
HINDUISM

2055/02

Paper 2

October/November 2018

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 100

Published

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge International will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

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This document consists of **17** printed pages.

Generic Marking Principles

These general marking principles must be applied by all examiners when marking candidate answers. They should be applied alongside the specific content of the mark scheme or generic level descriptors for a question. Each question paper and mark scheme will also comply with these marking principles.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:

Marks must be awarded in line with:

- the specific content of the mark scheme or the generic level descriptors for the question
- the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the generic level descriptors for the question
- the standard of response required by a candidate as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:

Marks awarded are always **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

- marks are awarded for correct/valid answers, as defined in the mark scheme. However, credit is given for valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme, referring to your Team Leader as appropriate
- marks are awarded when candidates clearly demonstrate what they know and can do
- marks are not deducted for errors
- marks are not deducted for omissions
- answers should only be judged on the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar when these features are specifically assessed by the question as indicated by the mark scheme. The meaning, however, should be unambiguous.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:

Rules must be applied consistently e.g. in situations where candidates have not followed instructions or in the application of generic level descriptors.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:

Marks should be awarded using the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme for the question (however; the use of the full mark range may be limited according to the quality of the candidate responses seen).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:

Marks awarded are based solely on the requirements as defined in the mark scheme. Marks should not be awarded with grade thresholds or grade descriptors in mind.

Marking instructions**General principles**

- You are urged to use the full range of marks, bearing in mind that it is not necessary for a response to be 'perfect' to get the top marks.
- If the response is as good as might reasonably be expected from an O Level student who has studied this syllabus then it should be rewarded appropriately.
- Adopt a positive approach: award marks based on what the candidate can do, rather than deducting marks for errors. Accept any recognisable spelling of names and terms.

Part (a) and (b) Questions (Assessment Objective 1)

Depending on the format of the question marks are to be awarded:

Either: 1 mark for each valid response.

Or: for a combination of valid points, examples and development.

Part (c) and (d) Questions (Assessment Objectives 1 and 2)

Examiners should adopt a 'best-fit' approach. The Examiner must select the set of descriptors provided in the Mark Grid that most closely describes the quality of the work being marked. As the Examiner works upwards through the Marking Bands, s/he will eventually arrive at a set of descriptors that fits the candidate's performance. When s/he reaches this point, the Examiner should always then check the descriptors in the band above to confirm whether or not there is just enough evidence to award a mark in the higher band.

To select the most appropriate mark within each set of descriptors, Examiners should use the following guidance:

- If most of the descriptors fit the response, the Examiner will award the top mark in the band.
- If there is just enough evidence (and the Examiner had perhaps been considering the band below), then the lowest mark in the band will be awarded.

Marking Bands and Descriptors**Table A Part (c) Questions** (Assessment Objective 1)

Levels	Descriptions	Marks
3	<p>A good attempt to answer the question, demonstrating some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a good range of relevant information • a high level of detail and development in relation to the question • a fairly comprehensive account of the breadth and/or depth of the issues. 	5
2	<p>A competent attempt to answer the question, demonstrating some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a range of relevant information • some detail or development in relation to the question • might be purely descriptive and/or fail to fully address the question. 	3–4
1	<p>A weak attempt to answer the question, demonstrating some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a small amount of relevant information • points might be lacking in detail or development in relation to the question • might deal with the general topic rather than addressing the question. 	1–2
0	No creditable response	0

Table B Part (d) Questions (Assessment Objective 2)

Levels	Descriptions	Marks
4	<p>A good attempt to answer the question, demonstrating some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good use of relevant evidence/experience demonstrating understanding of the significance of issues raised • a variety of viewpoints explored with reasoned argument and discussion • a good evaluation of the arguments raised showing an awareness of the issues involved • critical engagement with the question throughout the response. 	9–10
3	<p>A competent response to the question, demonstrating some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate use of relevant evidence/experience, clearly related to the question • different viewpoints offered, with some development and discussion • attempts an evaluation of different arguments • addresses the issues raised by the question. 	6–8
2	<p>A limited response to the question, demonstrating some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some use of evidence/experience but response may contain inaccuracies, misunderstanding or irrelevance. Connection between evidence and question might be implied rather than explicit • different views might be offered but with little or no development • some unsupported argument or underdeveloped discussion • some engagement with the question. 	3–5
1	<p>A weak attempt to answer the question, demonstrating some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little or no evidence or supporting religious knowledge • a single viewpoint might be stated with little or no support • no critical engagement with the question or views regarding it • response might be simplistic, confused and/or very brief. 	1–2
0	No creditable response	0

