

Examiners' Report
June 2018

GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 4C

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Introduction

Overall, the standard was good with examples of outstanding work. There are distinctively new features of this Spec compared to the former Legacy. Candidates rose to these challenges ably. For example, many candidates used the Anthology passage in 3a in a successful manner. The synoptic question 4 attracted full and well-informed answers with intelligent use of links. For the first time of running this exam many candidates are to be congratulated on their success.

This is the first year of this examination. The paper is divided into Parts A, Part B and Part C and candidates must answer ALL questions.

Part A consists of two extended-response questions:

Question 1 has 8 marks for AO1 with the command word 'explore'.

Question 2 has 12 marks with 4 marks for AO1 and 8 for AO2 with the command word 'assess' .

Part B consists of one two part essay question on an excerpt sourced from the Anthology:

Question 3 has 10 marks for AO1 with the command word 'clarify'.

Question 3b has 20 marks including 5 AO1 and 15 AO2 and the command word 'analyse'.

Section C consists of one synoptic essay question:

Question 4 has 30 marks including 5 AO1 and 25 AO2 with the command word 'evaluate'.

Centres and candidates are reminded to check the meanings of the five command words used in the A level papers found in Appendix 1 of the A level Spec. The weightings of AO1 are 40% and AO2 has 60%.

Question 1

Candidates were required to explore the beliefs and practices associated with Rama. Candidates focused on Rama as an avatar of Vishnu and his significance to Vaishnavism. Attention was given to the Ramayana and exploits about Rama and Sita and the ideals they represent. Quite correctly, candidates stressed the importance of Rama in terms of upholding dharma. Candidates emphasised the significance of Divali and the value given to bhakti.

These answers reflect the standards at the highest level. They:

- presented key, significant ideas about Rama
- candidates used key terms such as avatar and dharma accurately
- based their work on key scriptures
- broadened out their material with reference to Rama and the defeat of evil and the upholder of values.

1 Explore beliefs and practices associated with Rama.

- Rama + Sita - Ramayana
- Diwali
- morals

Rama is a Hindu God ~~that~~ ^{who} is acknowledged as being a symbol of bravery and conquering evil. He is seen in the Ramayana which includes the story of Rama and Sita.

This story highlights Rama defeating the evil Ravana with the help of Gods such as Hanuman. Rama is seen as one of

Indras ~~forms~~ human forms. Rama

is associated with the festival of Diwali (~~celebration~~ ^{festival} of light) as

the story of Rama and Sita is

usually performed. Rama is used as

a moral example for Hindus and

his bravery is consistently highlighted in the media through stories.

Rama is ~~also~~ used in Hindu worship and is seen in Hindu

temples. Rama is also considered as

one of the most popular figures

in Hinduism as he is used as

a key moral basis for goodness and

Karma.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The candidate was awarded 8 marks.

SECTION A

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

- ~~saving wife~~ (→)
- Ramayana
- stabilising influence
- ~~Avatar of Vishnu.~~

1 Explore beliefs and practices associated with Rama.

Rama is an avatar of the God Vishnu, (Jamison) and so is believed to be "God incarnate." This means that he is seen as a spiritual role model for Hindus, as his every action is perfect as he was divine. Therefore, whilst his violent actions may not be necessary for Hindus today, his spirituality should be immortalised. As an avatar, he is believed to be a "stabilising influence of dharma to chaos" (Zachner). He came to the world to defeat evil, as described in the Ramayana, saving his wife, and restoring the balance of dharma in the world, so can be seen as rehabilitating the world. Also, his story of saving his wife in the Ramayana is remembered as a symbol of good triumphing over evil, and so is celebrated by many Hindus in songs, and performances of the story at festivals, reaching many different people and castes. Drawing Rama is important to many Hindus. Therefore, Rama is believed to be an avatar of Vishnu who saved the world.



The candidate was awarded 8 marks.

1 Explore beliefs and practices associated with Rama.

Rama, an avatar of Vishnu, is normally regarded as "the prime example of dharma in action" (Jamison). As an incarnate of Vishnu, who is known to be the preserver of dharma, Rama's role is as of "the greatest notable example of a husband, king, warrior" etc.

Rama is associated with the story Ramayana as portrayed in the vedas that shows a story of him fighting opposition to dharma. Known as the best example of dharma (western equivalent of 'duty') he serves as a guide to ordinary Hindus as to how to perform their varnashramadharma correctly to please Brahmin. Furthermore Rama is presented blue in colour with various symbols, such as the bow and arrow, which signifies his dedication to his role as the 'upholder of dharma in the universe' (Zaehner).



The candidate was awarded 8 marks.

Question 2

Candidates focused on the importance of the Indus Valley Culture for the development of Hinduism. An understanding of the historical and geographical context of these sites were credit worthy. Archaeological evidence from the main cities was noted, notably Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. Some argued that water and water cleansing were significant in the development of Hinduism. Evidence of feminine influence along with fertility were stressed. Candidates analysed some artefacts such the Great Bath and various seals. AO2 material included the problems of untranslated script and difference of scholarly views about the interpretation of the evidence.

These three answers received marks in the highest level. They are good because:

- they are well-informed about archaeological investigations
- students refer to good quality scholarship
- they select significant artefacts and comment on them
- there was some evaluative material such as problems of interpretation of sources plus a range of alternative influences during a similar period
- there was a consistent focus on possible influences on the development of Hinduism.

2 Assess the importance of the Indus Valley culture in the development of the Hindu tradition.

Doniger - ~~with illustrations~~

(12)

The Indus valley culture refers to an ancient civilisation in the Indus valley in Northern India. There were two major cities, Harappa and Mohenjo Daro, and studies by the "Archaeological Survey" in India, spear-headed by Professor B.B. Lal, have discovered some interesting artifacts which suggest the Hindu tradition, or at least part of it, was originated from there. For example, the Harappa seals depict a horned man, surrounded by animals and sitting in a Yogic position, which could be deciphered as an early version of the Hindu god Shiva. Shiva is also considered an ithyphallic god, and artifacts such as the linga have been discovered at sites in Harappa and Mohenjo Daro, suggesting phallic worship - which is a key component in worship of the "erotic anathema" Shiva (Doniger).

