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# **Examiners' Report**

## Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCE  
In Religious Studies (8RS0)  
Paper 4F Sikhism

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## **Buddhism**

### **Paper Introduction**

This specification was examined for the first time this year.

The examination contained four questions - with the final question having a part a and a part b.

Questions 1 and 4a were designed to test AO1.

Questions 2, 3 and 4b were designed to test both AO1 and AO2.

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### **8RS0\_4F\_Q01**

#### **Question Introduction**

Question 1 will always be 'Explore'. 8 AO1 marks are available. In the context of this specification and the exam paper explore asks candidates to demonstrate understanding by investigating different reasons, concepts and ideas. This question asked candidates to explore the key features of initiation into the khalsa. A significant minority of candidates just outlined the events of the founding of the khalsa and as such they were limited in the marks they could gain. This shows the need to read the question carefully and ensure that the response is answering the right question rather than the one we have assumed when seeing a key word that the candidate recognises.

#### **Introduction**

This response gains a level 3- 7 marks.

#### **Examiner Comment**

In this response the candidate clearly outlines the features of the initiation. This response shows a broad range of religious ideas and beliefs. The depth of understanding is also quite good as they outline the events of the initiation. The reason is, does not gain all 8 marks for the response is that to some extent the depth of understanding is not consistently shown - there are examples of it such as the reference to saint soldier - but it could have done this more consistently for example in developing the importance of the panj piare. This is, however, a good answer.

#### **Examiner Tip**

Ensure that a range of specialist knowledge is selected and used appropriately throughout

## SECTION A

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

1 Explore the key features of initiation into the Khalsa.

Initiation into the Khalsa is performed during the ceremony of Amrit Saanchar. The person who is being initiated must come in their pure form where they haven't taken any inhibitions such as alcohol or drugs. The Amrit that is ~~made~~<sup>taken</sup> will be made with sugar, patase and water to represent sweetness. It will be mixed using the kirpan to represent temporal authority whilst in the midst reciting the mool mantra to represent spiritual authority. This means that the person who is being initiated will have their saint and soldier sides. This is all done within the presence of the panj pyare and the guru granth sahib Ji, so it shows that the person is under high authority when being initiated. These features reflect the first ceremony which happened alongside Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1699 with the first panj pyare. A person who is being initiated will then intake the amrit and become a part of the Khalsa.

## **8RS0\_4F\_Q02**

### **Question Introduction**

This question asked candidates to assess the significance of the founding of the sangha. Assess, as used in this question, requires a reasoned argument of factors to reach a judgement regarding their importance/relevance to the question context. It is worth 9 marks with 3 being assigned to AO1 and 6 to AO2. Within this question, as with all questions, the level descriptors are key in marking the answers provided.

This question about the significance of Guru Gobind Singh was generally answered very well. Candidates were aware of events of the life of Guru Gobind Singh and his significance/ contribution to Sikh identity. Candidates variously focussed on his example, his writing of the Dasam Granth, the founding of the Khalsa and the assignation of the Guru Granth Sahib as the eternal Guru.

### **Introduction**

This response gained Level 3- 9 marks.

### **Examiner Comment**

Within this response there is clear evidence of the candidate meeting all of the requirements for Level 3. There is a wide range of knowledge shown - the first paragraph uses information about the creation of the khalsa and is able to use them to construct a reasoned judgement that shows a logical chain of reasoning based on the knowledge shown. This response outlines four significant contributions of Guru Gobind Singh and is able to explain them well using logical chains of reasoning to illustrate his significance.

### **Examiner Tip**

In this question this is not required but this enables them to assess its significance in greater detail and evidence reasoned judgements.

2 Assess the significance of the life of Guru Gobind Singh.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji's life was very significant as he established and accomplished many things in his life.

For instance, Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1699 created Khalsa.

Khalsa is a key feature in Sikhism as this gave Sikhs an identity. He also created 'Amrit Sanchar' for those who wanted to get close to God and start a new life.

