

Cambridge International AS & A Level

HINDUISM**9487/01**

Paper 1 Concepts in Hinduism

May/June 2025**MARK SCHEME**Maximum Mark: 60

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 **20** 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 descriptions 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.

Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
N/A	Highlighting areas of text
N/A	Allows comments to be entered in speech bubbles on the candidate response.
N/A	Allows comments to be entered at the bottom of the RM marking window and then displayed when the associated question item is navigated to.
L1	Level one
L2	Level two
L3	Level three
L4	Level four
L5	Level five
SEEN	Indicates that the point has been noted, but no credit has been given.
EVAL	Evaluation

Generic marking grids

These level descriptors address Assessment Objectives (AOs) 1 and 2 and should be used in conjunction with the indicative content for each question in the mark scheme.

Assessment Objectives**AO1: Knowledge and understanding**

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the specified topics and texts

AO2: Analysis and evaluation

Analyse and evaluate the specified topics and texts

Generic marking principles

- 1 Examiners should start at the lowest descriptor, if the answer meets all the criteria they should then move to the next level and so on. The Examiner should repeat this process until there is a match between the overall answer and the descriptor. Examiners should use a best-fit approach when deciding upon the level, it is possible for a different level to be chosen for each AO.
- 2 If the Examiner identifies all aspects of the level descriptor within the answer, then the highest mark for the level should be given. Examiners should also make reference to the indicative content when deciding on the mark within a level to ensure that there is sufficient relevant content evident within the answer for the level and mark. Examiners should be prepared to credit material in answers which is not contained in the indicative content.
- 3 The Examiner may need to make a judgement within a level or between two or more level statements. Once a 'best-fit' level statement has been identified, use the following guidance to decide on a specific mark:
 - Where the candidate's work **convincingly** meets the level statement, you should award the highest mark.
 - Where the candidate's work **adequately** meets the level statement, you should award the most appropriate mark in the middle of the range.
 - Where the candidate's work **just** meets the level statement, you should award the lowest mark.

5 mark questions

Level	AO1 Knowledge and understanding	Marks
Level 3	Accurate knowledge with good understanding • Uses a range of detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through a well-developed response. • Fully addresses the question. • Good understanding of the wider context, if relevant.	5
Level 2	Partially accurate knowledge with limited understanding • Uses a range of knowledge which may be partially accurate. • Demonstrates limited understanding through a partially developed response. • Addresses some aspects of the question. • Attempts to engage with the wider context, if relevant.	3–4
Level 1	Basic knowledge and basic understanding • Identifies a limited range of knowledge which may not be accurate. • Demonstrates basic understanding through a limited response. • Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question. • Little or no reference to the wider context, if relevant.	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

10 mark questions

Level	AO1 Knowledge and understanding	Marks
Level 4	Accurate knowledge with good understanding • Uses a range of detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through a well-developed response. • Fully addresses the question. • Good understanding of the wider context, if relevant.	9–10
Level 3	Mostly accurate knowledge with some understanding • Uses a range of mostly accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through a developed response. • Addresses most aspects of the question. • Some engagement with the wider context, if relevant.	6–8
Level 2	Partially accurate knowledge with limited understanding • Uses a range of knowledge which may be partially accurate. • Demonstrates limited understanding through a partially developed response. • Addresses some aspects of the question. • Attempts to engage with the wider context, if relevant.	3–5
Level 1	Basic knowledge and basic understanding • Identifies a limited range of knowledge which may not be accurate. • Demonstrates basic understanding through a limited response. • Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question. • Little or no reference to the wider context, if relevant.	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