Furthermore, Dr. Franke, standing in opposition to the claims that the Indus valley civilisation was destroyed by Aryan invaders, and that these invaders were the authors of the Vedas (not the people of the Indus valley), has carried out re-interpretations of the Vedas, and discovered that the geography of the area of the Indus valley civilisation matches the one depicted in the Vedas. For example, the Saraswati River is mentioned a great

dead in the ~~in~~ vedas. This river existed five thousand years ^{(in the Indus valley region),} ago, but dried up five thousand years ago, and this cycle is ~~described~~ described by vedic authors. Therefore, states Franke, the vedic people must have been lived in the Indus valley long enough to witness the entire Saraswati River's life-cycle, and therefore the vedas cannot have been authored by invaders from Europe, who would have arrived after the decline of this river.

However, Wendy Doniger points out that the people who built the Indus valley cities cannot have written the vedas: ~~there~~ there is no mention of certain farming techniques and animals in the vedas, and, ~~although~~ while there are ~~also~~ many artifacts from the Indus valley have been discovered, no writing (apart from the indecipherable writing on the Harappa seals), has been discovered. This would suggest that imply that vedic culture, the cornerstone of later Hinduism, and the foundation of a great deal of key Hindu literature, didn't originate from the Indus valley.

Furthermore, the Dravidian culture of the South India arguably played a greater role than the vedas in introducing the ~~the~~ theistic movements which characterized Medieval Hinduism, and ^{continue to} greatly inform modern Hinduism. It was these movements which gave Hinduism its theistic flavour. Therefore, even if the vedas did originate from the Indus valley, they played ^{most} at least an equal role in developing modern Hinduism.

(Total for Question 2 = 12 marks)



The candidate was awarded 12 marks.

2 Assess the importance of the Indus Valley culture in the development of the Hindu tradition.

~~no evidence -~~
~~undiscovered~~ - baths
~~Agans = case~~ - mother goddess
~~prescription~~

9.25

(12)

Whilst it is believed that the Indus Valley Civilisation was important to the development of Hindu tradition, it is not certain, and other cultures were also very important.

Firstly, the Indus Valley culture is important as it contains early forms of Shakti. Statues of a mother goddess figure, believed to be the "divinity of the people" (Babham) were found, many with vegetation growing from her womb, suggesting a link to fertility. This is very similar to the goddess Shakti, who is seen as the power and energy behind Siva, responsible for female fertility. So, the Indus Valley is important to the development of Hindu tradition.

Secondly, the Indus Valley culture is important as it could be the root of ritual bathing. Despite there being washing facilities in every house, great baths were also found in Mohenjo Daro, suggesting public ritual ablution; the practice of "washing the body to purify the spirit". ^(Hymnals/Shahid) This is also practised in modern Hinduism as festivals are held on the bank of the River Ganges, in which Hindus purify themselves using the water, suggesting the Indus Valley is important to the development of Hindu tradition.

However, there are problems with this.

Firstly, there is a "lack of archaeological

evidence" (Jamison) in the Indus Valley to validate these claims, and evidence that has been found, like mass graves, is debated over, as historians cannot decide if they were caused by a violent invasion or a plague. With a lack of evidence, nothing can be proven.

Secondly, the Indus script found on seals "has never been deciphered" (Jamison), meaning that we can only speculate as to the use of evidence found, and the importance of figures like the mother goddess and bulls, which we can only assume to be religious. As the script is untranslated, it cannot be known for sure.

Additionally, other cultures, like the Aryans, are also important in the development of Hindu tradition.

The Aryans introduced the varna system to Hinduism, possibly the most influential social structure within India, dictating how every Hindu lives their lives. Aryans also introduced Agni and Soma as fire sacrifices, still practiced today through puja, showing they too are important to the development of Hinduism.

In conclusion, whilst the Indus Valley is important to the development of Hindu tradition, this has not been proven and other cultures are also important.

(Total for Question 2 = 12 marks)



The candidate was awarded 12 marks.

2 Assess the importance of the Indus Valley culture in the development of the Hindu tradition.

(12)

Having assessed the ~~important~~ Indus Valley Culture, it is clearly extremely important in the development of the Hindu tradition. The pre-Aryans clearly had many traditions which are still carried on today.

Firstly, the Indus Valley arguably had some belief in Shiva. Marshall excavated 'pashupat seals' which showed yogic horned figures to be seated in the 'padmasana pose' on the "beautifully curved stones" (Somson), and Marshall argues that this is a 'proto-Shiva'. Shiva is depicted in many images to be seated in the same 'padmasana' pose on a lotus flower, showing clear similarities. Also, "the yogic figures were often 3 faced and surrounded by ~~se~~ various animals", as Ling says, and Shiva is also believed to be tricephalic and the 'Lord of the Beasts'. The strong similarities between this yogic figure of the IVC and Shiva in modern Hinduism suggest that the Indus Valley culture was important.

Additionally, ~~the~~ the IVC clearly had respect for Phallic worship, as the Aryans called them "phallic worshippers". This is seen in the pashupat seals as the yogic figure can be seen to have an erect phallus, and Zachar states that "the emblem under which (Shiva) delighted to be worshipped is the Lingam or Phallus, which is always erect". This, again, shows that modern

Hindu belief in Shiva is importantly rooted in the Indus Valley Culture.

Moreover, terracotta statues of pregnant female figures were found with vegetation peeping from their breasts. They were named 'Mother Earth Goddess', and this strongly links to belief in Shakti who is also maternally named 'Bharati Ma' (Mother India). Also, "The large number of mother goddess structures suggests that the religious practices of the Indus Valley civilisation was largely domestic", as Ling says, and this is supported by the finding of fire pits in the huts. Domestic worship is a key feature of modern Hinduism, and all this shows how modern Hinduism's belief in Shakti and domestic worship has its root in the IVC.

However, it can be argued that the burial of the dead in the IVC contrasts this, instead arguing that the Indus Valley culture was not as important.

