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Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Religious Studies A (1RB0)
Paper 3: Area of Study 3 – Religion, Philosophy
and Social Justice
Option 3G: Sikhism

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Introduction

This area of study comprises a study in depth of Sikhism, its beliefs and teachings on life, specifically within families and with regard to creation.

This approach encourages candidates to reflect upon the links between beliefs and teachings of Sikhism and the topics of families and creation which are an important part of life today.

There are four sections: Sikh Beliefs, Philosophy of Religion, Living the Sikh life, Equality. The details of the assessment content are provided in the specification. Centres are to use this rather than other published resources when planning the course content.

Section 1, Sikh beliefs were well answered, with sound knowledge and key Sikh terms used throughout, especially AO1 questions. The AO2 questions were not answered so much in depth (but it is improving through the guidance on the website), although the knowledge was there. The candidates are beginning to start to critically analyse the statement using various techniques, although there needs to be more chains of reasoning and a justified conclusion for candidates to gain the higher levels. Candidates should compare and contrast the areas of ethics within Sikhism and non-religious views when asked. Candidates should also look at divergent views within Sikhism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed.

Section 2, Philosophy of Religion were answered reasonably well with sound knowledge especially on revelation. Candidates needed to use more Sikh appropriate knowledge to gain the higher marks, although there was some improvement in Sikh information. The design argument and cosmological argument lacked knowledge and at times design was confused with creation and cosmological argument was confused with design. Sources of wisdom must be used that are appropriate to the question and not just 'random quotes' that the candidate has learnt.

Section 3, Living the Sikh Life. Candidates were well prepared for this section due to the advanced notice however 3c was poorly answered due to lack of knowledge on the history of langar.

Section 4, Equality. Some questions were difficult for the candidates to decipher especially 4b; therefore, they did not gain full marks. The question used language specifically from the specification. Candidates need to practice these types of questions for them to achieve higher marks.

Question 1 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Sikh beliefs.
Bullet point 1.4 . 'Sikh beliefs about life after death.'

The question asked was:

'Outline three Sikh teachings about the nature of life after death.'

Candidates are asked to 'outline' on (a) items. Therefore, lists can reach a maximum of one mark.

Candidates answered this well and most achieved full marks. They clearly knew Sikh beliefs in life after death.

GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a list.

An example:

Outline 3 characteristics of God:

- **God is creator** (1 mark)
- **God is creator**, judge, and lawgiver (1 mark for list or sentence)
- **God is creator**, busy and distant. (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)
- Busy, distant and **God is creator**, (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)
- Creator, judge, lawgiver (1 mark for list)
- Creator, busy, distant (0 Marks) (all three elements need to be correct for 1 mark)
- Creator, judge, distant (0 marks)

Question 1 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Sikh Beliefs.

Bullet point 1.3. '...how uniting with God will affect their lives,'

The question asked was:

'Explain two ways uniting with God will affect how a Sikh lives.'

The question asked for ways uniting with God will affect their lives, therefore the candidate would gain good marks if they wrote about ways such as 'avoiding the five evils' or 'meditating on God's name'. Some candidates did not do this so failed to achieve full marks.

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (b) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom as quotes or examples.

Question 1 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Sikh Beliefs.

Bullet point 1.2 'Sikh teachings on God as creator.

The question asked was:

'Explain two Sikh teachings about God as Karta Purakh'.

In the specification creator is also referenced as Karta Purakh. Some candidates failed to see the connection and did not write about the teachings on God as creator but just wrote sections of the Mool Mantar. The candidates needed to focus on God as creator. This was poorly answered.

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' of (c) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom as quotes or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked.

The reasons then should be supported with a 'reference to a source of wisdom', this must support the reason given and cannot be awarded twice. Therefore, if it is used as development, it does not gain a second mark for the source.

GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a source of wisdom

- The candidates do not have to reference a quote or quote it word for word.
- If the candidate gives the paraphrase and then puts (Guru Granth Sahib 15) in brackets the paraphrase can have the mark and the bracketed reference is ignored.
- If a candidate quotes Guru Nanak and it was Guru Gobind Singh or vice versa; and the quote is not accredited to them, it is not awarded.

Question 1 (d)

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the (d) items. The candidates are being assessed on AO2 Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief. This constitutes 50% of the overall mark.

