

Teacher Resource Bank

GCSE Religious Studies Specification A

Unit 14 *Sikhism*

Exemplar Scripts and Commentaries



Script 1

PART A

A1 Beliefs and Sources of Authority

- (a) Explain the meaning of manmukh. (2 marks)

Manmukh means self centred. A sikh that is manmukh is self-centred and egotistic. Sikhs should strive to be more gurmukh, selfless and Guru or God created.

Commentary

A reason with good development.

(2 marks)

- (b) 'Only God, not human beings, should tell us how to live.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. Refer to Sikhism in your answer. (6 marks)

Guru Nanak lay down teachings for Sikhs to reach mukhti, some Sikhs believe that the Guru's were dictated by God's hand/will (Hukam). God's hukam is the religious rules and morals in Sikhism, but God also gave us our own will to dictate our lives for ourselves. So whilst we should follow Hukam, God gave Sikhs free will to live their secular life within certain morals such as 'not committing adultery' or 'taking intoxicants'. Human beings can learn from God and help us as listening is important, although skeptics may argue that God's teachings are simply Nanak's teachings in which case completely contradicts this quote.

Commentary

Good development of the reason for the statement. Awareness of alternative view, but falls short of the L5 criteria to show 'reasoned development.'

(4 marks)

A2 The Ten Gurus

(a) Give **two** reasons why Guru Nanak is important to Sikhs. (2 marks)

1. *Guru Nanak was the founder of Sikhism!*
2. *Guru Nanak taught Sikhs the most important and key beliefs of Sikhism, equality, tolerance and truthfulness.*

Commentary

Two accurate reasons.

(2 marks)

(b) Explain why Guru Arjan is important to Sikhs. (5 marks)

Guru Arjan is important to Sikhs because he was the first Sikh martyr, he stood up against discrimination of the Sikhs using only peaceful protest. Guru Arjan also completed the Holy Golden Temple in Amritsar, the main Sikh temple. He also contributed a large amount to the making of the Granth Sahib. Composing the most number of hymns out of the Gurus and completing the first version of the Granth Sahib – the Adi Granth.

Commentary

A full and detailed answer with some development.

(5 marks)

(c) 'The teachings of the Ten Gurus give all the guidance that Sikhs need.'

What do you think? Explain your opinion. (3 marks)

I believe there is actually no way of telling what things would be like with more Gurus. Guru Gobind had the power to end the line of Gurus and must have considered his decision carefully. Maybe he believed that Sikhism could not be added to, that the beliefs laid down were enough. There is speculation as to whether the spirit of God lived through each Guru, in which case Gobind Singh did not go against the other Gurus in his decision.

Commentary

Not answering the question. Candidate's response is inaccurately interpreting the question as being about needing more gurus.

(0 marks)

A3 Personal Lifestyle

- (a) Describe ways in which Sikhs can practise sewa in the gurdwara. (4 marks)

Sikhs can practise 'sewa' or selfless service in the Gurdwara , for example working or cooking in the langar, doing/conducting or assisting ceremonies. In the home Sikhs can do "sewa" by doing chores and helping out with parent. Volunteering or charity work is also considered sewa, as you are helping people's lives without possible gain but satisfaction.

Commentary

Part of this answer is not focussed on the gurdwara. The reference to voluntary work could be in the gurdwara so has been credited, however, it has not been clearly expressed by the candidate which is required for level 4 'clear knowledge and understanding.'

(3 marks)

- (b) 'It is difficult to be a Sikh in the United Kingdom.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. (6 marks)

Yes, in some respects being a young Sikh is very difficult in the UK because of social and peer pressures. E.g many boys and men are clean shaven or have shorter hair. Its harder for young Sikhs in a more multicultural society, than older sikhs, but young Sikhs can still be religious, they just have to fit their sacred lives round their secular. Sikhs can also go to the Gurdwara as a place of spiritual refuge, Sikhs can be themselves and express their religious values without feeling awkward when everyone else is there to do the same thing.

Commentary

Developed reasons with alternative viewpoint.

(4 marks)

- (c) Explain why the Rahit Maryada is important to Sikhs. (4 marks)

Rahit is important to Sikhs because it shows or gives hope to Sikhs that having a Sikh state is possible, despite its downfall in 1849. He also dictated the state through Sikh beliefs, probably influencing Bhindranwale's ideas of Khalistan. He ruled the state with religious, not political belief whilst also trying to show equality to other faiths which I personally believe is quite a feat of achievement.

Commentary

The candidate does not answer the question.