Nowadays, Hindus are traditionally cremated on a funeral pyre, and the burial of the dead contrasts this, arguing that perhaps ~~the~~ the development of Hinduism is not heavily rooted in the IVC. ~~that~~

In conclusion, having assessed the culture of the Indus Valley civilisation, it is clear that much of the development of Hinduism is rooted in Pre-Aryan beliefs.



The candidate was awarded 12 marks.

Question 3 (a)

The command word 'clarify' (for AO1 only) means 'to identify key ideas and explain key concepts' and this does not necessitate a sentence by sentence analysis. There are many methods candidates may use to clarify a passage and examiners will credit any legitimate method. Candidates identified key emphases within Advaita Vedanta that the Self is believed to be identical with the Divine being. In contrast, some candidates used the terminology that prakriti is separate from purusha. Many took the opportunity to contrast what they described as the non-dualism of Shankara with qualified monism of Ramanuja. Many students were confident in their analysis of these positions bearing in mind this question required only AO1 material.

For Centre information in addition beyond Q3a there may be some questions that lend themselves to the content of the Anthology. For example, in this paper q 4 there is relevant material on the context to Dayananda Sarasvati in Smart's extract which is reprinted in the Anthology.

The following two answers represent standards of work from the highest level. They are good because:

- Candidates focused on key ideas in the passage with a systematic focus on the text
- There was a clear exposition of different stances
- There was a proficient use of technical language
- They clarified and explained some complex issues such as levels of truth.

The typical assumption in the Hindu tradition is that every living body is matched by a soul (sometimes called atman and sometimes purusa, or else cit or consciousness). However, in Advaita Vedanta the identity between the Divine Being and the Self is taken strictly. Consequently we all, so to speak, share the same Self. It is our limited view or projection which causes us to see separate selves. It is like a light seen through a colander. It looks like many lights when it is in fact only one. Advaita in this way shows an affinity to Buddhism, in that the latter has many individual consciousnesses but none are permanent; so at the lower or empirical level of truth we have a host of transmigrating individuals, lacking permanence.

(Source: Extract adapted from 'A Companion to Philosophy of Religion' - Part I, Chapter 1 'Hinduism', edited by Quinn, P., Taliaferro, C., and Draper, P., Blackwell, 2010, Edexcel Anthology)

3 (a) Clarify the ideas illustrated in this passage about the nature of the 'Self'.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

The passage above is talking in reference to the Advaita Vedanta advocated by Shankara, who believes that there are no individual Jivas (embodied souls) but that the souls are in fact parts of a greater whole - Brahmin.

Where the passage states "We all, so to speak, share the same soul", it is referencing an idea analogised by Shankara as "a drop of water returning to the ocean". For Shankara, all Jivas or Atmans are the same as Brahmin; just as a drop of water is the same as the ocean.

The passage also touches on the idea of "Merges", that the world as we understand it

is an illusion. The analogy used in the extract about seeing a light through a collinder fits nicely in understanding that we are not seeing lots of individual lights but in fact one light seperated. This analogy also fits the idea of "maya", that the lights we see are not in fact the true light as our perception is altered by the "illusory" and the "mundane"; the light behind is the "ultimate reality" or Brahmin.

This idea is later reinforced in the extract when referencing a "lower or empirical truth". The concept of Jnana Yoga talks about lower truth based on our senses (empirical) which is the belief that the world is reality. Higher truth, for Jnana Yoga, is the acceptance of Brahmin and the ultimate reality - seeing maya as the illusion.

For the above extract, there are large references to Shankara's *advaita vedanta*, and the belief that Atman and Brahman are one and the same. The only way to escape from *samsara* is to see maya is an illusion through Jnana yoga.

This contrasts with Ramanuja's belief which is not mentioned alongside Madhva and Shankara in the passage above. Ramanuja

believed that there were three entities in existence; Prakriti (Physical Matter), Brahman and Atman. For Ramanuja, Brahman and Atman are separate, individual, but co-dependant.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate was awarded 10 marks.

SECTION B

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

UP.
atman -
samsara -
iferru -
moksha

atman = eternal
iva = individual

Read the following passage before answering the questions.

The typical assumption in the Hindu tradition is that every living body is matched by a soul (sometimes called atman and sometimes purusa, or else cit or consciousness). However, in Advaita Vedanta the identity between the Divine Being and the Self is taken strictly. Consequently we all, so to speak, share the same Self. It is our limited view or projection which causes us to see separate selves. It is like a light seen through a colander. It looks like many lights when it is in fact only one. Advaita in this way shows an affinity to Buddhism, in that the latter has many individual consciousnesses but none are permanent; so at the lower or empirical level of truth we have a host of transmigrating individuals, lacking permanence.

on = dual share

share atman as atman = Brahman
everyone atman but in fact some - bra

considered for Buddhism

(Source: Extract adapted from 'A Companion to Philosophy of Religion' - Part I, Chapter 1 'Hinduism', edited by Quinn, P., Taliaferro, C., and Draper, P., Blackwell, 2010, Edexcel Anthology)

3 (a) Clarify the ideas illustrated in this passage about the nature of the 'Self'.

ignorant -> cannot see illusion.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

The passage refers to ideas about the 'self' by identifying the relationship between atman + Brahman, specifically in Shankara's Vedanta school.

The relationship between atman ('self') and Brahman is a main theme within the Upanishads, which are philosophical texts, thought to be esoteric, at the end of the vedas, (800 BCE). When the extract refers to the idea that "every living body is matched by a soul", it is focusing on the idea of atman, which is the eternal soul that moves from body to body in each lifetime. The aim of atman is to escape ~~samsara~~ the cyclical existence of birth death + rebirth known as samsara + achieve liberation (moksha).

Furthermore, when he refers to ~~the self~~ ^{the soul} being called 'sat' this refers to Shankara's idea of Brahman ~~as~~ he believed Brahman was an impersonal force, incapable of an iconic representation, thus only having the description of 'sat-chit-ananda' meaning 'being, consciousness bliss'. As the atman and Brahman are thought to be the same, ~~atman sat~~ this description of Brahman also applies to atman (the 'self').