15 mark questions

Level	AO2 Analysis and evaluation	Marks
Level 5	Thorough discussion supported with evidence - Analyses the importance and/or strength of different arguments/points of view. - Uses accurate evidence to support a well-structured discussion. - Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view and assesses alternative conclusions.	13–15
Level 4	Coherent discussion supported with evidence - Discusses different arguments/points of view in some detail. - Uses accurate evidence to support a structured discussion. - Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view.	10–12
Level 3	Clear discussion with some support - Recognises different arguments/points of view and discusses at least one in some detail. - Uses some evidence to support discussion. - Clear conclusion to the question which is linked to a range of knowledge and points of view.	7–9
Level 2	Attempts a discussion with limited support - Outlines one or more argument/point of view. - Uses supporting evidence for one or more relevant point. The support may not be wholly relevant or accurate. - Attempts a conclusion to the question which is linked to knowledge and/or a point of view.	4–6
Level 1	Basic response with a point of view - States a point of view. - Little or no supporting evidence. - May attempt a basic conclusion, which may not directly address the question.	1–3
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

Question	Answer	Marks
EITHER		
1(a)	'Dharma was declared by Brahman for the advancement and growth of all creatures. Therefore, that which leads to advancement and growth is righteousness. Righteousness was declared for restraining creatures from injuring one another. Therefore, that is righteousness which prevents injury. Dharma is so called because it upholds all creatures; in fact, all creatures are upheld by righteousness. Therefore, that is righteousness which is capable of upholding all creatures.' Summarise what the above passage says about the concept of dharma. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 5 mark level descriptors (AO1). Candidates might refer to some of the following: Dharma was established/set in place by Brahman and its purpose is to enable all creatures to develop, grow and move forward; this means that anything which leads to those outcomes is righteous in nature. Righteousness as a concept was established to prevent creatures from hurting or harming one another, so anything which prevents harm is righteous in nature. Dharma supports all things, and righteousness supports all things; anything which is able to give such support is righteous in nature. The passage implies that dharma can be translated as righteousness.	5

Question	Answer	Marks
1(b)	Explain the role of dharma in shaping society. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 10 mark level descriptors (AO1). Candidates might refer to some of the following: Dharma is a central concept in Hinduism, describing religious and moral laws and principles. The complexity of the concept is evident in the range of possible English translations for the term, with the best choice being dependent on the context in which dharma is being discussed. In relation to society dharma might be understood as including ideas about order, law, and appropriate behaviour. A dharmic society is thus an ordered and peaceful one, in which everyone knows their place and the duties that come with it. Varnashramadharma is the aspect of dharma most commonly associated with the workings of society. It describes an organised division of society into various varnas (classes) and the people within them into various ashramas (life stages), each of which has its own specific dharma. The varnas structure society overall into four broad groups: brahmins (priests) with the responsibility for the religious elements of society; kshatriyas (warriors) who are both the defenders of society and its leaders; vaishyas (merchants) who are responsible for trade and commerce; and sudras (service providers) who provide the services necessary to support the other varnas and keep everything working smoothly. The dharma of each ashrama does not necessarily apply to the wider society so clearly but it is part of the overall system. While grihastha dharma includes being economically active, raising children, and fulfilling religious duties that support other ashramas as well as contributing to an orderly world on a cosmic scale; this is the ashrama most obviously involved in shaping society. However, without the brahmacharya (student) ashrama fulfilling its dharma properly the whole system would eventually collapse because no one would know what their dharma was while the vanaprastha ashrama are the teachers of the brahmacharya. Similarly, sthri dharma describes the role of women in an ideal society. Generally an individual's dharma changes throughout their life, depending on their ashrama, but each contributes to the whole of a dharmic society. Sadharana Dharma also contributes to shaping society. It describes ethical values, which are considered universal and unchanging. It includes ideas such as honesty, truthfulness, non-violence, duty to parents, teachers and gods, and hospitality. All values which, if practised by the majority, will contribute to a harmonious and peaceful society.	10

