup>state of</sup> permanence: "Do not let the fruit of work influence you." (Katha)

~~which is not~~ This key idea is also demonstrated in a wider context: for example, in Christianity, the notion of the Trinity shows an important divide between permanence and impermanence ~~is~~, as shown in the creed: "I believe in the father... and his only son... who was conceived by the Holy Spirit." Jesus is the impermanent being, yet God the father and the Holy Spirit are permanent. ~~is~~ Furthermore, in ~~Judaism~~ <sup>Islam</sup> the idea of permanence is that Paradise, ~~is~~ yet Allah

commands his followers to abide in their impermanent state on earth, to perform all such duties as ~~the~~ pilgrimage: "You shall observe the <sup>full</sup> rights on Hajj" (Qur'an), and Salat: "O ye who believe, seek Allah through steadfastness and prayer." (Qur'an). Finally, this idea can be seen in the film, for example, ~~the~~ Avatar, where the disabled protagonist is transported to world of Pandora where he is ~~permanently~~ a permanent, and fully bodied individual, ~~and though he dies~~ and though he dies in the mortal realm, his permanent Avatar self lives on in ~~Pandora~~.

b) I agree with ~~the~~ Smart's <sup>the typical assumption is that</sup> idea that "every living body is watched by a soul" as it is demonstrated in Hinduism and in other religions, as well as in a wider context.

Firstly, ~~the~~ Smart's idea of the 'soul' is like the purusa in ~~the~~ the Sankhya yoga school of philosophy, ~~and the~~ and the 'body' or 'matter' is like ~~the~~ ~~the~~ prakriti. ~~The~~ This school believes that "salvation consists in being made aware of this separateness" (Uig) between the two, and thus

~~the~~ ~~is~~ this shows that it is ~~an~~ ~~idea~~  
a main assumption in Hinduism that ~~the~~  
every body has a soul or ~~an~~ an equivalent.  
Furthermore, ~~I~~ I agree with Smart's point as  
it can also be seen in the Maitri Upanishad,  
~~which~~ which contains the ideas of the 'soul'  
& or atman being transmigrated along with  
its good or bad karma, and thus the idea of  
the soul and a body is also a typical assumption  
in this example. ~~Furthermore~~

Furthermore, in Hinduism ~~this~~ the notion  
is also demonstrated by Ramanuja, who argued  
that humans and God were "inextricably linked",  
as there is ~~an~~ inherent ~~strong~~ link between  
the two. ~~The~~ The analogy of the umbilical cord  
is used to ~~show~~ show such a link, like  
that between a mother and her child. ~~Hence~~,  
I agree with Smart's point ~~that~~ as it can be  
seen that it is a "typical assumption" ~~in~~ that  
the body is matched by a soul. The implication

~~Another~~ ~~way~~ ~~of~~ ~~seeing~~  
on religion if Smart is correct, is that Hindus  
may try to ~~be~~ be like the better man or  
the man of steady wisdom, as these are able to  
free their bodies from earthly existences and  
~~to~~ allow their 'embodied souls' to experience

moksha. A further implication may be that Hindus  
develop different ideas on the notion of the  
~~body and soul~~ body and soul, and  
~~are~~ in pursuit of a "higher calling"  
(Smart), due to the non-dogmatic nature  
of Hinduism. It has been suggested that there  
are as many ideas of Hinduism as there are  
Hindus. (Cde.)

Another reason why I support Smart's view that  
~~there~~ it is a typical assumption that there is  
a body and soul, is due to sanyasins, who  
"devote themselves to the search for moksha"  
(J. Smith) and ~~do not~~ retire to forests  
to do so, renouncing their earthly life  
and possessions. Thus, this shows that they  
held a belief in a body and a soul  
~~they~~ within their bodies as it ~~is~~ they  
→ try to devote the final stage of their lives  
to spiritual endeavours and "metaphysical  
knowledge" (Smart), pertaining to their inner  
soul. An implication of this religion is that <sup>some</sup> Hindus

Finally, ~~it can~~ also be seen that  
Smart's point is correct because  
~~the~~ the notion of 'a soul' is essential  
~~to the key concepts~~. For example,  
~~the~~ the path of jnana marga

provides  
structure  
for their  
lives,  
as being  
a sanyasin  
is one of  
the four  
ashramas.





Smart can be disagreed with, for example, ~~the~~ Gilbert Ryle ridicules the idea of a 'soul', calling it the "ghost in the machine", ~~and~~ and literary Darwinists claim that there is only bodies, and no 'soul' as there is "no protoplasmic jelly - no life force - <sup>nothing</sup> but blind pitiless indifference". An implication of human experience of this is that humans may be more concerned for earthly lives and non-spiritual things such as rituals.

Also, in Hinduism, ~~many~~ Advaita Vedantism maintains that there is no body or soul, but "from an absolute point of view only Brahman exists." (Zachner), and thus this ~~is~~ goes against Smart's point. ~~The~~ <sup>The</sup> Mimamsa school of philosophy also ~~is~~ not interested in the existence of a soul but merely pursuing dharma and rituals.

The implication of this on religion and human experience is that Hinduism is "a jungle of tropical confusion" (Wong) as many stances and ways of

• interpreting the 'soul' and its existence are varied.