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)	<p>What do the two birds described in the Mundaka Upanishad III.1 represent?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jiva or individual self/soul • Paramatman, Isvara or the Divine. <p>1 mark for each correct response</p>	2
1(b)	<p>What does the Mundaka Upanishad III teach Hindus about atman?</p> <p>Responses might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the atman, which is the bird who eats the fruit, experiences actions and the fruits of actions • That the atman can be enthralled or distracted by the material world • That the atman has similarities with Paramatman/that atman is or flows from Paramatman. <p>3 marks for any combination of valid points, development and example.</p>	3
1(c)	<p>Explain what the Mundaka Upanishad means when it says ‘In truth who knows God becomes God’.</p> <p>Responses will be marked using the AO1 marking descriptors (Table A , pg.4). Candidates may choose to cover several points or explain one or two points in more detail. Answers do not need to cover all the points below to gain full marks.</p> <p>Candidates might consider some of the following: The Upanishad as a whole explores the nature and reality of Brahman and Brahman’s relationship to the individual soul. To know Brahman is to understand that relationship, which involves being free from desire and attachment and being at one with Brahman.</p> <p>When the atman is liberated it becomes part of Brahman, ‘as rivers flowing into the ocean find their final peace . . . and their name and form disappear’ (Mundaka Upanishad III.2). Put simply this is achieved through a realisation of the ultimate truth that Brahman is/is in all things.</p>	5

Question	Answer	Marks
1(d)	<p>'The Upanishads are the best source of knowledge about Brahman.' To what extent do you agree with this view? Refer to the specified texts you have studied in your answer.</p> <p>Responses will be marked using the AO2 marking descriptors (Table B, pg.5). Candidates should present reasoned arguments to discuss differing views and are free to agree or disagree with the view. Whatever route is chosen, essays which examine different views and support the arguments with evidence from study or personal experience will be rewarded. There may be detailed consideration of a few points, or a less detailed discussion of several points.</p> <p>Candidates might consider some of the following:</p> <p>The Upanishads are generally understood to be sruti (heard/revealed) texts and so are considered authoritative by most Hindus. They are the Vedanta, the end or purpose of the Vedas, and they contain many teachings about Brahman, atman and ultimate reality. Because of their age, authority and prominence among the Hindu scriptures they could be argued to be the best source of knowledge about Brahman, and even to be the only appropriate source because of their revealed nature.</p> <p>The Upanishads have been influential in Hindu philosophy, perhaps especially in the case of the Vedantic schools. The six āstika (orthodox) schools which hold the Vedas to be authoritative would certainly agree with the statement, but other nastika (heterodox) schools would be less likely to. For example the Carvaka school is a sceptical and materialist philosophy that regards empirical knowledge and direct perception as the reliable sources of truth.</p> <p>Other sources or means of knowing Brahman, which can be compared to knowledge of the Upanishads or offered instead of that knowledge, include direct personal experience such as visions or dreams, a dedication to a different yoga – study of the Upanishads could form part of the jnana path but other yogas are also paths to liberation – reading other texts, or learning directly from a guru.</p>	10