Question	Answer	Marks
1(c)	Evaluate the claim that traditional sthri dharma is no longer relevant to Hindu women in the modern world. AO2 – Analysis and evaluation. Responses will be marked according to the 15 mark level descriptors (AO2). Candidates might refer to some of the following: Sthri dharma is the dharma that is specific to women. Traditionally varnashramadharma applied only to men and the concept of sthri dharma developed to address the roles and duties of women in society. The concept is therefore rooted in a belief in essential differences between men and women that can and should determine what is appropriate behaviour for each. For many people in the modern world these are not justifiable assumptions, largely because they have resulted in women having fewer choices and freedoms than men. This could lead to a rejection of the entire concept of a specific dharma for women or it could be argued that the traditional associations with the idea should be set aside but that the concept itself remains relevant. Sthri dharma is explained in detail in the Manusmriti, although there is no single definitive source. In general, the dharma of women is understood in relation to the men in their lives: women can be daughters, wives or mothers. Modesty and obedience are traditionally considered virtuous, and a wife is expected to be devoted to her husband to the extent of treating him as though he were an ishvara or personal deity. According to the Manusmriti women should not travel, nor should they seek education or study scriptures. Their role was entirely based in the home, where they would be responsible for running the household and raising children. Having children, in particular sons, is an important part of traditional sthri dharma. Wives were also responsible for maintaining the religious life of the family, maintaining the household shrine, making offerings to the deities and carrying out the daily puja. Since much of this is derived from tradition and interpretation of ambiguous texts it might be challenged on the basis that both of these things are affected by social and cultural contexts and should therefore change as those contexts change. There are other concepts that connect the idea of women and nurture, including an association with the Ganges and India itself, and motherhood. There are also examples of goddesses such as Sita and Draupadi who might be considered as exemplifying or challenging ideas of sthri dharma. There is a degree to which women have always challenged these norms, often by defying cultural expectations in order to become a sanyasi or leaving their homes to dedicate themselves wholly to the worship of an ishvara. Either path would lead a woman away from traditional household responsibilities and there is no religious prohibition on women taking them. In fact, in the Bhagavata Purana Krishna explains that love for him frees women from mundane obligations.	15

Question	Answer	Marks
1(c)	There have also been bhakta poets who were so consumed by love for Krishna or Vishnu that they did not feel themselves to have any earthly attachments. However, it is also the case that the female sage Maitreyi, who appears in the Vedas, was also a married woman which could be said to imply that some traditional expectations cannot be easily set aside or that being conventional in some respects enables challenging tradition in others. Hindu women living in modern India may have had more access to education than in previous centuries and this might affect their views on traditional sthri dharma since they may be more aware of historical inequalities. However, they might also hold the view that contemporary values are not incompatible with the traditional duties of a wife and mother, or that those traditional roles are more important than ever in a complex and fast-moving world. Knowing about the different opportunities available to women in the contemporary world might lead women to see the demands of sthri dharma as restrictive, unfair and outdated but it could also be argued that the concept of sthri dharma offers a way of ascribing value to the work that women do within the home and family. This would make sthri dharma potentially a tool for achieving greater equality, however using the concept in this way would require rejecting or reinterpreting a lot of traditional understanding and the challenges of this might lead some to conclude it is more useful to reject the concept as irrelevant today.	

Question	Answer	Marks
OR		
2(a)	Describe how dharma is connected to the other purusharthas. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 5 mark level descriptors (AO1). Candidates might refer to some of the following: The four purusharthas are dharma, artha, kama and moksha. Moksha is the ultimate or end goal to which all the others contribute; it is dharma that determines how a life should be lived in order to attain moksha. Artha and kama are appropriate only during the grihastha ashrama, and this is because of the dharma of that ashrama. Dharma also requires that they are pursued in moderation, otherwise they become adharmas. Dharma determines the way in which the other purusharthas are pursued during a lifetime.	5