Shankara's school of thought is 'advaita vedanta' meaning non-dualism. This focuses on a monist view of Brahman & atman and the idea that we 'share the same self', as Brahman & atman are the same, as he is the only 'really real', everything else is 'maya' (an illusion). ^{extract} He attempts to further explain his idea of 'the self' through the analogy of colander → "it looks like many lights, when in fact it is only one". Again, this emphasises the idea that atman may appear to be in numerous bodies over numerous lifetimes, however, they're all connected to Brahman & thus are only considered as one being.

Shankara believed there were 3 levels of reality that underpinned the universe. This is highlighted

in the extract when it refers to the "lower or empirical level of truth" that is "lacking permanence". The lower/empirical levels of truth refer to the idea of 'the illusory level' (hallucinations, dreams + tricks of the mind) + the 'merely real' which is ~~the~~ empirical objects of the universe e.g. tables or cars. He believed the only 'really real' was Brahman, + thus the 'self' atman as they're the same. Once people came to this realisation through gaining experiential knowledge (jnana yoga), they would achieve moksha. Shankara believed ignorance (~~set~~ avidya) existed in the world, as they failed to see that everything was 'maya' (an illusion) except Brahman. He compared this idea to his snake + coil analogy.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate was awarded 10 marks.

Question 3 (b)

Question 3b relates to the extract and expands its scope. It requires candidates to analyse and make arguments connected to the question. It spans AO1 (5 marks) and AO2 (15 marks). This requires candidates to analyse the key beliefs about the relationship between atman and Brahman. Candidates presented meanings of key terms such as Brahman and atman. There were clear contrasts made between Shankara and Ramanuja and hence Advaita Vedanta and Vishishtadvaita. Candidates were knowledgeable in their discussions about monism and dualism. The better answers communicated the diversity of beliefs regarding this topic, which also included the Bhagavad Gita.

The following three answers achieved marks in the highest level. They displayed good practice because:

- they examined in detail and with clarity key ideas on this topic
- typically, this included work on Shankara and Ramanuja
- candidates were familiar with key terms such as maya and monism
- there was commendable breadth of material including textual sources from the Upanishads
- candidates developed the implication of their studies e.g. with reference to yoga
- there was a good level of understanding of the contributions of notable scholars.

(b) Analyse key beliefs about the relationship between atman and Brahman.

(20)

| Ramanuja | Shankara |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ • bhakti - 95%• easy to understandJainism. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ • clever |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- • new concept - made up• Sanskrit - higher class• distasteful - Gita bhakti↳ Cote. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gita• Buddhist - crypto-Buddhist[-] • difficult to understand• avoidance of problems• criticised by Madhva + Ramanuja |

Smith
Notes
↑

Response:

There are two main key beliefs about the relationship between the atman and Brahman devised by two Hindu philosophers, Shankara and Ramanuja. Shankara stated that the relationship is that the atman is Brahman. Whereas, Ramanuja devised the concept of "qualified non-dualism" which expresses that the atman is separate from Brahman but linked and connected. Both theories have strengths but can also be flawed. However, the key beliefs conceptualised by Ramanuja are more accessible to the everyday Hindu and therefore more significant to Hinduism.

One positive of the key beliefs expressed by Ramanuja is that it is easier to understand in comparison to Shukaras concept. Scholar Jamison used an analogy which further simplifies the belief about the relationship. Ramanuja states that the atman is the purusha inside the Praliti which is the matter and the body. Ramanuja states that ~~the two~~ atman is separate from Brahman, known as dualism. Despite this, there is linkage in that the atman is prevalent in the cycle of Samsara which involves dharma. Dharma is a fundamental belief in Hinduism that Zachner describes to be 'subtle yet difficult to understand'. It is the regulation and order of the universe, hence, the relationship with Brahman. Jamison says the ocean represents Brahman and a bucket represents the body. You can fill the bucket with water and it will be separate however you can return it to the sea and it will intergrate ~~to~~ with the water to become 'one body ~~seen~~ ocean. Thus, a strength of Ramanuja's belief is that is easy for Hindus to understand.

Despite this, Ramanuja developed his concepts about the atman and Brahman in Sanskrit, the ancient Vedic language. This suggests that it was aimed at the higher, more intellectual

castes and not directly accessible to the everyday Hindu.

② To the contrary, these key beliefs Ramanuja puts forwards allow for bhakti yoga as a method of reaching moksha. Moksha is the liberation from the cycle of samsara. This emphasises Ramanuja's view of Brahman. He regarded Brahman to be Saguna meaning God with attributes and human qualities - an anthropomorphic view of God. This suggests that a personal relationship between the Hindus and their atman and Brahman is pivotal. In the Gita it says, "think of me constantly". This can be performed by bhakti worship which is the love and devotion to God. It is evident this is the most popular of the three yogas as 95% of Hindus worship in this way. Thus Ramanuja's ~~new~~ beliefs about the relationship between the ~~However~~ atman and Brahman are significant.

However, Ramanuja is said ~~to have~~ by Cole to have "only referenced the Bhagavad Gita because the book is greatly influential". Ramanuja considered the constant mention of bhakti yoga to be 'distasteful' in expressing the relationship between the atman and Brahman.

Further, a reason to suggest the weakness of Ramarujas belief is the fact he conceptualised an idea that is ambiguous and straddling two categories. He calls the relationship 'qualificational-dualism' to suggest there is not a dualistic relationship between the atman and God. However, by definition the relationship is dualistic. This may harbour confusion thus reducing the significance of his beliefs.

On the other hand, another philosopher who developed key beliefs about the relationship between Brahman and the atman was Shankara. Firstly, it can be argued that the idea of the empirical world being an illusion as there are two levels of reality as intelligent. It is an imaginative, unusual idea to express the relationship between the soul and Brahman. Krott says, "Shankara cleverly used Buddhist influences", in his set of beliefs. However,

However, the ~~betreps~~ belief about the absolute reality being Brahman may be hard to conceptualise and difficult to understand. Hindus may question the purpose of their life if none of this empirical world is real.