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)	<p>Name the two yogas discussed in the Bhagavad Gita chapter III.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jnana • Karma. <p>1 mark for each correct response</p>	2
2(b)	<p>Describe one teaching from the Bhagavad Gita chapter III about desire.</p> <p>Responses might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That desire blinds the atman to truth by clouding the bodily senses, like fire is covered by smoke or a mirror by dust • That desire takes many different forms and so can never really be satisfied • That desire destroys or hinders wisdom and causes people to do wrong or evil actions. <p>3 marks for any combination of valid points, development and example</p>	3
2(c)	<p>Explain how the ‘two roads of perfection’ described in the Bhagavad Gita chapter III are different.</p> <p>Responses will be marked using the AO1 marking descriptors (Table A , pg.4). Candidates may choose to cover several points or explain one or two points in more detail. Answers do not need to cover all the points below to gain full marks.</p> <p>Candidates might consider some of the following:</p> <p>In the Bhagavad Gita III Krishna identified jnana yoga (path of wisdom) and karma yoga (path of action) as the ‘two roads of perfection’. The perfection referred to is liberation, which Krishna described as a state of freedom from the bonds of action, from attachments and from desire. Once this freedom has been achieved then the soul is liberated from rebirth within samsara.</p> <p>The two paths might be outlined individually or presented as different aspects of a single purpose. Although both ultimately achieve the same end and neither is inherently superior that end is achieved by different means. Which is more appropriate depends on the nature of the individual. Jnana yoga is a striving to overcome delusion and see things as they really are, hence becoming free of the desires and attachments which constitute maya. Karma yoga is the active performance of one’s duties within the world while remaining unattached to the consequences of those duties.</p>	5

Question	Answer	Marks
2(d)	<p>‘Bhakti is the best way to reach God.’</p> <p>To what extent do you agree with this view? Refer to the specified texts you have studied in your answer.</p> <p>Responses will be marked using the AO2 marking descriptors (Table B, pg.5). Candidates should present reasoned arguments to discuss differing views and are free to agree or disagree with the view. Whatever route is chosen, essays which examine different views and support the arguments with evidence from study or personal experience will be rewarded. There may be detailed consideration of a few points, or a less detailed discussion of several points.</p> <p>Candidates might consider some of the following:</p> <p>Bhakti yoga (path of devotion) is possibly the most popular form of Hinduism and one of the best known. The form and nature of bhakti means that this form of Hinduism fits well with the Christo-centric paradigm of religion upon which much of Western Religious Studies has relied. However, it is only one of the possible paths to liberation that are available for Hindus. Jnana, raja and karma yoga are among the other possibilities. Different paths are not a hierarchy; individuals should choose the path they are best suited to follow well and any path can lead to liberation.</p> <p>However, if a more personal view of God is taken, and liberation is understood in a theistic way then bhakti might be the most appealing path. The devotion to a named deity creates a relationship with the divine and allows people to communicate directly and personally with God, and this is important for many people.</p> <p>Bhakti yoga is also sometimes understood as the most accessible path for ordinary people. It is not as rigorous as other paths since it can be followed while still living within the world, being part of a family etc., while the other paths require a greater commitment and withdrawal from the world to focus on being a yogi.</p>	10

Question	Answer	Marks
3(a)(i)	<p>Name one of the four ashramas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brahmacharya • Grihastha • Vanaprastha • Sannyasa. <p>1 mark for correct response.</p>	1
3(a)(ii)	<p>What stage of life does this ashrama describe?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a student/studying with a guru • Being a Householder • Dwelling in the forest/retired life • Being a renunciate/renouncing the world. <p>1 mark for correct response.</p>	1
3(b)	<p>Describe the upanayana samskara.</p> <p>Responses might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the upanayana samskara as the sacred thread ceremony • Preparation in the form of shaving the head, ritual bathing and wearing new clothes • Ceremonial elements including performing homa, receiving personal mantras, making vows, and the investiture of the sacred thread itself. <p>3 marks for any combination of valid points, development and example</p>	3
3(c)	<p>Explain how dharma is related to the other purusharthas.</p> <p>Responses will be marked using the AO1 marking descriptors (Table A , pg.4). Candidates may choose to cover several points or explain one or two points in more detail. Answers do not need to cover all the points below to gain full marks.</p> <p>Candidates might consider some of the following:</p> <p>Dharma is an important part of all aspects of Hindu life, including pursuit of the other aims of life. To act within dharma is to act in accord with rta and this involves both religious and moral duties as well as social behaviours. If dharma is ignored then chaos is created. When other aims are felt to be in conflict it is dharma which should be heeded.</p> <p>Dharma is one of the four aims of human life (purusharthas), and all are important. But it is dharma which prevents artha and kama becoming uncontrollable. If these two aims are pursued in accordance with dharma they are a matter only for those in the grihastha ashrama and then only in moderation. If dharma is ignored they may become preoccupations for people in all stages of life with severe social disruptions as a consequence. Moksha is generally regarded as the ultimate aim, but it would be hard to achieve moksha if dharma were wholly disregarded or forgotten about.</p>	5