Question	Answer	Marks
2(b)	Explain why the concept of varnashramadharma might be considered important for understanding Hinduism. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 10 mark level descriptors (AO1). Candidates might refer to some of the following: Varnashramadharma is a compound word, bringing together the concepts of varna, ashrama and dharma. It encapsulates the idea of dharma that arises from an individual's varna (class) and ashrama (stage of life). A person who knows both of these things should also then know what duties and responsibilities it carries, both with regard to their family and to wider society. It is therefore an important part of a person's svadharma (personal dharma) and in fact it is sometimes used as a synonym for svadharma, suggesting that it offers a complete understanding of how a person should live their life. Varnashramadharma is sometimes presented as if it is universal to all forms of Hinduism, but this is not the case; it is more commonly associated with Vaishnavism than Shaivism. The inclusion of both social and personal dharma in the overall concept suggests both that it is intended to inform the entire life of a person and also that it provides a framework for an ideal Hindu society. While it is unclear if the system was ever practised perfectly, and the concept of varna in particular is controversial in the contemporary world, the concepts themselves are nonetheless useful in that they demonstrate how the individual person and the needs of society should interact in a dharmic world. Dharma is certainly the central concept of Hinduism, used by some as a preferable name for the religion as a whole. It encompasses ideas of morality, duty, righteousness, order, law and teaching and therefore understanding dharma means understanding how to live as a good Hindu. Svadharma is not solely based on varna and ashrama, nor are those two concepts universally important in all forms of Hinduism but they are widespread and influential and the Dharmashastras commonly consider social and religious duties in relation to them rather than in isolation. It is possible for specific aspects of varnashramadharma to come into conflict, as when Rama's duties as a husband (his ashrama dharma) clashed with his duties as a king (his varna dharma) but for most Hindus this is unlikely to occur. In addition, if the ideas of varna and ashrama were not important the story of Rama would be a very different one.	10

Question	Answer	Marks
2(c)	‘Dharma and rita mean the same.’ Discuss. AO2 – Analysis and evaluation. Responses will be marked according to the 15 mark level descriptors (AO2). Candidates might refer to some of the following: The term rita is found in the Samhitas, which are the earliest category of the Vedic texts. In them rita is presented as a cosmic principle of balance, order and harmony. The term can be translated as order, law or truth, all in a cosmic or ultimate sense and, as such, rita can be understood as the fundamental principle that structures the universe. This encompasses natural law and the order inherent in the progression of the seasons, the movement of the stars and so on. It also includes order in a more abstract, moral sense. This order is maintained through the actions of both human beings and gods. In the Vedas these necessary actions are specific rituals carried out by priests, as ritual experts, often on behalf of householders. The concept was developed in the Upanishads, and it is arguably through the philosophical reflections in these Vedic texts that it came to be subsumed into the concept of dharma. The two terms are of comparable age, with dharma being used throughout the Rig Veda Samhitas. In this context it is used to describe the necessary rituals, actions and laws that will maintain rita, while rita itself refers to the order or nature of things that it is necessary to preserve. In contemporary Hinduism rita largely retains this meaning, while dharma has expanded to include ideas of morality and virtue as well as ritual duties. It is generally agreed in Hindu philosophy that desirable qualities like justice, social harmony, and happiness are gained when people live according to dharma. This could be argued as a distinction between the two concepts as rita is associated with things happening on a cosmic scale rather than a human one. The Sanskrit roots of the two terms are very different: dharma coming from dhr which means to hold or support and rita coming from rta, meaning truth or rightness. Nevertheless dharma now shares with rita the possible English translations of order, law or truth (although it can also be translated in other ways). It encapsulates the application of these principles in the abstract, as rita does, but it also expands them to include the role and responsibility of the individual in maintaining them through the way that they live. It might therefore be argued that the concepts are linked, and have always been so, but remain distinct with one emphasising the cosmic and the other the personal. Alternatively, it could be argued that rita is a way of referring to one specific element of the complex whole, which is dharma. However, most understandings of dharma include the idea that it is dharma that upholds the universe. For example, this idea is found in the concept of the Mahayuga, where the decrease in dharma drives the cycle of creation and destruction and it is the maintainer deity Vishnu who is also the deity most closely tied to dharma, incarnating as avatars to preserve it. In these ways dharma is used effectively as a synonym for rita, describing the underlying order of the universe rather than the actions of those living within it. However, Varuna is the lord of rita in the Vedas, which could be said to imply a distinction between the two concepts.	15