Furthermore, Shankara devised God to be Nirguna Brahman, without qualities. Hindus use the phrase *Neti Neti*, meaning neither this nor that. To some, this may suggest that the relationship is impersonal. Shankara has a monistic view of Brahman in that 'he' is a force or power. Additionally, Shankara claimed that the path to moksha was conducted by ~~tantra yoga~~ jnana yoga. He used the ~~anatomy~~ He referenced the analogy of the charioteer in the Upanishads. The fact that there is mention of the raga jnana in the Upanishads may add to the significance of Shankara's key beliefs. The idea is that the chariot resembles the body and the charioteer is the atman. The horse represents the senses and it is the job of the charioteer to deter the senses (horse) from distracting objects. Thus once a Hindu has gained the knowledge that the atman is in fact Brahman, they have reached moksha.

~~Add~~ Similarly, Shankara's philosophies of the atman relationship were greatly criticized by Ramanuja and Madhva, two renowned Hindu philosophers. Ramanuja described the theory as 'hollow', adding

to the insignificance of Shankara's theory.

Also, as previously mentioned, Shankara was influenced by Buddhist ideologies. Knott claims he was criticised of being 'crypto-buddhist' and people questioned the relevance of his theory to Hinduism at all. Another way in which Shankara's key beliefs can be analysed is through saying the world is an illusion. He avoids the fundamental problems within Hinduism such as the discrimination of Dalits and women and the unfair system of the cycle of samsara.

To conclude, having analysed the key beliefs about the relationship between the atman and Brahman, it is evident that Ramanuja's theory on the atman is more accessible to the everyday Hindu who practises Bhakti yoga and murti worship to the Saguna form of Brahman.



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The candidate was awarded 20 marks.

(b) Analyse key beliefs about the relationship between atman and Brahman.

(20)

The relationship between atman & Brahman is a key theme in the Upanishads (800 BCE). These texts are 'shruti' (revealed) texts, part of the end of the Vedas, but are often considered ~~as~~ in their own right & they focus on philosophical knowledge & are experiential. Brahman is believed to be the universal spirit, ^{macrocosmic} ~~macrocosmic~~ as it covers the entire universe, whilst atman is believed to be the eternal microcosmic spirit - part of the universe. The relationship between atman & Brahman is a key idea in 2 opposing Vedanta schools: Shankara & Ramanya.

Shankara (772) proposed his advaita Vedanta school, which focused on non-dualism & monism. He believed God was the unknowable creator & thus ~~is~~ possessed ~~the form~~ an impersonal force (Brahman Nirguna). He is neither this nor that ('neti-neti') and can only be described approxi-mately. His main description is 'sat cit ananda' meaning being, consciousness, bliss. His school of thought focused on jnana yoga as a path to achieve moksha, as he believed you ~~can~~ by gaining experiential higher knowledge of God, you can achieve liberation & thus reunite atman & Brahman. He further compared that

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everything in the universe was *maya* an illusion and possessed either the 'merely real' empirical objects e.g. tables' or the 'illusory level' (hallucinations & ideas of the mind'). He used his analogy of the snake + coil to represent this idea. A man believes he thought a snake in his room at night, but the servant assures him it is only a coil of wire. The snake represents the illusory level, the coil represents the 'merely real' + so this ~~highlights~~ highlighting how they're both 'maya' and the only really real is Brahman. From this he thus concluded that, *avidya* (ignorance) resides in the universe, as we are too ignorant to see that everything is an illusion + there is no individual *jiva* (soul).

Shankara's beliefs about the relationship between *atman* + Brahman allows *moksha* to be achieved at the arrival of the knowledge that *atman* + Brahman are 'identical' + so avoids the idea of ~~being~~ accumulated *karma*. Moreover, this key beliefs originate from the *Upanishads* which are *Shruti* texts of ultimate authority, thought to have come directly from God. Thus key beliefs about Brahman + *atman* possess great significance + authority.

Furthermore, as Shankara's school of thought

focuses on Brahman Nirguna, it avoids the problem of evil + suffering, as Brahman is an impersonal force, rather than a personal God, like the West. Also - influenced many reformers such as Ram Mohan Roy + Ramakrishna + ~~Sri~~.

However, the path of jhana yoga in trying to understand Brahman + human relationship is exclusive to renunciant stage of ashrama + ~~is~~ not accessible to all castes. Traditionally it was only accessible to the top 3 castes as they're "twice-born"; moreover, the idea of ^{thus making the idea outdated - very few people actually go + renounce in the forest} Brahman Nirguna can be problematic for some. ~~It is~~ as ~~Brahman~~ it's impersonal + sober ~~offer~~ offer any comfort to believers.

An alternative ~~set~~ Vedantic school of thought is Ramanuja (1017 - 1137). He put forward his idea of Vishadvaitavada - (qualified non-dualism) + the idea that a man ~~is~~ is separated from Brahman for the duration of many life times + moksha sees the return of a man to Brahman - which is seen in his bucket analogy. He believed in the bhakti path of loving devotion to achieve moksha + believed in Brahman Saguna - a personal God, like we have in the West. He criticised Shankara's school of thought + disagreed with his view that bhakti was a lesser

path to achieving moksha. He ranked shankaras higher + lower ^{as he} ~~referred~~ ^{substances} ~~as~~ ^{believed}, any ~~text with~~ ^{social} ~~elements~~ should be regarded equally. He further went on to ~~so~~ highlight shankaras inconsistency within his vedanta school, as if everything is maya, then where does Brahman (really real) originate from. ~~each step~~

Ramanyya is bhakti path ~~highlights~~ is the most popular yoga, as it's accessible to all castes + featured in smriti texts, especially the mahabharata in Bhagavad Gita, as Krishna promoted this form of ~~relationship~~ ^{yoga} to achieve moksha. Furthermore, this is particularly popular in the west, especially with hare-krishnas + ~~also~~ ISKCON, ~~yet also popular with~~ ^{followers, as well as}

however, Ramanyya's school of thought can be confusing as to whether ~~is~~ moksha is earned through effort, as said in the monkey school, or whether God grants you moksha, as proposed in the cat school?