Question	Answer	Marks
3(d)	<p data-bbox="316 241 1145 280">‘Ashrama is not important for Hindus in the modern world.’</p> <p data-bbox="316 313 1268 378">To what extent do you agree? Refer in your answer to your study of ashrama.</p> <p data-bbox="316 414 1332 647">Responses will be marked using the AO2 marking descriptors (Table B, pg.5). Candidates should present reasoned arguments to discuss differing views and are free to agree or disagree with the view. Whatever route is chosen, essays which examine different views and support the arguments with evidence from study or personal experience will be rewarded. There may be detailed consideration of a few points, or a less detailed discussion of several points.</p> <p data-bbox="316 683 960 719">Candidates might consider some of the following:</p> <p data-bbox="316 752 1332 952">Ashrama, together with varna and the purusharthas, is often understood as one of the basic foundational principles of Hindu living. These things in combination offer a guide on how to live and what responsibilities one has to oneself, the family and wider society at any point in life. That being the case it could be argued that ashrama is as important a concept as it has always been, regardless of other changes in the world.</p> <p data-bbox="316 987 1295 1220">However, society is very different in structure and expectations than it was when these concepts originated. It could be argued that it is no longer possible to follow all four ashramas in the ways it used to be, because of financial difficulties, increasing urbanisation and changed priorities. They might still be considered an ideal though, even by people who cannot or do not intend to pass through all four themselves. Holy people are still greatly respected by modern Hindus.</p> <p data-bbox="316 1256 1311 1422">Many Hindus believe the current era to be the Kali yuga, and therefore it is natural that traditional values are eroded and things which used to be important are disregarded. It is part of a greater cycle. From this perspective the actual or ultimate importance of ashrama is unchanged but it goes unrecognised by many people.</p>	10

Question	Answer	Marks
4(a)	<p>Name any two of the four varnas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brahmin • Kshatriya • Vaishya • Shudra. <p>1 mark for each correct response.</p>	2
4(b)	<p>Describe the role of the samskaras in Hindu life.</p> <p>Responses might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ceremonies as rites of passage, marking an individual's progress through the stages of life • As a sign of a person's membership of the wider community and their commitment to doing their duty within it • Ritually preparing an individual and reminding them of the qualities necessary for the next stage in their life • Fulfilment of dharma. <p>3 marks for any combination of valid points, development and example</p>	3
4(c)	<p>Explain how the varnas have affected modern Hindu society.</p> <p>Responses will be marked using the AO1 marking descriptors (Table A , pg.4). Candidates may choose to cover several points or explain one or two points in more detail. Answers do not need to cover all the points below to gain full marks.</p> <p>Candidates might consider some of the following:</p> <p>The four varnas – Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra – are generally understood to have Vedic origins via the Purusha Sukta. Together they create a model for an ideal society in which all necessary functions are carried out by those best suited to do them. However, the more complex jati system, in which social status and occupation may be deemed to be fixed at birth, has become mixed up with the concept of varna over the years.</p> <p>Being within a particular varna affects individual dharma, social responsibilities and religious duties. Not every varna involves progression through the ashramas. These things might seem more important to individuals than society but the duties of each varna towards their fellow Hindus and the varnas roles in society may have wider impact. It is also possible to argue that varna no longer makes any practical impact on Hindu society because of secular government and equality laws.</p> <p>Varna has different significance when set against different cultural backgrounds or within different societies.</p>	5