Question	Answer	Marks
EITHER		
3(a)	Describe the raja marga. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 5 mark level descriptors (AO1). Candidates might refer to some of the following: Raja marga literally means the royal road or path. Also known as raja yoga, it is one of the possible paths towards liberation. It is strongly associated with Patanjali's ashtanga yoga, so much so that the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably. The practices of the raja marga are focused on controlling the mind, which is always distracted and therefore confused about the true nature of the self. The path is sometimes described as the path of meditation. In raja yoga the aim is to attain a state of consciousness in which the self can truly know itself. This is called samadhi, in Patanjali's sutras, but also called kaivalya (isolation).	5

Question	Answer	Marks
3(b)	Compare the different demands of the jnana marga with those of the bhakti marga for an individual seeking liberation. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 10 mark level descriptors (AO1). Candidates might refer to some of the following: Marga means path or way to liberation, and as such they should be understood as a lifelong process to which the individual must be committed. The margas are also sometimes referred to as yogas, which in this context can be understood as spiritual discipline, and this carries the same implications of commitment. The demands of such a commitment will vary with the specific path according to the practices necessary to follow that path and the impact they have on how a person lives. This can be a complete renunciation of ordinary life; although this is not an expectation for every Hindu following the bhakti marga, practices of extreme austerity and renunciation are associated with this path, particularly in the context of Shaivism. The jnana marga is the way of knowledge. It is strongly associated with Advaita Vedanta, and liberation is thus attained through achieving an understanding of the self as non-different from Brahman. This is not the only possible form such knowledge might take, but detaching from the ego is a common element. There is a tradition of people on the jnana marga thinking and speaking of themselves in the third person, to emphasise that they are trying to free themselves from ego. Following the jnana marga involves contemplation and reflection on the nature of the self and reality, usually undertaken under the guidance and supervision of a guru. It also involves the study of Hindu scriptures, again guided by a guru. This might require learning to read different languages and alphabets. Jnana marga involves the possibility of becoming jivan mukti, because the necessary realisation of ultimate reality can take place at any point in a person's life. The bhakti marga is the path of love and devotion to a personal deity, or ishvara. It commonly involves practices such as murti puja, constant remembrance of the divine name (naam japa), chanting hymns (kirtan) or mantras and service offered in the deity's name. Self-surrender, offering oneself wholly to God, is at the heart of such devotion and is more important than the specific practices. As a result, bhakti marga might be seen as more accessible than other paths. It does not require specialist knowledge, specific levels of education, or particular abilities. Neither is the guidance of a guru necessary although it might be valued. Bhakti is available to any individual, regardless of varna, gender or any other condition which, in some traditions, would mean they cannot be liberated without rebirth as a man. Both jnana and bhakti marga are described in the Bhagavad Gita and they are therefore two of what some scholars have called the Trimarga; three paths to liberation that are rooted in the Vedas. As such one cannot be considered better or more admirable than the other, they are simply different paths suited to people with different spiritual aptitudes or qualities who are striving for the same goal.	10