(0 marks)

- (d) 'The Sikh religion should not have rules about what people should wear.'
What is your opinion? Explain your opinion. (3 marks)

I believe that the Sikh idea of the 5ks is slightly outdated and that they only wear them simply because of tradition and acknowledging the wishes of their Guru. Guru Gabriel invented the 5ks as a way of Sikh identify this was done as a rebellion against persecution. Now Sikhs are not widely persecuted at all and it only serves as awkwardness to young Sikhs, both boys and girls.

Commentary

Good answer. The candidate's opinion is supported by several well expressed reasons.

(3 marks)

A4 Justice and Equality

- (a) Explain Sikh attitudes to prejudice. (4 marks)

Sikhs frown upon prejudice. Guru Nanak especially, told Sikhs to be tolerant of others, even if your beliefs are different and be non – judgemental. This belief is demonstrated through physical and mental acts. For example, mentally, one is encouraged to listen and consider, physically, the langar is a free kitchen allows anyone to eat in it, regardless of greed, caste or colour.

Commentary

This answer just reaches level 4. There is some development, but this could have been improved with e.g. reference to specific Sikh teaching.

(4 marks)

- (b) Describe briefly how Sikhs help the poor. (3 marks)

Sikhs help the poor through service which is selfless service. One way of helping the poor and doing sewa in a outside community is charity work. A second way of helping the poor is by helping in the langar. Another way to help the poor was introduced by Guru Amar Das was the daswandh where a Sikh family gives a tenth of their surplus wealth to the community or a charity.

Commentary

A good response showing sound knowledge and understanding, with good development by reference to specific examples.

(3 marks)

- (c) 'Women have equal status to men within Sikhism.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. (6 marks)

Women are treated equally in Sikhism because they are allowed to participate as Gurnthis in ceremonies unlike many world religions they are also allowed to take part and represent the Panj Piare even though the Panj Piare were mostly women. However some Sikhs may believe that the fact the Gurus were all men makes the Gurus sexist in some way or that women inferior. Having said this though, Gurus make many attempts of equality to be shown between the sexes. Especially Gabind Singh, who when he gave the five k's he made a specific rule to respect women and the kachera was also supposed to stop one's lust and crimes against women.

Commentary

Good development of one point of view. The alternative is mentioned but lacks development. Level 4 'best fit'.

(4 marks)

PART B

B6 Family Life

- (a) The words 'Singh' and 'Kaur'; are used in the naming of Sikh children. What do these words mean? (2 marks)

'Singh; means lion and 'Kaur' means princess

Commentary

Two accurate points.

(2 marks)

- (b) Explain the Sikh responsibilities of kirat karna and vand chhakna. (4 marks)

Kirat Karna means truthful living and that a Sikh should live an honest life. Vand Chhakna means charitable work which is obviously self explained.

Commentary

Two simple points – no clear development offered.

(2marks)

- (c)(i) 'Young Sikhs should welcome arranged marriages.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. (6 marks)

Young Sikhs should consider arranged marriages but I think that an act of marriage should be an act of love. Whilst it may give young Sikhs a future, one should be prepared to love and marry of their own free will.

However, I can acknowledge that by marrying a man or women Sikh into a rich family, it can up a impoverished family's status. It can really help a family, but I believe that this type of thing is outdated and that families will only go through marriages such as this because of tradition.

Commentary

Some simple reasons, lack of clear development.

(3 marks)

- (c)(ii) Describe a Sikh wedding ceremony. (6 marks)

The Anand karaj, wedding ceremony starts with the groom coming forward to face the Granth Sahib, followed by his wife who sits on the left of him. The granthi will then explain to the couple, their responsibilities and respect they should show each other and their families. The bride and groom bow, then the bride's father takes the groom's scarf and ties it round the bride's duppatta (headscarf). The granthi then recites the shabad and the 1st lavan. During each lavan, the bride and groom walk clockwise around the Granth Sahib before sitting down to listen to the next lavan. This is done three more times and the serving of Karah Parshad concludes the ceremony.

Commentary

A good account with some development. Lacks elaboration required to be full and coherent.

(5 marks)

- (d) 'Divorce is a private matter for the two people involved; it has nothing to do with religion.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. Refer to Sikhism in your answer. (6 marks)

This quote is in my opinion, partially right. Divorce is a private matter and no one else should have to be involved in it apart from possibly children. But religion can help with divorce, many teachings of Sikhism such as sewa are supposed to demonstrate tolerance and discipline. Sikhs should not dismiss problems, Sikhs are taught to work and solve problems. The gurus apart from Krishan were married, so the teachings of the Granth Sahib are not without experience.

