

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations
General Certificate of Secondary Education

RELIGIOUS STUDIES A (WORLD RELIGIONS) (SHORT COURSE) 2395/1
PAPER 5 – Hinduism

MARK SCHEME

Specimen Paper 2003

- 1 (a) **Describe what happens at a Hindu marriage ceremony.** [8]

It must be taken into account that marriage ceremonies can be very diverse in Hinduism, so great flexibility must be shown in marking. A high-level answer might describe a range of symbolic items and events. Common ones might include the mandap; seven steps around sacred fire, and the vows; prayers and blessings, possibly the giving of the dowry.

- (b) **Explain how Hindu beliefs might help a couple in their married life.** [7]

A good answer might refer to issues such as: marriage binding two families, one's dharma, help and inspiration from deities (e.g. Rama and Sita), recalling promises referred to in 1(a).

- (c) **'Parents should help their children choose a marriage partner.'**

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Hinduism in your answer. [5]

Mark according to level of response, but within a Hindu context an answer might consider caste, dharma and whether only Hindus can generate good karma.

- 2 (a) **What do Hindus mean by samsara and karma?** [8]

Candidates might be able to describe karma in terms of good and bad deeds leading to good and bad rebirths. A high-level response might consider samsara in terms of the beginningless cycle of reincarnation and its termination with moksha.

- (b) **Explain how Hindus might try to gain good karma.** [7]

A good answer will probably consider a range of both religious and ethical means, such as puja, pilgrimage, selfless behaviour, following one's dharma.

- (c) **'Karma is a good explanation of why people suffer.'**

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Hinduism in your answer. [5]

Mark according to LoR; a Hindu context might consider whether it is provable. Comparisons with other religious and non-religious explanations would be valid.

- 3 (a) **Describe the goddess Lakshmi and say why she is an important figure in Hinduism.** [8]

A weak answer might simply offer a basic physical description such as standing on a lotus and spilling coins. There might be a brief reference to Divali. A better response will probably discuss her qualities of prosperity, good fortune and generosity, her role as wife of Vishnu and a more detailed examination of her role at Divali.

- (b) **Choose one other Hindu god and explain how worshipping this god might affect the life of a Hindu.** [7]

Any deity is valid but LoR depends on depth of description of the role of that deity and its effect on the worshipper.

- (c) **'It does not matter which god you worship.'**

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Hinduism in your answer. [5]

Mark according to LoR; points might include family tradition and the relationship between the deities and Brahman.

- 4 (a) **Describe how Hindus celebrate Navaratri.** [8]

Possible data: Nine nights of celebration, dancing around shrine of Durga/Parvati, fasting, newly-married daughters come home, stick dances, community parties, fireworks, destruction of the image. Accept Dassehra celebrations, retelling of Ramayana, burning Ravana.

- (b) **Explain how and why Hindus are influenced by their sacred writings.** [7]

Lower level responses might simply recite stories exhaustively from the smritis. Better answers might be more comprehensive and refer to the ideas in and use made of the Vedas, Upanishads, Mahabharata and Ramayana, although only a basic knowledge of content required.

- (c) **'Religion needs modern stories to interest people today.'**

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Hinduism in your answer. [5]

Mark according to LoR; a Hindu context might consider whether the values in e.g. the Ramayana and other literature are eternal, or whether some, such as the relative roles of men and women, are as appropriate today.

