

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

GCSE Religious Studies (5RS07)
Paper 01 Religion and life based
on a study of Sikhism

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GCSE Religious Studies 5RS07/01

Religion and life based on a study of Sikhism

The unit continues to attract a large number of entries from candidates not of a Sikh background. Candidates are advised to carefully study the glossary to learn the precise meanings of terms such as 'euthanasia' and 'civil partnership'. Generally, candidates found it hard to secure full marks for part (b) questions. They must look at the demands of the question and focus only on two reasons to support their views. They should explain each of these reasons in depth, perhaps by offering an example, supporting quotation or fact.

Section 1

This section was generally well answered, though some candidates did not explain the problem of evil and suffering as clearly as they could have in question 1(c) and some began to offer responses to the problem. A clear explanation of the inconsistent triad is a good basis for answering questions in relation to the problem of evil and suffering. There were good explanations of the design and cosmological arguments in relation to question 1(b). A variety of media programming was addressed in response to question 2(c).

Section 2

Questions 3 and 4 were equally popular. Both part (b) questions were well answered as was question 3(c) on the reasons why non-religious people might believe in life after death. In question 4(c) candidates needed to explain the reasons why Sikhs might accept abortion in some circumstances rather than listing them. It is important to read the question carefully as some candidates were explaining why abortion is always wrong. In question 4(d) some candidates seemed to think that resurrection was not a form of belief in life after death.

Section 3

5(b) was usually answered well. Candidates either discussed pre-marital sex or adultery but sometimes ignored the fact that both of those are a kind of sex outside marriage. Moreover, question 5(c) sometimes involved a list of situations in which divorce might be acceptable rather than an explanation why it would be acceptable to some in those circumstances. There was a range of interesting responses regarding a possible link between a 'religious' family and a 'happy' family. Question 6(b) was answered well as candidates focused on the role of the gurdwara in bringing up children and there were good answers to question 6(c) on the importance of marriage.

Section 4

Question 7(c) on community cohesion often involved an elaboration of one or two points, and only rarely a discussion of the range of reasons why the government might support it. In 8(c) and 8(d) in particular candidates often offered personal and anecdotal reasons in response to the questions on different attitudes towards people of other faiths and current gender relations in the UK.

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