Question	Answer	Marks
4(d)	<p>‘Antyeshti is the most important of the samskaras.’</p> <p>To what extent do you agree? Refer in your answer to your study of antyeshti and the samskaras.</p> <p>Responses will be marked using the AO2 marking descriptors (Table B, pg.5). Candidates should present reasoned arguments to discuss differing views and are free to agree or disagree with the view. Whatever route is chosen, essays which examine different views and support the arguments with evidence from study or personal experience will be rewarded. There may be detailed consideration of a few points, or a less detailed discussion of several points.</p> <p>Candidates might consider some of the following:</p> <p>There are many different samskaras, and not all of them apply in every Hindu life. But as the funeral rites it is likely every Hindu will go through antyeshti. While some rites are prohibited or restricted by caste and or gender the antyeshti might take different forms, but it is not denied on those grounds.</p> <p>Underlying the rites of the antyeshti is the core Hindu belief in rebirth and the existence of the atman. The rituals contribute to returning the body, which is no longer needed, to the material world it was made from and releasing the atman to be either reborn or to return to Brahman. In this sense they must be among the most important rites as they open the way to liberation, the ultimate aim.</p> <p>However, funerals and contact with the dead might be considered ritually polluting for the living. The rites benefit the dead person, and might be the most important samskara for them, but the living might feel differently. The importance of grief is recognised, but to be too attached to the transient world is a barrier to achieving liberation oneself and so there should also be a willingness to let the dead go.</p> <p>A case could also be made for the practical importance of funeral rites, alongside any symbolic or spiritual importance they have. Dead bodies cannot simply be forgotten about or left alone because of the risk to the health of others; by contrast other rites of passage lack urgency and so are less important.</p>	10

Question	Answer	Marks
5(a)	<p>Name two people who taught Ramakrishna Paramahansa.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Totapuri • Bhairavi Brahmani. <p>1 mark for each correct response.</p>	2
5(b)	<p>Describe Ramakrishna's first vision of Kali.</p> <p>Responses might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That it followed period of increasing desperation to have such a vision • That he felt it would be better to die than be separated from the goddess any longer, and the vision occurred as he was preparing to kill himself • That he felt his surroundings disappear and was engulfed in bliss and the presence of the divine • That he saw the 'infinite Ocean of Consciousness' surrounding and enveloping him. <p>3 marks for any combination of valid points, development and example</p>	3
5(c)	<p>Explain how Ramakrishna influenced the life of Swami Vivekananda.</p> <p>Responses will be marked using the AO1 marking descriptors (Table A, pg.4). Candidates may choose to cover several points or explain one or two points in more detail. Answers do not need to cover all the points below to gain full marks.</p> <p>Candidates might consider some of the following:</p> <p>Although when Vivekananda (then called Narendranath) first met Ramakrishna he did not wish to become his disciple he is often described today as Ramakrishna's most important follower because of his influence on views of Hinduism both within India and in the rest of the world. Vivekananda interpreted Ramakrishna's teaching that all religions are aspects of a single truth as a form of Advaita Vedanta (Neo-vedanta) which posited this form of Hinduism as a world religion based on ethical principles that were universally true and valid.</p> <p>The importance of Ramakrishna to Vivekananda can be seen in his decision not to seek another guru after Ramakrishna's death, emphasised by his dream the night prior to initiation by Pavhari Baba. The Ramakrishna Mission, founded by Vivekananda but named after his guru, also speaks of commitment and connection to Ramakrishna.</p>	5

Question	Answer	Marks
5(d)	<p>‘Ramakrishna was not interested in social reforms.’</p> <p>To what extent do you agree? Refer in your answer to your study of Indian reformers.</p> <p>Responses will be marked using the AO2 marking descriptors (Table B, pg.5). Candidates should present reasoned arguments to discuss differing views and are free to agree or disagree with the view. Whatever route is chosen, essays which examine different views and support the arguments with evidence from study or personal experience will be rewarded. There may be detailed consideration of a few points, or a less detailed discussion of several points.</p> <p>Candidates might consider some of the following:</p> <p>Ramakrishna was a mystic, whose entire life was devoted to being conscious of God. He was a devotee of Kali but his spiritual practices were drawn from different religious sources. He taught that all religions are revelations of God, giving pictures of the same truth taken from different perspectives. Looked at this way it could certainly be argued that he was not interested in social reform but in spiritual truth.</p> <p>However Ramakrishna believed that God is immanent in all living beings, and a consequence of this belief is the teaching to serve each living being as one serves God. This is a powerful statement with implications for social justice and people’s treatment of one another, and certainly demonstrates that Ramakrishna cared about others. He rejected distinctions of caste and believed the divine was accessible for everyone.</p> <p>While he did not work for social reform in the ways that his disciple Vivekananda and others did, he was concerned about the enslavement of working people to the clock and to productivity, seeing it as a block to spirituality and he presented his religious teachings as a source of spiritual solace. This could be seen as a social reform in that he was seeking to improve life for ordinary people.</p>	10