The question is '**Evaluate**' this statement **considering the arguments for and against** and reach a **justified conclusion**. There must be some consideration of the arguments, that is appraising the arguments which will help to gain the higher grades. Many candidates gave excellent answers giving reasons for and against but not analysing or evaluating them. Still some candidates used formulas and writing frames which restricted the flow of the arguments restricting the candidates' progression to the higher levels.

We are now marking using levels and award a best fit according to the level descriptors

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Sikh Beliefs.

Bullet point 1.7. ' ;purpose of sewa and its importance in the development of Sikhism,.'

Please note that, neither in the bullet point, nor on the question, are candidates required to give a non-religious response. Candidates must respond to the question asked.

“Sewa has been essential for the development of Sikhism.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against. In your response you should:

- refer to Sikh teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Candidates overall achieved level 2 and some candidates achieved level 3, they failed to deconstruct religious information and critically analyse the statement throughout. Generic answers were given, and Sikh key words were limited. Those who achieved the higher level 2 or at times level 3 analysed how sewa is important in the development of Sikhism, referring to the langar and its importance for providing ‘selfless service’. The other argument was living an honest life and setting a good Sikh example. This however was quite limited and logical chains of reasoning throughout would benefit the candidates to achieve higher levels. Overall, the candidates are beginning to use phrases such as ‘this is a strong argument’ or ‘this is a weak argument’. If they then explain why, it is a strong argument evaluating the statement, they can achieve higher levels.

Question 2 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Philosophy of Religion.

Bullet point 2.1 ‘....reasons why revelation might be important to Sikhs’.

The question asked to

‘Outline three reasons why revelation might be important to Sikh.’

There were some good reasons given, but some candidates wrote about the revelation of Guru Nanak in the river and did not write about why it may be important to Sikhs. Candidates need to clearly read the questions carefully.

Question 2 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Philosophy of Religion.

Bullet point 2.4 ‘....the nature and importance of miracles in Sikhism.’

The question asked was:

‘Explain two reasons why miracles are important in Sikhism.’

This was answered quite well with candidates clearly stating the miracles performed in Sikhism. Most of them were related to Guru Nanak e.g., ‘the boulder miracle’ ‘the river experience’, however some candidates did mention miracles performed by other Sikhs

that were credit worthy. The development used was why these miracles are important to Sikhs.

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (b) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, and quotes or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked.

Question 2 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Philosophy of Religion.

Bullet point 2.6 'The Design argument and its use in Sikhism as a philosophical argument for the existence of God and what it shows about the nature of God.'

The question asked was:

'Explain two ways the design argument shows the nature of God to Sikhs'.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

The question is asking how the design argument shows the nature of God, not asking about creation and how this shows Gods nature. Candidates failed to acknowledge this and wrote about creation and not design. Those that did write about design and God's nature gained some marks. A lot of candidates needed to use an appropriate source of wisdom, set out in the specification such as 'Secondly, He fashioned creation; seated within the creation, He beholds it with delight.' (Guru Granth Sahib 463) – this source of wisdom shows God's nature as being intelligent as God knows the purpose of his design.

Question 2 (d)

The question is '**Evaluate**' this statement **considering the arguments for and against** and reach a **justified conclusion** – there must be some consideration of the arguments (appraise the arguments to gain the higher grades). Many candidates gave excellent answers giving reasons for and against but not analysing or evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting candidates' progression to the higher levels.

We are now marking using levels and award a best fit according to the level descriptors.

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Philosophy of Religion.

Bullet point 27. ...'the cosmological argument for the existence of God.'

The question asked was:

“The cosmological argument proves that God exists.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Sikh teachings
- refer to non-religious points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

This question was poorly answered with a lot of candidates writing about the design argument and not the cosmological argument. Those that did, gained a reasonable level but there is still room for improvement on analysis and relating the answers to the statement. Candidates need to express views on why this is a strong argument or a weak argument, with a sound element of religion and belief and good chains of reasoning.

Question 3 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Living the Sikh Life.

Bullet point 3.8 ‘...the significance of Amrit sanskar (the initiation ceremony) for Sikh families.’

The question asked was:

‘Outline three reasons why the Amrit sanskar ceremony is important for families.’

The candidates that wrote about how the Amrit sanskar ceremony is important for families gained full marks. However most just wrote about the importance of the ceremony and did not link it to families.

Question 3 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Living the Sikh Life.