Furthermore, ~~the~~ ^{the} Brahman Saguna suffers the problem of evil + suffering as God is supposed to be personal with qualities yet still allows for evil to exist?

To conclude, the relationship between

Ahman + Bahman is a complex one + there is still uncertainty to the true nature of the relationship. However, even though the 2 vedanta schools possess differing views on Ahman + Bahman, they both originate from Upanishads - hold ultimate authority, so key beliefs in both must be significant.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The candidate was awarded 20 marks.

The relationship between the atman and Brahman is fervently discussed by both Shankara and Ramanuja, both debating whether the atman is an inherent part of Brahman, giving us no identity, or whether Atman is prevalent but still in the illusion of Maya and thus evidentially, still "under the control of the divine being" (Jamison).

One key belief about the relationship between atman and brahman is suggested by Shankara. He discussed the notion that "everything empirical isn't an actual reality but illusionary" (Jamison). Predominately, Shankara maintained that the "only real thing reality is Brahman" (Jamison) and that the atman is simply an extension of Brahman and not of its individual existence. Fundamentally, this goes against "the archaic nature

of Hinduism" (Zachner) that maintains that the Atman is an individual's soul that is the "only constancy" (Jamison) in the universe as it is that that adopts the consequences of one's Karma in their present lives and thus reincarnates as a result of the wheel of samsara. Dispelling this normalised and practised notion would mean that the purpose of Karma is no longer of use as ~~is~~ if the Atman is Brahman, then doesn't that essentially mean all beings are "divinely perfect"? This notion isn't supported in Hinduism as the ideal ^{is} the fact that the Atman ~~must~~ must go through a series of rebirths, according to their Karma, and eventually reach moksha which joins the Atman with the "ultimate reality" (Shankara) that is God. Being 'Brahman' from the outset thus deems moksha ^{arguably} unimportant.

However Shankara does

exemplify another notion in regards to the relationship between the atman and brahman, ~~with~~. Shankara suggests that in order to meet Brahman and "obtain the divine reality" (Jamison), one must obtain jnana, knowledge. As without this knowledge and realisation that we are in fact Brahman, the devotee is unable to achieve jnana and as a consequence, moksha. For this purpose Shankara says one must be aided by gurus, yet it could be questioned as to whether this truly is the "divine truth" (Zachner) due to the fact that it goes against historic notions about the relationship between the atman and Brahman in Hinduism.

~~Ramany~~ Ramanuja, a fierce opponent of Shankara's Advaita Vedanta suggests, similarly to Shankara that we "live in maya" (Ramanuja) and that is order

For the Atman to reach Brahmin, we must "realize the illusion" (Jamison). Yet differently however, Ramanuja rejects the notion that the atman is innately joined with Brahman and instead suggests that "though there is a clear link" (Jamison) and relationship between both entities, the "atman exists individually" (Ramanuja). This therefore conforms to the archaic understanding of the relationship between the atman and the Brahman as dictated by both the Upanishadic and Vedic discourse, whereby the atman to Brahman "is the divine controller behind the atman" (Jamison) yet due to free-will, Brahman cannot forcibly control the atman, or else the whole point of karma yoga (and its components) would be rendered meaningless.

However it could also be stated that Brahman is "the divine

energy ~~cannot~~ - penetrating everything in the universe" (Jamison). Thus, wouldn't this suggest therefore that the will of Brahman is carried out by the Atman and is thus ~~the~~ ~~argues~~ disallowing Ramanuja's notion of ~~the~~ "free will of the atman" and instead is a return to early Upanishadic discourse?

Therefore, both Shankara and Ramanuja displayed varying discourses around the idea of the relationship between the atman and brahman. Though both vary somewhat, they both agree that the illusion of 'maya' is integral in the development of the relationship between the atman and ~~the~~ brahman as it is through this platform that the atman 'realises' its relation to ~~God~~ Brahma and the intrinsic value of the atman as an entity going back to

Brahms (according to Upanishadic doctrine), though in what form is often debated!



The candidate was awarded 20 marks.

Question 4

This has the highest marks across the papers with 5 marks for AO1 and 25 marks for AO2. The command word 'evaluate' means 'to review/analyse information, bringing it together to form a conclusion/judgement based on strengths/weaknesses, alternatives, relevant data or information. Candidates should come to a supported judgement of a subject's qualities and relation to its context.'

The Religious Studies web site clarifies the wording of the question regarding how 'developments in Hinduism have been influenced by one of:

Philosophy of religion

Religion and Ethics

New Testament Studies.'

Documents, that provide this information:

A Level Religious Studies update - Question 4

A level Religious Studies update - Approach to the Anthology

Those can be found here:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/religious-studies-2016.course.materials.html#filterQuery=Pearson-UK:Category%2FTeaching-and-learning-materials>

The web site states that this question may be answered by candidates who evaluate **links with one of these components**. Most candidates adopt this approach which is entirely appropriate and credit-worthy. Candidates who do not show links with another area of study will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of level 4.

Candidates were required to evaluate the thinking of Dayananda Sarasvati in modern Hinduism. This included the context to Dayananda Sarasvati and some relevant biographical information. Candidates were effective at focusing on his views about the primacy of the Vedas. The formation of the Arya Samaj was seen as a critical factor in his significance and some candidates discussed this group alongside other groups such as Brahmo Samaj. Candidates discussed a range of social and ethical topics such as caste. A major topic was Hindu nationalism and the reasons for its origins and discussions about its strengths and weaknesses. A number of answers concentrated on other Reformers such as Ram Mohan Roy and Sri Ramakrishna. This approach tended to weigh up the relative importance of Dayananda Sarasvati compared to other Reformers. This was quite legitimate. However, some candidates focused more on these other Reformers at the expense of a focus on Dayananda Sarasvati.