Question	Answer	Marks
6(a)(i)	<p>What is meant by the term ‘Brahmo Samaj’?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society/congregation of Brahman. <p>1 mark for correct response.</p>	1
6(a)(ii)	<p>Name the founder of the Brahmo Samaj.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ram Mohan Roy. <p>1 mark for correct response.</p>	1
6(b)	<p>Describe one of the social issues the Brahmo Samaj worked to change.</p> <p>Responses might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sati or widow burning, where the widow of deceased man burned to death on his funeral pyre • Murti puja and ritual worship in the temple; the commercial nature and/or mechanistic nature of much temple worship • Caste discrimination and inequality in terms of access to education and religious worship. <p>3 marks for any combination of valid points, development and example</p>	3
6(c)	<p>Explain why the Brahmo Samaj rejected many traditional Hindu practices.</p> <p>Responses will be marked using the AO1 marking descriptors (Table A, pg.4). Candidates may choose to cover several points or explain one or two points in more detail. Answers do not need to cover all the points below to gain full marks.</p> <p>Candidates might consider some of the following:</p> <p>The founder of the Brahmo Samaj, Ram Mohan Roy, saw many traditional practices associated with Hinduism as innovations that were not based on the Vedas or as corruptions of things that were. He taught that true Hinduism was monotheistic and ethical in nature. He saw murti puja and many temple rituals as idolatry and/or superstition and these were some of the things the Brahmo Samaj sought to remove.</p> <p>Other practices were related to these, or resulted from a society that had lost sight of its true ethical roots. These included sati, polygyny and child marriage. Caste discrimination was viewed as problematic because it prevented fair access to education and other social structures and so divided rather than united Hindus.</p>	5

Question	Answer	Marks
6(d)	<p>‘The Brahma Samaj has had a lasting influence on Hinduism.’</p> <p>To what extent do you agree? Refer in your answer to your study of Indian reformers.</p> <p>Responses will be marked using the AO2 marking descriptors (Table B, pg.5). Candidates should present reasoned arguments to discuss differing views and are free to agree or disagree with the view. Whatever route is chosen, essays which examine different views and support the arguments with evidence from study or personal experience will be rewarded. There may be detailed consideration of a few points, or a less detailed discussion of several points.</p> <p>Candidates might consider some of the following:</p> <p>In terms of its aims for social reform the Brahma Samaj certainly influenced the shaping of modern India. The current Indian constitution seeks to remove traditional injustices based on caste and gender, and practices like sati and infant marriage are illegal in modern India. The Brahma Samaj has clearly influenced secular law and society in India and therefore influences Hinduism in so far as the law impacts on the practice of religion.</p> <p>However its impact on the religion itself is less clear. Brahmos are treated the same as Hindus within the law but there have been a variety of legal cases seeking to establish whether it is in fact a distinct religion. If it is, then its influence on Hinduism is arguably less than if it is regarded as a part of the larger whole. Certainly Brahmos have some beliefs that are not in accord with most forms of Hinduism, and so their influence seems small – for example they oppose idol worship but murti puja remains a common form of Hindu worship.</p> <p>The Brahma Samaj does still exist today, although at a greatly reduced size from its heights and few people describe themselves as Brahmos in preference to the term Hindus. It is generally presented as a social reform movement but it raised questions about the ‘true’ nature of Hinduism that were taken up by other groups and are still of interest today.</p> <p>It could be argued that the Brahma Samaj has had a lasting impact in social areas, but less so in religious ones, or the influence of the movement could be used to consider the difficulty in drawing such an absolute distinction.</p>	10