

Markscheme

November 2015

World religions

Standard level

Paper 2

19 pages

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Markbands

	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Paper 2 Marks
Level descriptor	Knowledge/understanding	Application/analysis	Synthesis/evaluation	Skills	0–20
A	No relevant knowledge	No evidence of application	No evaluation	None appropriate	0
B	Little knowledge and/or understanding; largely superficial or of marginal relevance	Very little application; important aspects of the question are ignored	No evaluation	Very low level; little attempt at organization of material	1–4
C	Some relevant knowledge and understanding	Limited attempt at application; answer partially addresses the question; there is no or little analysis of the key concepts	No evaluation	There is some evidence of an attempt to follow a structured approach	5–8
D	Relevant knowledge and understanding, but with some omissions	Some attempt at application; competent answer although not fully developed, and tends to be in parts descriptive; there is some analysis of the key concepts	Limited evaluation or unsubstantiated evaluation	There is a clear structure to answers in line with the question	9–12
E	Generally accurate knowledge and understanding, but with some minor omissions	Appropriate application; developed answer that covers most aspects of the question; there is a developed analysis of the key concepts; using both secondary and/or primary sources	There is evaluation of all major areas of the answer; answers demonstrate a consistently critical approach	Answers are well structured; ideas are organized in a clear, coherent and balanced essay	13–16
F	Accurate, specific, detailed knowledge and understanding	Detailed application; well-developed answer that covers most or all aspects of the question; the answer demonstrates an in-depth analysis through effective use of ideas drawn from a wide range of secondary and/or primary sources; there is evidence of rigorous analysis of the key concepts	Good and well-balanced attempt at evaluation; arguments are clear, coherent, relevant and well substantiated where appropriate, there will be a successful challenge to the assumptions implied in the question	The specific question is addressed in a clearly structured and focused essay that indicates a high level of awareness of the demands of the question.	17–20

Section A

Hinduism

1. Discuss the different types of sacred texts found in Hinduism.

Candidates may refer to some of the following points:

- Scriptures are divided between shruti (heard) and smriti (remembered). Initially they were passed via oral tradition and then later written down.
- As the shruti texts are believed to be revealed, they carry a higher status than the smriti.
- The divine origin of the Vedas and the Upanishads: the revealed shruti texts, the Vedas, were compiled for ritual purposes; and the Upanishads written by the sages as a kind of wisdom literature.
- The smriti texts: the Mahabharata, especially the Bhagavad Gita, and the Ramayana are important for the mythological expression of gods and goddesses upholding the sanatana dharma (eternal teachings).
- Candidates may discuss the fact that it is the smriti texts which have been often portrayed on television and in community theatre because of the stories they contain.
- Both the shruti texts, especially the Upanishads, and smriti texts, especially the Bhagavad Gita, are interpreted differently by the six philosophical systems (darshanas – Nyaya and Vaishesika, Samkya and Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta). Hindu sampradayas (nine sects founded by gurus) also have individual interpretations.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

2. Discuss the importance of pilgrimage and festivals in Hinduism.

Candidates may refer to some of the following points:

- Yatra (pilgrimage) to the sacred rivers, shrines and the kumbhamelas (special bathing fairs).
- Holi, Vaisakhi, Navaratri, Dasara and Divali.
- The importance of other festivals such as Ganesha Chaturthi, Thai Pongal, Raksha Bandhan.

They should then consider how and why pilgrimages and the particular festivals they have cited are important and how they are celebrated by Hindus. Some may also look at regional, family or caste variations, for example: stories associated with Divali in different parts of the sub-continent.

Good answers might continue to consider that in almost all instances these are group experiences where families and friends come together to worship and celebrate.

Candidates should not be penalized if they do not achieve an equal balance between pilgrimage and festivals.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

Buddhism

3. Examine the importance of karuna (compassion) in the moral conduct of Buddhists.

Candidates should demonstrate awareness that compassion is centrally important to the Buddhist moral path and should include some of following points:

- Compassion within Buddhism is a feeling of sympathy towards the suffering of others.
- The Buddha sought enlightenment (or the answer to the suffering in human life) because of his compassion for human beings and his wish to lead them away from suffering.
- Buddhists follow his example. They also wish to reduce the suffering of others.
- This is particularly true for Mahayana Buddhists, who follow the path of the bodhisattva and seek, out of compassion, to help all other beings to enlightenment.
- Buddhists undertake not to harm others and not to steal from others. Developing compassion makes these undertakings easier.
- One way of developing compassion is through meditation.
- Some Buddhists find that they can develop compassion by seeing everything in the world as interconnected. We are connected to all beings who are suffering.
- In Mahayana Buddhism particularly, but also in Theravada Buddhism, compassion is an essential part of enlightenment. Without the development of compassion, enlightenment is not possible.

Some candidates may be aware that there is a tension in Buddhism between compassion and the fact that the Buddha taught that we should develop detachment from the world in order to reach enlightenment. This tension can be resolved by seeing detachment as detachment from selfish craving, not as detachment from caring for others.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

4. To what extent do Mahayana sacred texts differ from Theravada Buddhist texts?

Candidates may choose to approach this historically or doctrinally. Both approaches should be accepted. Candidates who combine these approaches should be given credit for this.