Question	Answer	Marks
3(c)	Evaluate the view that a Hindu does not need to commit to a single marga to achieve moksha. AO2 – Analysis and evaluation. Responses will be marked according to the 15 mark level descriptors (AO2). Candidates might refer to some of the following: Hinduism recognises four main spiritual paths to moksha (liberation): karma marga (path of action), jnana marga (path of knowledge), raja marga (path of self-discipline) and bhakti marga (path of devotion). For many the bhakti marga is considered the most accessible, but that does not mean it is inherently preferable or that following it precludes other practices: any activity can be performed as an act of devotion to ishvara. The different margas are associated with different human temperaments: an active person might be considered most suited to follow karma marga while a reflective, philosophical person might be better suited to the jnana marga. Since jnana marga requires a high level of education and access to a guru (teacher) it is not accessible to every Hindu, but this does not mean that a Hindu who can pursue it is thereby prevented from other forms of practice. Bhakti is recognised as a potentially useful practice for those starting out on the jnana marga and the Smarta tradition, which is rooted in a philosophy strongly connected to jnana, practises a form of worship (Panchayatana Puja) that is equally strongly linked to bhakti, with the specific intention of achieving the understanding of reality that is liberation in the jnana marga. Karma marga is the way of selfless service and desireless action, in which action, without being attached to the consequences, frees the atman from karma and so, eventually, from samsara (the cycle of birth, death and rebirth). However, the idea of karma is not restricted to Hindus following this path. Karma can be removed by the grace of God for Hindus following the bhakti marga, and they might believe that they cannot attain liberation until this occurs. Similarly, the raja marga emphasises detachment, which for many would include being detached from the fruits of one's actions. It might even be argued that the raja marga can include all other margas, requiring an individual to attain the spiritual knowledge of the jnana marga, engage in the desireless action of the karma marga and focus on the divine as in the bhakti marga. The four margas are clearly identified as distinct in various Hindu scriptures, with the Bhagavad Gita often considered the best authority for this idea of different ways to become liberated. This is an idea that is valued by many Hindus as reflective of diversity and inclusivity. However, it is also possible to argue that in practice the four margas are not as distinct as they can appear to be, with each path necessarily involving elements of the others.	15

Question	Answer	Marks
3(c)	For example, the karma marga (path of action) is not primarily concerned with doing specific things but about the attitude one has to the consequences of those things and one's reasons for doing them. It could be argued that this attitude is an inherent part of any other marga. In a similar way Krishna's urging in the Bhagavad Gita to surrender all actions to him could be understood as implying that prapatti (self-surrender) can be a part of any path to moksha.	

Question	Answer	Marks
OR		
4(a)	'The wise do not grieve for those who live and they do not grieve for those who die, for life and death shall pass away. Because we have been for all time, you, and I, and all these others. And we shall be for all time, all of us for ever and ever. As the spirit of our mortal body wanders on in childhood, and youth, and old age, so that spirit wanders on to a new body: of that, this sage has no doubts.' Summarise what the above passage says about samsara. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 5 mark level descriptors (AO1). Candidates might refer to some of the following: The cycle of samsara is a never-ending journey of the spirit travelling from body to body. People who have wisdom do not sorrow over either the living or the dead because they know that neither state is permanent; no body lives forever and no spirit remains dead or without a body forever. Every individual person has existed for all time and will continue to exist forever. Everyone who exists has always existed and always will exist. A mortal body has a spirit, soul or atman within it. The body passes through the stages of life, from infancy to old age and the spirit travels with it; eventually the spirit continues to travel and joins a new body.	5