However its also important to remember that other people can be asked for advice as well, also, why should someone go to religion to help them over divorce when the reasons for marriage were not religious. Although religion may hold the answers to these problems, love is ultimately selfish, so shouldn't religion come before love.

Commentary

Some partial development of reasons with awareness of alternative view.

(4 marks)

Script 2

PART A

A1 Beliefs and Sources of Authority

- (a) Explain the meaning of manmukh. (2 marks)

Manmukh is self-centredness and is the opposite to Gurmukh; God centred Sikhs regard manmukh as wrong as it dettaches sikhs from God and makes them feel like a separate entity from God. As Manmukh is self-centredness it can cause excessive attachment to people or things (Moh), and can cause a false sense of pride and ego. All in all Manmukh is considered a bad trait Sikhism, as it blocks the way to mukti and oneness with God.

Commentary

Reason and development. The first two lines secure the marks. The extension was not required in such a short answer question.

(2 marks)

- (b) 'Only God, not human beings, should tell us how to live.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. Refer to Sikhism in your answer. (6 marks)

This statement is quite controversial and there are as a results, two distinct viewpoints. Some Sikhs would agree with the statement as God is Sargun and Nirgun and is beyond gender or creation; therefore his wisdom is endless and his ideas taught by the Gurus and in the Guru Granth Sahib, should be a Sikhs sole focus for how to live (moral code: Rahit Marydadon). Also Sikhs believe in destiny, and that God has a plan for people. Therefore people should only allow God to tell them how to live as it is part of their destiny and God's will (Hukam). However other Sikhs would argue that Sikhs should listen to other human beings as they can give them advice on how to live a healthy life, or how to rebuild a broken marriage, or the correct way to raise children. As a result I do not agree with the statement because I feel that humans should be able to tell us how to live a healthy life, but God should be the only one to tell Sikhs how to live morally and spiritually.

Commentary

A good response, reasoned consideration of alternative viewpoints. Falls short of the level 6 requirement for well-argued, as the contrasting viewpoint is lacking in explanation. For example, why might human advice in these situations be valuable? Or who might provide such guidance and why?

(5 marks)

A2 The Ten Gurus

(a) Give **two** reasons why Guru Nanak is important to Sikhs. (2 marks)

1. *He was the founder of the Sikh faith and his moral teachings and ideas formed the basis of a faith.*
2. *His small anthology of poems (pothi) were the beginnings of the compilation of the Adi Granth, later to be called the Guru Granth Sahib.*

Commentary

Two accurate points.

(2 marks)

(b) Explain why Guru Arjan is important to Sikhs. (5 marks)

Guru Arjan or the “the apostle of peace” is important to Sikhs for various reasons. Firstly, he was the first Guru martyr and his death marked a significant point in the history of the Sikh faith. This was as it led to the start of Sikhs fighting in defence of the religion. Also Arjan formally composed the first Adi Granth which he kept at Harimandir, in Amritsar which he also completed the building of. He also spread the Sikh faith by his many missionaries and set up other Sikh towns. Finally Arjan was an active campaigner for social reform (he disliked and opposed the caste system.)

Commentary

A full and detailed answer with some development.

(5 marks)

(c) ‘The teachings of the Ten Gurus give all the guidance that Sikhs need.’

What do you think? Explain your opinion. (3 marks)

I feel that the teachings and moral guidance that the ten Gurus give to Sikhs is important and extensive. This is because their teachings cover matters from death and rebirth to how to help others. Most significantly the Gurus’ guidance is important due to the fact they inargarated and propogated rites of passage and other festivals. However I also feel that Sikhs read more guidance than just what the Gurus have taught them. This is as they need to know how to live a healthy, stressless and effective life. i.e they need a good education and advice on what to eat or exercise as well. So I agree with the statement to some extent.

Commentary

The candidate’s opinion is supported by clear reasons to reflect the view whilst acknowledging what may lead to an alternative view. This is not necessary but is creditable in 3 mark evaluations.

(3 marks)

A3 Personal Lifestyle

- (a) Describe ways in which Sikhs can practise sewa in the gurdwara. (4 marks)

Sikhs can practise sewa extensively in the Gurdwara. They can do Tan (physical service) by washing pots and pans or cooking and serving food in the langar. Sikhs can also do mental service (man) in the Gurdwara by teaching others about the Gurus or scriptures in one of the classes. Finally a Sikh can do dhan (material service) by giving money to the Gurdwara, or donating money to a charity the Gurdwara supports. So Sikhs can practise sewa extensively in the Gurdwara.

Commentary

An excellent response. Several points made with significant development and understanding of key terms.