In conclusion, thus it can be seen that Smart is correct that ~~the soul~~ it is a typical assumption that the body is matched by a soul, as it is a prevalent belief in aspects of Hinduism and other religions, ~~despite~~ it can ~~be~~ despite the instances in Hinduism, other religions and the wider world where the notion of a soul seems to be disregarded. The major implication of this on ~~the~~ religion and human experience is that there are many stances that can be taken, and thus that all religions possess inherent differences, yet Hinduism is set far apart due to its non-dogmatic nature which show that "it is a very <sup>different</sup> kind of religion than Islam or Christianity." (Flower) and ~~it~~ "it has many 'issues'" (Knot)



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

Although this was a good quality answer, it did not attract such high marks as the previous two answers. This answer kept closely to the text but did not develop the depth of analysis as seen in the previous two answers.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

A02 was good in terms of contrasting positions but overall had a more limited range than the previous answers e.g. there could have been more developed material on the implications arising from the passage.

a) This passage/extract from Ninian Smart talks of the linking between the mind, body and soul in religious traditions, in particular, Hinduism.

Ninian Smart has referred to the Advaita Vedanta which was propagated by Adi ~~Shakt~~ Shankara in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. He uses the ~~was~~ words 'typical assumption' to differentiate between the Advaitins and the believers of Hinduism. He has drawn upon the point that many Hindus believe that every living thing has a soul, which goes by the name 'Atman' in the Upanishads and in many scriptures or 'Purusa' as is thought of in Samkhya Yoga and also as 'cit' meaning ~~some~~ consciousness in other schools of philosophy like Nyaya, Vaisheshika and most other traditions.

~~Her based~~ In the text, Advaita Vedanta is looked in great detail, as he explains the concept of 'Aham Brahmasmi' and 'Maya'. 'Aham Brahmasmi' means the atman, which is us, is ~~at~~ also Brahman so basically we are the same self. In his

an example of seeing the light through the colander, he is using the colander, to represent 'Maya' which is the delusion that we are in that prevents us from accepting that we are one and the same. Once we transcend this 'Maya' (which is said to be a form of Brahman), we will then be permanently existant with the impermanent factor of Maya taken away.

Here, the text says this Advaitic idea has an 'affinity to Buddhism' as they have the similar idea where Buddhism has a string of individual consciousness of which none are permanent as in their scriptures, it clearly says that everything changes but after 'nirvana', the cessation of all activity, it achieves '~~some~~ Sunyata', nothingness. Their belief is that even the soul is impermanent and is only carrying the 'karmic linkage' ~~and~~ which will extinguish like how the flame of a candle ~~extinguishes~~ is blown out.

It further on, goes on to say that yogis who have achieved those few

glimpses of reality can remember their previous lives as they are closer to realising the truth of what they are. As in Raj Yoga, once we can control the mind, we can have Samkhya darshan, allowing us to distinguish from the 'Purush' (Spirit) & the 'Prakriti' (Nature), giving in turn allowing us to use the spirit to manipulate Prakriti which manifests as paranormal powers such as telepathy, mind-reading, etc.

Also, the texts mention people gaining putative memory or being born as child geniuses and also the occurrence of paranormal recognitions. This is attributed to 'samsara', reincarnation/rebirth as the knowledge, memories, etc. learnt in past life, manifest again as the mind's potential is uncovered. An example of these events can be found in case studies by Ian Stevenson who has made many of these discoveries and this can be further explained by parapsychology & near-death-experiences (NDEs).

Upon this, Nirjan Smart has made

clear that in the numerous schools of philosophy, a recurring difference is in the division of permanent and impermanent in the face of reality. Here it is said again that Advaitins believe that the belief that we are all different is an illusion and so therefore impermanent while the fact that we are all the same is permanent. He has also accepted that not all of Hindus think like this as they see us all actually being different with a God 'up there' looking over us and taking care of us believes there is a distinction between the Atman and the Brahman.

He brings the contrast of Western traditions as they believe that we are actually the body and there is no difference in us but we all have souls, crafted by God and given to us, that is making us live right now. This idea is different from Hinduism as this <sup>is</sup> monism while Hinduism is dualistic as they believe there is a difference in' between the soul and the body.

b) The actual implications of this passage could cause many rifts interfaith & intrafaith due to the difference in beliefs and inability to accept another's beliefs to also be plausible.

Ninian Smart has given a good comparison of religion's thoughts on the distinctions between the permanent and impermanent ~~was~~ paired with <sup>links</sup> ~~ideas~~ of between mind, body and soul.

In Hinduism, the idea of Atman and Brahman being the same, coming from Advaita Vedanta, is hard to find flaws with as it is extremely abstract therefore it is said that you must adopt a pathway that helps you find out what reality we fabricated is near to the actual truth. This is why many Hindus adopt Dvaita Vedanta instead as easier to comprehend and follow while giving you the chance to graduate to Advaita Vedanta once you have ~~seen~~ ~~understood~~ implemented Dvaita Vedanta.

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On the other hand, Advaita Vedanta is easier to comprehend and follow than Buddhism that tells everyone to be austere to help them tread on the path to nirvana while also containing many complex ideologies that people find difficult to relate to.

In total, these Indic traditions say it's the soul that actually is living and that this body is ~~unneeded~~ just a way to help exhaust the consequences of our deeds.

In contrast, Western/Abrahamic traditions speak of the body being really important as it shall be resurrected after death.

In conclusion, the difference of beliefs can cause relation interfaith and intrafaith to be spoilt. This is because people in general can not understand and accept other religions.

~~My own view is that religion is~~

In addition to this, the rituals and practices that we do to help our understanding and to implement our knowledge will be meaningless and mechanical if no one understands what they are doing.

In my opinion, the ideas of the links between the body, mind and soul are complex but can't truly be understood if not experienced ourselves as what we follow and do, are all instructions from others who have experienced this but we can't get the same results as the language used will not be enough to describe the experience.

## Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are encouraged to:

- develop their interest in an academic study of religion
- develop study skills that reflect these academic demands such as a thorough study of the texts, the ability to analyse complex ideas and to manage their material in order to answer the question in an explicit manner
- adopt a critical approach which reflects on their prior learning in the other RS units
- engage with the implications of their studies.

## **Grade Boundaries**

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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