Question	Answer	Marks
4(b)	Explain how maya can be understood in both positive and negative ways. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 10 mark level descriptors (AO1). Candidates might refer to some of the following: Literally, maya means illusion, or delusion. It refers primarily to the idea that the material world is not as we perceive it. This fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of the universe can be a major obstacle to achieving liberation from samsara and this can mean maya is viewed in a negative light. In Advaita Vedanta, maya is seen as the illusion that the material world has real or absolute reality; Brahman is the only thing that is ultimately real and all things, including what appear to be individual atman or selves are actually Brahman. Maya causes people not to realise this and the result is that they remain entangled in samsara and subject to negative experiences such as fear, suffering, loss and death. This is commonly illustrated with the analogy of a man who, in the darkness, mistakes a piece of rope for a snake and so experiences fear that is very real. When the illusion (maya) is dispelled by light (knowledge or jnana) the snake is revealed to be a rope and so the man no longer experiences fear and this supports a negative view of maya as dangerously deceptive. In other traditions, such as Vishistadvaita, maya is seen in more positive terms as the creative power of Brahman, related to it as flame is related to fire. It is distinct from Brahman but is of the same substance and not different from it. Maya is responsible for all the diversity of creation, which has absolute reality but is of the same substance as Brahman. In this context, God can be understood and experienced through maya and so it can help to lead people towards moksha. Madhva's Dvaita philosophy also considered maya to describe the creative energy or manifestation of the divine. Thus, if the divine is seen as a fire, it is maya that is the flame. It can also be seen as the power that allows gods to act in the world and it is the power that allows avatars to manifest and defend dharma. Madhva's philosophy included the belief that maya is a tool that is used by Vishnu to encourage human beings to seek God. Maya can also be considered as a quality of shakti and is sometimes personified as a manifestation of the Goddess. In more negative understandings of maya it is seen as an obstacle to liberation, confusing or entrapping the atman within samsara. By contrast more positive understandings enable human beings to connect with the divine and so bring the possibility of moksha closer.	10

Question	Answer	Marks
4(c)	‘All Hindus expect to be liberated at the end of their current lifetime.’ Discuss. AO2 – Analysis and evaluation. Responses will be marked according to the 15 mark level descriptors (AO2). Candidates might refer to some of the following: Samsara is the cycle of life, death and rebirth, which Hindus believe all life is subject to. When a person dies, they are reincarnated into a new body according to the karma they accumulated over the course of their life and this cycle continues until liberation is achieved. Most Hindu philosophy considers birth as a human an essential precursor to liberation; animals do have dharma and an atman that is technically identical to that of a human, but they do not generate karma by their actions, they merely use up any that has carried over from previous human existences. The chances of being incarnated as a human rather than an animal are generally considered almost infinitely small and it is possible to return to animal rebirths from human ones. All of this emphasises the importance of using a human lifetime to move towards moksha; however, it does not guarantee that will happen, or even that it is possible for every human being regardless of context or circumstance. Only humans can study with a guru, read the scriptures, meditate, or seek moksha through karma, jnana, or bhakti. All of these activities can move someone closer to liberation. But if there is still karma to be played out then further births are likely to be necessary. Sanchita (accumulated) karma is the sum of all past karmas, whether positive or negative, from all births prior to the current one and a person’s current lifetime is an expression of a small portion of that karma. The actions and choices that someone makes also create new karma which is added to that pool, and which must be expressed in its turn. Hindus following the bhakti marga might hope that the grace of their ishvara will remove any karma they have remaining, but assuming that will happen might be considered more likely to create negative karma than to result in liberation. Some Hindus, especially those following the jnana marga, believe it is possible to be jivan mukti; that is the state of being liberated while still alive within samsara. A person who will be liberated after the death of their current body is videha mukti. A person who is jivan mukti would know that is their state, and there are characteristics by which they can be recognised; for schools that believe in this possibility, it could be argued that people who are not jivan mukti can or should have no expectation of achieving liberation at the end of their current life. Alternatively, it might be argued that it is not necessarily the case that everyone who will become liberated will attain jivan mukti first. A person who is videha mukti would not know during their lifetime that they will not be reborn, since until death they have not achieved liberation and the perfect knowledge that comes with it.	15

Question	Answer	Marks
4(c)	It is also the case that some Hindu traditions teach that simply being born human is not a sufficient stepping-stone to achieve liberation from. In some times and places the ability to achieve liberation has been limited according to varna and/or only to men; this is based on the idea of spiritual development with people being born into a place from which moksha can be attained only when they are spiritually ready for it. The teaching is that if the people who cannot hope to be liberated in their current lifetime observe their dharma and cultivate positive karma then future births might place them in a position from which liberation can be directly achieved. It might also be noted that Dvaita Vedanta includes the idea that there are some souls that will never be liberated.	