(4 marks)

- (b) 'It is difficult to be a Sikh in the United Kingdom'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. (6 marks)

It is often believed that Sikhs or other religious minorities have difficulty living happily in the UK. But is this in fact true? Sikhs would argue for the statements by saying that it is hard to find time to worship God due to them working to support their family (economic priority). They would also say that Sikhs, especially young Sikhs are influenced by the media and peers to move away from Sikhs and become more manmukh. Some sikhs would also support the statement by bringing up the point of religious prejudice and discrimination. However, against the statement, is the fact that there are numerous Gurdwaras nationwide, and other, Sikh Groups (B.O.S.S = British Organisation of Sikh Students) that propagate and spread the Sikh faith. The widespread locations of Gurdwaras and Sikh educational movements make it easy for someone to be Sikh in the UK. Therefore I partially agree with the statement as it is easy for a Sikh to retain and learn about their faith in the UK, but it is does not make him or her immune to cultural, economic and social pressures.

Commentary

A well argued response. Good consideration of alternative views. The final conclusion of the statement demonstrates insight into the issue raised for evaluation as do some of the reasons offered.

(6 marks)

- (c) Explain why the Rahit Maryada is important to Sikhs. (4 marks)

The Rahit Maryada is important to Sikhs because it is their code of conduct, and all Sikhs that enter the Khalsa must adopt this code. It is important as it encompasses how a Sikh should live their lives. Therefore it encourages them to propagate equality and justice and be compassionate to all, as well as leading to a happy life, free of paap (sin) in devotion to God. It also propagates the idea of "saint - sipahi (saint soldier, which is at the heart of khalsa. This is why it is important.

Commentary

Very good answer. Clear knowledge and understanding with some development.

(4 marks)

- (d) 'The Sikh religion should not have rules about what people should wear.'
What is your opinion? Explain your opinion. (3 marks)

I partially agree with this statement as I feel that amritdhari Sikhs should wear a turban (due to the kesh) to show discipline and structure in life. Furthermore I believe that khalsa Sikhs should also wear the Kachera to show modesty as it stops other sikhs having kam or crave immoral, unloving sexual acts. However I also feel that clothing restrictions can make people feel upset or alienated from the rest of society (in the west), as they are easily recognisable (panj kakke) so I feel that the Sikh faith should retain the Panj Kakke to propogate equality, unity and identity , but not be too strict on clothing restrictions for other Sikhs as they can alienate some people. .

Commentary

Developed reasons support the opinion expressed. The candidate offers an alternative view which was not required. Full credit achieved before the 'however' viewpoint.

(3 marks)

A4 Justice and Equality

- (a) Explain Sikh attitudes to prejudice. (4 marks)

Ever since Sikhism was founded the Gurus and Sikhs hated and fought against prejudice. Sikhs feel that any form of prejudice is wrong as it goes against their key ideas of tolerance and equality as, as a result, of prejudice it leads to people being treated differently or even being discriminated. Guru Nanak himself said "There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim, we are all children of the same father". So Sikhs hate and fight prejudice to uphold their ideals of equality, which are extensive and a central aspect of the faith.

Commentary

Clear knowledge and understanding. Reference to teachings and action help to demonstrate good development.

(4 marks)

- (b) Describe briefly how Sikhs help the poor. (3 marks)

Sikhs help the poor in various ways. Firstly as a result of sewa and dhan (material service) Sikhs are obliged to give a tithe (daswandh) of one tenth of their surplus wealth to charity. Also Sikh's third principle of vand Chhakna, or charity obliges them to give money to the poor and needy. Also some Sikhs give up their time to help clothe and feed the homeless and poor in the Gurdwara, which is open to all.

Commentary

A good answer. Use of specific examples and technical language extend beyond the level 3 criteria.

(3 marks)

- (c) 'Women have equal status to men within Sikhism.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. (6 marks)

Inequality between men and women is a big problem in some faiths, but is it also true of Sikhism? In Sikhism women have equal status to men as they are allowed to be amridshari Sikhs and lead ceremonies as Granthis. They can also divorce their husband and learn to read and speak in public about the Guru Granth Sahib. Religious equality is taught by the faith in matters spiritual and social (all eat together in the Langar as a pangas). But in reality the statement is not totally true as sometimes, due to cultural pressures, Sikh women are treated as inferior to men and have less opportunities to practise their faith and socialise. Also it is possible some Sikh 'sects' practise religious inequality, even though it is against the ideas of Sikhism. So I partially agree with the statements as the Sikh faith preaches sexual equality, however cultural ideas, in reality, limit the extent to which it is practised.

Commentary

A well argued response showing good insight into the issue. Candidate utilises religious and cultural practice well to support the reasons they offer.

