

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations
General Certificate of Secondary Education

RELIGIOUS STUDIES A (WORLD RELIGIONS) (SHORT COURSE) 2398/1
PAPER 8 – Sikhism

MARK SCHEME

Specimen Paper 2003

1 A procession on the Gurburb of the birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Ji

(a) Describe how Sikhs celebrate Diwali. [8]

Description of Diwali celebrations including special Gurdwara activities. Might also refer to e.g. value of shared activity and joy as at any festival of lights; reinforcement of beliefs about good fighting evil; but celebrates Sikh historical link too - release of Guru Har Gobind Ji.

(b) Explain how the celebration of Gurburbs might strengthen the Sikh community. [7]

Some effects will be the same as melas such as Diwali but Gurburbs, anniversaries of the gurus, are only celebrated by Sikhs and are a reminder of their history and solidarity. Good candidates are likely to refer to a specific example. The Gurburbs in the syllabus are: birthday of Nanak Dev Ji (founded the faith; born 1469 Talwandi in Punjab); birthday of Gobind Singh Ji (who founded Khalsa and made Guru Granth Sahib Ji the last guru), martyrdom of ninth guru Tegh Bahadur Ji in Delhi in November 1675, supporting Hindus and Sikhs of Kashmir against forcible conversion to Islam.

(c) 'Religious people should live for today and forget about the past.'

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

Good arguments may be based on either practical or philosophical points.

2 (a) Describe the ceremony when a Sikh joins the Khalsa. [8]

Description of ceremony of five Panj Pyare preparing amrit, then five times drink, five times sprinkled into eyes and into hair. Anand Sahib, Ardas, random reading, Karah Parshad.

(b) Explain how the Five Ks might remind Sikhs of their duty to the Khalsa. [7]

Focus of good responses will be on reminding of duty. Traditionally the wearing of the kesh, kangha, kirpan, kachs and kara goes back to the founding of the khalsa when all Sikh males were given name Singh 'lion-hearted'. Symbolism will remind them of the qualities required of their duty to the Khalsa e.g. long hair - symbol of devotion; comb - discipline ;sword to fight for justice; shorts for moral purity or readiness for action; bracelet - unity with God and with Khalsa; eternity. Wearing the five Ks encourages unity and sense of identity etc.

(c) 'Going through an initiation ceremony does not make a person more religious.'

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

Good responses are likely to debate motives.

- 3 (a) **Describe a Sikh funeral ceremony.** [8]

Cremation, though burial not considered wrong; washed, clothed with 5 Ks; fire lit by close relative; sohilla sung; ardas said at end; ashes in river; no impressive tombs.

- (b) **How might belief in rebirth affect the life of a Sikh?** [7]

Some credit for showing understanding of belief in reincarnation -it may be more appropriate to cross credit to (a) but good responses will probably concentrate on the effects of this belief on moral behaviour e.g. towards other people and towards all forms of life.

- (c) **'Religious people should not be afraid of dying.'**

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

Good discussion should have a thoughtful religious dimension.

- 4 (a) **Describe how Guru Nanak Dev Ji started Sikhism.** [8]

Description of how Guru Nanak Dev Ji started Sikhism and special features of his message e.g. weary of the trouble in fifteenth-century Punjab between Hindus and Muslims; himself a Hindu of Kshatriya caste but influenced by Kabir who tried to reform Hinduism with some Muslim ideas. Nanak had call at river when disappeared for three days; had been to God's court. Put revelations to music; went on four great journeys. Finally settled in Kartarpur where he established a Sikh community. Believed there is One God - ik onkar - who is worshipped by all faiths; no idolatry - God is worshipped in heart - ritual ceremonies and images not needed - praise of God and doing God's will are the best worship. All people equal; no castes. Still believed in transmigration of souls and law of karma rather than Last Judgement.

- (b) **Explain how Sikhs might show respect for the teachings of the Gurus in their daily lives.** [7]

Credit practical signs of respect such as reading about their example but good responses are likely to identify some key Sikh concepts such as the importance of doing God's will in order to live in harmony and peace with self and others and some applications of teachings of specific gurus about e.g. equality.

- (c) **'All the Gurus are equally important.'**

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

Good candidates, though considering reasons for other points of view, are likely to show understanding that the quotation is supposed to be true as far as Sikhism is concerned and may explain why. They are likely to base arguments on earlier parts of this structured question, implicitly or explicitly.