Candidates referred to a variety of links such as:

- the functional use of religious language from Philosophy of Religion and the ways in which Dayananda Sarasvati employed rhetoric;
- issues regarding equality in Ethics were linked to social reforms related to Dayananda Sarasvati;
- the status of authority of scriptures in the New Testament was linked to the place of the Vedas in Dayananda Sarasvati's system.

These answers represent work at the highest level. They are commendable because:

- They provided an historical context to Dayananda Sarasvati
- There was very good use of key terms such as exclusivism and nationalism
- Candidates showed their understanding of key topics such as the status of the Vedas and the founding of Arya Samaj
- There was a breadth of information such as his social reforms
- An evaluation of Sarasvati Dayananda included an assessment of his role in relation to other Hindu Reformers
- Significant scholars were incorporated
- There was evidence of effective reference to 'links' such as a philosophical interpretation of beliefs and an ethical perspective to social reforms.

4 Evaluate the significance of the thinking of Dayananda Saraswati in modern Hinduism.

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Hinduism have been influenced by **one** of the following:

- Philosophy of Religion
- Religion and Ethics
- New Testament Studies.

(30)

In the 19th Century several Hindu movements developed in opposition to British control of India. During the Muslim Moghul (1700s) and British colonial (1800s) occupation of India, the term "Hindu" came to define groups of native Indian settlements which shared common traditions such as Samsara, Karma, Sanatana Dharma and forms of worship. Under British occupation an educated, administrative Indian middle-class emerged which aimed to organise the "British Raj". Some of these educated middle-class members wanted to change the British view of Hindu worship away from their superstitious ideas.

Dayananda Saraswati was one of these educated members, however he strongly opposed the British Occupation of India. From Saraswati was birthed the "Arya Samaj" movement which advocated social justice for

Indians under British Rule, particularly in the middle and working classes. The Arya Samaj under Saraswati was a Hindu revival movement during the "Hindu Renaissance" and brought to light key social issues during the 1800s.

Saraswati believed that for India to truly prosper as a unified nation, it should repel Christian and Muslim oppression on all fronts - including armed struggle. Saraswati often sent followers to Paris in order to learn Guerrilla fighting tactics to use against India's British occupant forces and the East India Company. Saraswati advocated that by expelling Christian and Muslim oppression they could establish a "Hindu nation for Hindus". This idea is often linked to Gandhi's idea of "Swaraj" or "Home Rule" but is a more extremist and exclusivist view. The idea of a Hindu nation was popular in the 1800s.

One more unpopular idea from Saraswati was the idea of Sanskritisation and a Hindu national language. Sanskrit is a language of complex grammar and various colloquial terms, which was particularly hard to implement as a blanket policy. One must remember that at the time, there was no unified India, the

cultures and languages (while similar) were still variant region to region. In order to blanket adopt a Sanskrit written language or unified Hindu spoken language, one would have to implement a highly efficient education system in a time where it was almost logistically impossible.

Saraswati also believed that the order of the future of the nation lies in a return to its vedic past, following the law of "Varnashramadharma". The social concept of Varnashramadharma can be traced back as far as the Aryan migration (or invasion - its unknown) of the Indus valley civilisation. It is your duty (Dharma) based on your caste (varna) and your life stage (Ashrama). Saraswati believed the Varna system implemented order and logistic capability as it would provide the correct amount of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishnavas and Shudras as society needs. This way society has a "dubious Structure" and is in line with Vedic traditions.

Saraswati also believed that a return to a vedic past would help society interpret science in line with the Vedas. While Neo-Vedantic movements like the Brahmo Samaj

focus on interpreting the vedas in line with observation and science (like Aquinas' Teleological, Design, motion, causation, angles and contingency arguments); Saruswati believed it is more productive to interpret Science in line with the vedas (A view similar to Rene Descartes and Anselm in the 'Ontological Argument for the existence of God').

Saruswati can be argued to have had a detrimental impact on modern India's nationalist tendencies. Saruswati's popularity in the 1800s stemmed largely from a nationalist Independence outcry in the public. Modern day India not only has a nationalist focus but also relies largely on a vernacular style society.

While "caste-discrimination" has been outlawed both in India ~~as~~ and the EU under the "1980 Discrimination Act", there is still high rates of caste-based violence and discrimination which is rooted in India's long history of a Caste-based society.

Saruswati also indirectly influenced the 1960 Independence of India, freedom from the "British Raj", as he advocated a "Home Rule" style of political influence which echoed down

Generations including Mahatma Gandhi's
view of "Shraaj"



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The candidate was awarded 30 marks.

4 Evaluate the significance of the thinking of Dayananda Saraswati in modern Hinduism.

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Hinduism have been influenced by **one** of the following:

- Philosophy of Religion
- Religion and Ethics — *against equality ethics - religious*
- New Testament Studies.

(30)

Having evaluated the significance of the thinking of Dayananda Saraswati in modern Hinduism, it is clear that he held an important role in the development of Hinduism but that his views were not continued strongly enough to settle into the current era of Hinduism.

Saraswati was an exclusivist Hindu thinker and had a nationalistic approach to Hinduism, calling to 'India for the Indians'. As Thomas said, Saraswati believed that ~~the~~ "Hindu national self-consciousness was to play an important role in the struggle for Indian independence", highlighting how significant his ideas were leading up to India's independence. ~~His~~ His beliefs in a nationalistic Hinduism were so strong that in 1878 he founded the 'Arya Samaj', which was a group, or organisation, which held his nationalistic views of Hinduism, and like Dayananda himself, sought to return to a time of Vedic Hinduism. Thus, his thinking was clearly ~~rather~~ significant as he was able to create a movement that based ~~themselves~~ itself on

his own idea of Hinduism.