The formation of Khalsa itself gave a clear message to Sikhs itself, the story tells us that we should be ready to die for our Guru, our religion and in what we believe in.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji also carried on the concept of the Hiri Piri which was first started by Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji. He carried on by teaching Sikhs self defense, 'Gatka'. This then helped in protecting others in injustice and in fighting at war. Sikhs were more trained and ready for the opposition which made the Sikh army more stronger than others despite the size of the army. This tells us, that we should stand up for injustice and if we have to, we shouldn't be scared to fight for what we believe in.

Guru Ji, also gave us our Surnames, 'Singh' and 'Kaur'. This was given to ~~you~~ baptized Sikhs that were part of the ~~trouka~~, as Guru Ji believed that as

we are baptized, we belong to a new family, the Khalsa. 'Singh' is given to the men and means a fearless lion and 'Kaur' was given to women, a princess of God.

~~Guru Ji~~ Guru Ji, also wrote the whole Dasam Granth, which is also considered a very sacred text in Sikhism; and most importantly, Guru Gobind Singh Ji gave his Guruship to our living and present Guru, Guru Granth Sahib Ji, which carries 6 gurus writings. This shows that, Guru Gobind Singh Ji's life was very significant as all those things that he has done in life, Sikhs put this into practice in their daily life.

(Total for Question 2 = 9 marks)

## **Introduction**

This response is awarded a Level 3- 9 marks

## **Examiner Comment**

Although being awarded the same marks as the last example this response utilises a clearer fraework for answering the question. Both are successful and this shows the diversity of approach that is possible. This meets all the requirements of a Level 3 answer - it is able evidence:

- A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1).
- Critically deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2).
- Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question (AO2).

This response clearly outlines why he might be significant and then links the knowledge to form a chain of reasoning showing his significance.

### **Examiner Tip**

This candidate is very clear in linking their response to the question. This is important and shows that the candidate is very clearly answering the question rather than going off on tangents. It would be useful for all candidates to bring the points they are making back to the question being asked at various points through the response



khalsa initiation. <sup>gave up family</sup> - Damdama Sahib Bir.

2 Assess the significance of the life of Guru Gobind Singh.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji was the 10th Sikh Guru. The Guru dictated the ~~to~~ Damdama Sahib Bir in the very early 1700s and this contained scripts and texts from the previous Gurus as well as the work of others. Guru Gobind Singh passed on the Guruship in 1708, to the Damdama Sahib Bir, which brings significance to the Guru's life. This is considered significant because, there was now a holy scripture that could be referred to by all Sikhs in the years to come. The life of Guru Gobind Singh Ji can also be seen as significant because he introduced and created the 'Khalsa', which was known to be the Sikh community. The creation of the Khalsa adds to the significance of the Guru's life as it allowed for Sikhs to be recognised and identified to their religion. This had great significance for when ~~the~~ the Khalsa was first introduced as it identified Sikhs in battle as well as those ~~who~~ Sikhs who were being prosecuted. However, some may say the life of Guru Gobind Singh Ji was not of a great amount of significance. This would be due to the controversy and conflicting opinions

held by

~~held by~~ modern Sikhs of whether or not you must be initiated to the Khalsa in order to be a real Sikh. Overall, Guru Gobind Singh's life was ~~at~~ one of great significance as concepts he introduced are still used and recognised worldwide. Also Guru Gobind Singh sacrificed, his four sons, ~~the~~ and his parents in order to save the Sikh religion. This is widely <sup>important in</sup> responsible for the significance of Guru Gobind Singh's life.

(Total for Question 2 = 9 marks)

## **8RSO\_4F\_Q03**

### **Question Introduction**

This question asked candidates to assess the significance of the founding of the sangha. Assess, as used in this question, requires a reasoned argument of factors to reach a judgement regarding their importance/relevance to the question context. It is worth 9 marks with 3 being assigned to AO1 and 6 to AO2. Within this question, as with all questions, the level descriptors are key in marking the answers provided.