Bullet point 3.1 ‘Features of the gurdwara.’

The question asked was:

‘Explain two features of a gurdwara.’

Well answered with sound knowledge on the features of the gurdwara.

Question 3 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Living the Sikh Life.

Bullet point 3.4: ‘... diverse ways in which the Nam Japna is used in the gurdwara ’

The question asked was:

'Explain two ways Nam Japna is used in the gurdwara.'

This question was answered quite well with good knowledge how Nam Japna is used in the gurdwara. However, there was a lack of relevant sources of wisdom. Candidates need to look at the specification guidelines to prepare for the appropriate sources e.g. Guru Granth Sahib 1142 'Repeating the Naam, the Name of the Lord, the mortal is exalted and glorified.'

Question 3 (d)

The question is '**Evaluate**' this statement **considering the arguments for and against** and reach a **justified conclusion** – there must be some consideration of the arguments (appraise the arguments to gain the higher grades). Many candidates gave excellent answers giving reasons for and against but not analysing or evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting candidates' progression to the higher levels.

We are now marking using levels and award a best fit according to the level descriptors.

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Living a Sikh Life:
Bullet point 3.4: – Meditating on the name of God'

The question asked was:

"The home is the best place to pray."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Sikh teachings
- reach a justified conclusion

Some candidates gave a general explanation why the home is the best place for prayer and did not use Sikh specific ideas of analysis. Those that did discuss this gained higher levels showing they had evaluative knowledge of why the home or gurdwara is the right place for prayer. The main conclusion was not all Sikhs stay at home all day. They are encouraged to always remember God so prayer can be performed anywhere, whether that be at school or in work.

Question 4 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Equality.
Bullet point 4.1 'Sikh teaching on human rights'

The question asked was:

'Outline three Sikh teachings about human rights.'

Candidates gave good responses to Sikh teachings on human rights that were appropriate and correct, for example, Sikhs are taught to protect human rights. Some gave specific answers for example, Sikhs are taught that everyone deserves freedom of speech, which was credited.

Question 4 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Equality.
Bullet point 4.6; 'Sikh responses to racial discrimination.'

The question asked was:
'Explain two Sikh responses to racial discrimination.'

This question was well answered with sound knowledge on how a Sikh responds to racial discrimination. The langar was one of the main responses given, by allowing all races for free vegetarian food.

Question 4 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Equality.
Bullet point 4.8 'Sikh attitudes towards wealth'

The question asked was:
'Explain two Sikh attitudes towards wealth'.
In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority

Those that answered the question achieved mainly the 4/5 marks. A lot of candidates failed to give a source of wisdom. They must use the specification to guide them on the appropriate source of wisdom for each section. For example, Sikhs' attitude to wealth is they should redistribute their riches, so that there is more equality in the world. 'God's preordained plan cannot be erased.' (Guru Granth Sahib 1159).

Question 4 (d)

The question is 'Evaluate' this statement considering the arguments for and against and reach a justified conclusion – there must be some consideration of the arguments (appraise the arguments to gain the higher grades). Many candidates gave excellent answers giving reasons for and against but not analysing or evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting candidates' progression to the higher levels. If the candidate wrote 'this is a strong argument' but did not back it up with evidence, then it was a weaker answer. The quality of the d question

answers is improving with most candidates are relating their answer to the statement given.

Candidates were assessed on Section Four Equality.

Bullet point 4.3 '... the divergent responses of Sikhs to a multi-faith society; the benefits and challenges for Sikhs living in a multi-faith society '

The question asked was:

"It is beneficial to live in a multi-faith society."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Sikh teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Some good Sikh knowledge of the benefits of living in a multi-faith society. Although some candidates wrote more about culture (food and fashion) than religious beliefs. More analysis was needed on the pros and cons of living in a multi faith society as this was lacking, especially in connection to Sikhism.

Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- When answering the (a) questions use three full sentences.
- The source of wisdom offered to support answers in question (c) must be relevant to the question and support the reason given.
- The (d) questions ask for evaluation, after considering the evidence. The higher grades are achieved if the evidence/reasons given is 'considered' or appraised for its value as an argument as part of deciding the evaluation.
- On (d) questions, the bullet points indicate the viewpoints that can be awarded in the answer.
- Understand all key words on specification.
- Use the source of wisdom guide in the specification.