~~Dayananda~~ Another reason why the thinking of Dayananda Saraswati was clearly significant is that the Arya Samaj established Gurukulas, which is important for the Brahmacharya (^{student} ~~student~~) ashrama (stage of life). ~~In his hope to return Hinduism to a stage where the primacy of the Vedas was once again~~ This shows activism towards returning Hinduism to its Vedic roots, which was important to Saraswati because he believed that "Vedic revelation as contained in the four Vedas contained the only true revelation and the source of the Hindu religion" (Thomas). By establishing Gurukulas, which are specialised Hindu places of teaching to Hindu students, he encouraged the studying of Sanskrit (language of the Vedas) amongst those of the Brahmacharya ashrama. This also means that the students studying the Vedas would be completing their dharma (duty) and ~~the~~ good Karma would be attaching itself to their actions, thus encouraging these students to follow their 'catvornashramadharmas'. ~~By~~ Through all of this, Dayananda's Arya Samaj not only established Gurukulas encouraging students to learn, but also acted on Saraswati's focus on the primacy of the Vedas as the "only true revelation" and "source of the Hindu religion", by respecting the key concepts of the Vedas such as dharma, Karma and the ashramas. Thus, he "make his

return to ~~the~~ "Vedic Hinduism" (Jamison) and this shows how significant his thinking was.

Additionally, Dayananda's thinking was significant in modern Hinduism as he, and specifically his Arya Samaj, were involved in various social reforms. This is seen in his opposition to child marriage and the idea of 'dowry', which is ~~what~~ a sum of money that a Hindu bride's family gifts to her groom's family. For many centuries there were traditional Hindu conventions, and Dayananda's opposition to them was significant and refreshing in modern Hinduism. It can also be noted that a ban was passed ~~to~~ of 'dowry' exchanges, and it can therefore be seen how significant and impactful Saran's modern thinking was in Hinduism, as it arguably resulted in many modern changes.

Saran's thinking was also significant as it showed attention to those who wanted to once again join Hinduism - as Jamison says, "outsiders were welcomed back into Hinduism". This is significant as traditionally, going back into Hinduism was "scarce in its name" (Zachar), and so once again Saran's thoughts clearly revolutionised more outdated norms of Hinduism.

However, on the other hand, it can be argued that ~~Dayananda~~ Dayananda's thinking was not as significant as some claim due to its exclusive and elite approach to Hinduism, which many disagreed with.

Naturally, Hinduism is multifaceted in its nature, as Zaehner states "Hinduism is quite free from dogmatic affirmations". However, Dayananda's beliefs were strongly exclusivist and "the Arya samaj had not been open to pluralist understandings of Hinduism, advocating rather an aggressive nationalism", as Flood says. ~~Due to the fact that~~ — It can be argued that Dayananda's elitist view of the Vedas being the only source of truth was instead ineffective and ~~was~~ not significant in modern Hinduism, as not everyone could read Sanskrit and the Vedic revelation that he speaks of was not available or accessible by everyone. It can also be argued that in modern Hinduism, the Vedas are outdated and go against the inclusivist nature of Hinduism that many others, such as Gandhi, taught. In his neo-Vedantic views, Gandhi said that "I believe the Bible, the Qur'an and the Zehd-Avesta to be as much divinely inspired as the Vedas", and this ~~is~~ clearly contrasts Dayananda's view, showing ~~the~~ ~~more~~ more Hinduism as much more hierarchical and ~~and~~ much less accepting. Through looking at the Study of Religion and Ethics, it is clear that Dayananda's thinking did not have much respect for equality ethics, as his elitist views go against the equality ethics of the likes of even Martin Luther King, who was strongly influenced by Gandhi. It can therefore be argued that Dayananda's thinking was not as significant to modern Hinduism as some claim.

Furthermore, Dayananda's thinking was not significant to modern Hinduism as it was too aggressive, and this strongly goes against the peaceful nature of Hinduism which so many people appreciate. Flood said that the result of Dayananda's thinking in modern Hinduism was "the reformation of Hinduism ~~to be~~ into an aggressive, powerful force against Christianity and Islam", and this highlights how violent and powerful it was. Jamison stated that ~~Dayananda~~ Dayananda had a "characteristically robust attitude to the British presence in India", which supports Flood's statement as it shows Dayananda's strong opposition to the British invasion of India as he believed in 'India for the Indians'. It can be argued that his ~~was~~ his methods were too aggressive and powerful to be effective, and this is justifiable as the Arya Samaj was involved in many violent brawls with other groups, especially Christians and Muslims. This is another reason why his thinking was not as significant, as he viewed Hinduism as a "very different religion to Christianity and Islam" and strongly opposed both religions violently. This created a firm divide between Christians, Muslims and Hindus, when contrast the accepting nature of Hinduism as Zaehner states "it is perfectly possible to be a good Hindu whether one's personal views incline towards monism, monotheism, polytheism or even atheism". The division that Dayananda caused was not helpful to modern Hinduism, but

rather made it seem aggressive and forceful, especially by becoming a "powerful force against Christianity and Islam" (Flood). These aggressive beliefs of Hinduism are not present in Hinduism today, and so it can be argued that the discontinuation of Dayananda's oppositional view, especially supplanted by Gandhi's accepting view, show his thinking to be not as significant.

In summary, having evaluated the thinking of Dayananda saraswati in modern Hinduism, it is clear that his thoughts, although discontinued into today's era, remain significant to modern Hinduism. As Jamison said, "he held a prominent role in the development of Hindu thought", and his establishment of the Arya Samaj spread his ideas and put his significant thoughts into action.



The candidate was awarded 30 marks.

Paper Summary

- It is vital for the whole Specification to be studied.
- Time-management in this paper is important and candidates need to know about the different range of marks for questions and to balance their time accordingly.
- Candidates are encouraged to understand the various ways of clarifying texts as used in 3a and to develop their skills in textual analysis. One approach which tends to lower performance, is a very close repetition of the wording of the passage itself. It is of course good practice to keep quite close to the text, but to select and explain key terms and ideas. This clarity should be sustained throughout their answer. Candidates should show their knowledge and understanding of key ideas in the passage by way of detailed analysis and by the way they are amplified. Furthermore, candidates may address a broad range of ideas provided they are linked to references in the passage.
- Candidates may legitimately answer question 4 in terms of 'links' and this approach is supported via details in the Religious Studies web site (see *Qualifications - Course Materials*).
- Candidates may cross reference to related boxes of content in the Spec. For example the passage in 3a could be related to box 3.1 about sanatana dharma.

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>

