

HUL 375: The Sociology of Religion  
Major exam: May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
Maximum Marks: 30

- Please read all questions carefully before starting your answer

**Q1 Write a short answer (up to 1 side of the answer book) on the following:**

- a. What are 'rites of passage'? Using an example of your choice discuss the three stages involved. 5
- b. Do you agree that pilgrimage can lead to both social and spiritual transformation? Explain your position by taking examples from the travel experience of Rajasthani pilgrims in the 'Hindu *darshan* bus tour'. 10

**Q2 Write an essay (up to 2 sides of the answer book) on ONE of the following:**

- a. In the article, 'The Politics of Religious Conversions in Jharkhand', Ram Singh Kujur's wife Shashikala Rajini commented 'that they are so poor that the only thing they have left to sell is their *pehchaan*, identity. She was grateful that there are still buyers for that.' 15

Who are these buyers and what are they purchasing? Under what circumstances does identity become a marketable commodity? Explain this statement in the context of the politics of religious conversion in India today.

- b. What do you understand by 'communitas'? What is its relationship to social structure and the possibility of societal change? Which festival celebrated in India best approximates the feeling of 'communitas' as defined by Victor Turner?

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