This question about the significance of the sangat was generally answered very well. Candidates were aware of the sangat and its significance/ contribution to Sikh identity. Candidates variously focussed on the identity and support that the sangat can bring. Particually pleasing was a focus on the physical and virtual sangat by a large number of candidates. A number of candidates were also able to use passages from the Guru Granth Sahib to support their answers which was pleasing to see,

### **Introduction**

This response was awarded Level 3- 9 marks

### **Examiner Comment**

Within this response there is clear evidence of the candidate meeting all of the requirements for Level 3. There is a wide range of knowledge shown- the first paragraph uses information about the sangat and is able to use them to construct a reasoned judgement that shows a logical chain of reasoning based on the knowledge shown. The final paragraph shows how an exploration of the virtual sangat can be used to discuss its significance.

### **Examiner Tip**

This candidate does not include an alternative viewpoint. In this question this is not required but some candidates may find that for some questions including such may enable them to assess its significance in greater detail and evidence reasoned judgements.

3 Assess the significance of the sangat.

The sangat is extremely significant. There is a quote from Gurbani "within sangat is where God resides." Sangat is a virtual or physical congregation of the community whereby they think or remember God. kirtan (religious hymns/praises of God) is performed and katha (past/historical stories) of the Gurus are recited. Sangat provide guidance to us as there's many people working together. Sangat is seen as extremely significant as everyone sits equally and aims for the same things, eventually uniting with God. Sangat allows the congregation to talk and share knowledge on things which is ultimately <sup>sewa</sup> <sup>(mental)</sup> <sup>work</sup>. Sangat can help bring out inner peace and mental piece of mind. Saath sangat means receiving bliss from within and you're more likely to receive that whilst in a sangat, all together like a community.

Good sangat is essential to fulfilling your end purpose in life as mentioned by Bhagat Kabir. Being in good sangat ~~helps~~ <sup>is</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>best</sup> <sup>way</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>achieve</sup> <sup>it</sup>. <sup>God</sup> <sup>centred</sup> <sup>sangat</sup>, helps

eliminate illusions / pushing away from God (maya) and focuses on becoming one with God which is essentially the purpose of a Sikh's life.

There is also ~~the~~ virtual sangat whereby you may not get the full experience of sangat however there are its advantages you're able to ask any open questions in order to extend your knowledge on Sikhi and there are also no language barrier problems.

(Total for Question 3 = 9 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 26 MARKS

## 8RSO\_4F\_Q04

### Question Introduction

Question 4 is split into two sections: a and b. These questions will be linked in theme but are looking for different things. The a question will always be 'Explore'. This follows the same format as question 1 and 8 AO1 marks are available. In the context of this specification and the exam paper explore asks candidates to demonstrate understanding by investigating different reasons, concepts and ideas. This question asked candidates to explore the Sikh teachings about the divine. This question was answered fairly well by the majority of candidates.

Question b is always asks candidates to 'Analyse'. In the context of the specification and exam paper this requires candidates to "Deconstruct information and/or issues to find connections and provide logical chains of reasoning in order to make judgement's regarding their important/relevance to the question context." In this 5 marks are available for AO1 and 15 for AO2. In practice these are assigned in the context of the levels of response. It is important, as with all other questions that the levels of response are used in practice exam questions. This question required candidates to analyse the view that Sikh beliefs about God were different to those held by the sant movement prior to Guru Nanak. The responses to this question were very mixed with some candidates talking about every aspect of the sant movement rather thhan focussing their answer around beliefs about God. A careful reading of the question would have aided these candidates.

### Introduction

Question 4a was awarded a Level 2- 5 marks

Question 4b was awarded a Level 3- 12 marks

### Examiner Comment

4a This repsonse used a range of knwoledge utilising specialist language to explore the nature of the divine within Sikhism. Although there is the beginning of a wide range these elements do not show a depth of understanding that would be required for a level 3.