(6 marks)

PART B

B5 Worship and the Guru Granth Sahib

- (a) What is karah parshad? (2 marks)

Karah parshad is the sikh ceremonial sweet pudding and it is blessed and eaten at the end of all sikh ceremonies. It serves as a reminder that God's blessings are sweet. If it is dropped on the floor, it should be picked up and eaten as it has been blessed.

Commentary

Two clear points with additional (unnecessary) development.

(2 marks)

- (b)(i) Explain how the Guru Granth Sahib is shown respect in Gurdwara. (6 marks)

In the Gurdwara, the Guru Granth Sahib is shown respect in a variety of ways. Firstly it is referred to as the Guru Granth Sahib, the first and the last words are signs of respect. Also the Guru Granth Sahib is 'put to bed' in its own bedroom at night called a sachkhand. As well as this it is wrapped in rumallas and is placed on a throne under a chanani. In addition a pavri is waved over the scriptures showing them respect again. Furthermore all who enter the Diwan Hall, where it is kept during the day, must be clean (as must the person handling it) and bow to it. Also when they leave they are not permitted to turn their back on the Guru Granth Sahib either. Finally offerings are given to it and it is read in a special way, denoting that it is more important than other books as it is "the living Guru".

Commentary

A full and coherent response. Lot of detail and explanation of some key points.

(6 marks)

- (b)(ii) 'Without the Guru Granth Sahib there would be no Sikhism today.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. (6 marks)

This statement is unusual but, as per-usual. There are two sides to the argument. Sikhs would argue for the statements as the Guru Granth Sahib is integral to all Sikh ceremonies and contains all the moral teachings and theology that Sikhs today need to practise their faith so if it did not exist the faith would not exist either. Also some would agree if the line of human Gurus had continued Sikhism could be killed, as their spiritual leader and main figure could easily be disposed of leading to the ultimate collapse of the faith. However others would argue that it is if there was no Guru Granth Sahib Sikhism would still exist today as another human Guru or mighty Sikh spiritual leader would have fought for and spread the Sikh faith to ensure its stability and continuation. But all in all I feel that if the Guru Granth Sahib did not exist then the Sikh faith would not exist today. This is because it not only is the main Sikh moral and theological text, but it is immune from human error. For if it did not exist and the line of human Gurus had continued, then they may have become corrupt and lost their faith and fought for money and power rather than for Sikhism. So I agree with the statement.

Commentary

A well argued response. Clear developed reasons showing awareness of alternative view and insights into the issue raised.

(6 marks)

- (c) Describe how Sikhs worship in the home. (4 marks)

Sikhs worship at the home in various ways. Some will simply say and repeat the Japji of Guru Nanak or check the Huraam for the day online. However some sikhs may possess a Gutka (a collection of shabody) which they will recite and do simran on (meditate). Other sikh may use a mala (prayer beads) to Gurus and worship God . A few may even practise sewa by caring for a sick or elderly relative.

Commentary

Clear knowledge and understanding shown in use of key language and some development of points made.

(4 marks)

- (d) 'It is better to worship in the gurdwara than in the home.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. (6 marks)

This statement is unusual, yet is an interesting way to explore worship in sikhism; as a congregation or as an individual.

In opposition to the statement is the fact that when worshipping at home you can do so more regularly. But in more spiritual terms worshipping at home can help a sikh boost their personal faith and spirituality more so than in the Gurdwara. This is because they can sit for long periods of time mediating and concentrating on their own beliefs rather than be part of a ceremony etc. Also worship at the home may be more effective as a Sikh would be in comfortable and familiar surroundings.

In favour of the statement is the idea of unity. Sikhs worshipping together as a sangat in the Gurdwara shows great equality and unity and brings a special sense of purpose to those worshipping this feeling encourages their worship to be more focused and effective. However most importantly at the Gurdwara Sikhs can listen to and worship in the presence at the Guru Granth Sahib, and few Sikhs possess a copy at home. So just going to see the Granth Sahib there makes the Gurdwara important. In addition there is a langar and kirtans are sang. All in all worship in the Gurdwara can bring Sikhs together and closer to God. They can also see and partake in important ceremonies such as the Amrit Sanskar or simply the Ardas.

In conclusion I agree with the statement of the communal feeling of worship the sangat and the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib brings is unique and it brings Sikhs closer to God and leads to more effective focused worship.

Commentary

A full and coherent argument made here. There is significantly more reasoning to support the candidate's view. However, this does not detract from the sound reasoned argument made opposing the viewpoint expressed in the statement.

(6 marks)