4b This response uses a range of knowledge to support the arguments that they are making but the chains of reasoning that are in evidence are simple in nature. They are very one dimensional in approach- very much the candidate makes a point which is briefly commeted on and then moves onto the next. As such the connections that are made are of many elements of the question but not all. What is pleasing with this answer is the fact that it is focussed, for the most part, around beliefs about God and so maintains the focus on the question being asked

throughout. The judgements that are made throughout the response are supported by an attempt to appraise evidence.

### Examiner Tip

For 4b this response lacks logical chains of reasoning- by this what is meant is the evaluation of the points being made and linking it back to the question. As identified above the chains are very simplistic and need to be explored in greater detail evidencing greater analysis.

*oneness*  
*sunam*  
*eternol*  
*truth*

*God*  
*is all come*  
*from me*  
*men equal.*

**SECTION B**

*nirbhay*  
*hate*  
*nirvair*  
*fear.*

*immortal.*

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

4 (a) Explore Sikh teachings about the nature of the divine. (8)

Sikh teachings about the nature of the divine say that there is oneness, and due to this quality, if we all come from this divine, then we must all be equal. The Mool Mantar, first recited by Guru Nanak, highlights what Sikhism shows about the nature of the divine. 'Satanam' teaches us that the divine is the eternal truth and by hearing the name of the divine helps reinforce the presence. Also, the Mool Mantar says 'Nirbhay Nirvair', teaching Sikhs that the divine is without hate and without fear. The Sikh teaching from Mool Mantar also teaches that the divine is immortal. The Mool Mantar is the first stanza in the first in the Guru Granth Sahib and teaches us about what Sikhs believe to be the nature of the divine. Sikhs also believe that the divine is omnibenevolent, omnipotent, and omniscient, as well as

*same: b/c of originate*  
*nirgun*  
*not an indian*  
*subcontinent*

*same = Muslim / Hindu prior*  
*inspo*  
*later*  
*nirgun.*  
*(20)*

(b) Analyse the view that Sikh beliefs about God were different from those held by the sant movement prior to Guru Nanak.

It could be considered that Sikh beliefs about God were different to those of the Sant movement prior to Guru Nanak. This would be because the work of those such as Bhagat Kabir and Bhagat Namdev had not been noticed until Guru Nanak started to take inspiration from them. Sikh beliefs could be considered to be different because, Sikh aim belief of mukti (uniting with God) was not prominent until Guru Nanak.

However, it can be said that Sikh beliefs about God were not different prior to Guru Nanak, because the beliefs of both Sikhs and the Sant Movement, seemed to have been originating from the North-Indian subcontinent. Also, Sikh beliefs can be seen as not so different to the Sant movement as both believed God to be Nirgun. It can also be said that there was no difference in beliefs prior to Guru Nanak because many beliefs that were being shared were common to both Sikhs and the Sant movement. This would be because differences only started to appear after or when Guru Nanak

was prominent, because of Guru Nanak's inspiration deriving not only from the sant movement but also from other sources such as the Hindu and Islamic religions.

Overall, ~~at~~ the views of Sikhs and the sant movement were not very different ~~for~~ prior to Guru Nanak. This is because many of the shared beliefs on the quality of God were later used as inspiration, and writings of those in the sant movement stayed within the Sikh religion. Differences in beliefs of God between the sant movement and Sikhs did not start to occur until Guru Nanak used teachings and ideas from more than one spiritual path, which was not something the Sants, commonly agreed with.

## **Paper Summary**

Some candidates displayed an excellent detailed knowledge and understanding of specific religious teachings and practices and were able to look at other points of view objectively. At the same time, there were candidates who appeared to have only limited knowledge and understanding of the specification, and who sometimes wrote a great deal of general knowledge surrounding a topic, without directly addressing the specific question. These will be explored in greater detail as this report considers each question.