Differences: A historical approach

Candidates will probably be aware that the Mahayana texts began to appear between the first century BCE and the first century CE. Mahayana Buddhists believe they are the Word of the Buddha but, historically speaking, they appeared several centuries after the Buddha's death.

Mahayana texts were written down in Sanskrit and were not communicated orally. The means of transmission and the language, therefore, differed from the Theravada texts which were communicated orally, at first, and then written down in the Pali language. Some Mahayana texts are now only accessible in Chinese and Tibetan translations.

Mahayana texts are extremely diverse and do not form a single collection or Canon. They include the Prajnaparamita literature, the Diamond Sutra, the Heart Sutra and the Lotus Sutra.

Differences: A doctrinal approach

Candidates will probably be aware that Mahayana sacred texts differ from Theravada sacred texts doctrinally. The Mahayana texts emphasise the bodhisattva path as a path for all Buddhists. They speak of many Buddhas and some describe the Pure Lands in which Buddhas reside. They also give more stress to the concept of emptiness. Some texts stress that all human beings can become Buddhas and possess Buddha nature.

Similarities: a historical approach

Both types of texts were initially compiled and communicated within monastic communities.

Similarities: a doctrinal approach

Theravada Buddhists and Mahayana Buddhists believe their texts are the Word of the Buddha. Both types of texts show the Buddha speaking to his followers. Both types of texts speak of the Four Noble Truths and concepts such as samsara (the cycle of life/rebirth), dukkha (suffering), impermanence/change (anicca), the lack of a permanent self (anatta) and enlightenment (nirvana).

Accept any other relevant answer.

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Sikhism

5. Examine the importance and the observance of festivals in Sikhism.

Candidates should show the ongoing importance of the festivals as remembering key events in Sikh history and bringing the community closer together in celebration and worship.

Candidates should present a balanced treatment between knowing what is observed and reflecting on the importance of these observations to achieve level E.

Candidates may refer to some of the following points:

Festivals (Melas), especially Vaisakhi (New Year's Eve, the anniversary of the Khalsa being realised on earth, 1699), which is celebrated with special services and procession of the Guru Granth Sahib (nagar kirtan). Divali (celebrates the release from captivity of Guru Hargobind).

Gurpurbs – commemorative days celebrating the births and deaths of the Gurus; especially those of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. Also the martyrdoms of Guru Arjan, and Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Gurpurbs are a mixture of the religious and the festive, the devotional and the spectacular, the personal and the communal. Over the years a standardized pattern has evolved, but this pattern has no special sanctity, and local groups may invent their own variations. During these celebrations, the Guru Granth Sahib is read through, in private homes and in the gurdwaras, in a single continuous ceremony lasting 48 hours. This reading, called Akhand Path, must be without interruption; the relay of reciters who take turns at saying the Scripture ensures that no break occurs.

Special assemblies are held in gurdwaras and discourses given on the lives and teachings of the gurus. Sikhs march in processions through towns and cities chanting the holy hymns. Special langars, or community meals, are held for the participants. Partaking of a common meal on these occasions is considered an act of merit. Programmes include initiating those not already initiated into the order of the Khalsa in the manner in which Guru Gobind Singh had done in 1699. Sikh journals and newspapers bring out special editions to mark the event. Public functions are held besides the more literary and academic ones in schools and colleges. Gurpurbs commemorating birth anniversaries may include illuminations in gurdwaras and in residential houses. Friends and families exchange greetings. Printed cards like those used to commemorate holidays in the West are also coming into vogue.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

6. “Although Sikhism teaches equality, it is not always practised.” Discuss.

This may not be a popular concept for students but they should be aware that teaching and practice sometimes differ.

For equality:

Sikhs believe in equality of humanity, regardless of birth, gender or religion.

The role of women in Sikhism is outlined in the Sikh scriptures, which state that the woman is to be regarded as equal to the man. In Sikhism, women are considered to have the same souls as men and an equal right to grow spiritually. They are allowed to lead religious congregations, take part in the Akhand Path (the continuous recitation of the Holy Scriptures), perform Kirtan (congregational singing of hymns), work as a Granthi, join the Khalsa and participate in all religious, cultural, social, and secular activities.

In 1499 Guru Nanak, reportedly said that “[it] is a woman who keeps the race going” and that we should not “consider woman cursed and condemned, [when] from woman are born leaders and rulers.”

Against equality:

Sikhs have had an obligation to treat women as equals, and gender discrimination in Sikh society has not been allowed. However, gender equality has been difficult to achieve; eg there are very few women Granthis.

In relation to caste Guru Nanak taught:

Meaningless is caste and meaningless (caste) names, The same shadow protects all beings (SGGS page 83).

Discern the light; do not enquire (one’s) caste; There is no caste in the hereafter (SGGS page 349).

However there are still instances where caste is an issue and it is not unusual to see adverts in papers and magazines seeking marriage partners which ask for “high caste” or “light-skinned” brides.

If candidates mention other examples of equality or inequality which they can corroborate, they should be given credit.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

Open-ended question

7. With reference to **one** religion, **either** Hinduism **or** Buddhism **or** Sikhism, investigate the ethical teaching concerning non-violence.

Candidates will probably be aware that the issue of non-violence is complicated in their chosen religion, for instance, that teachings in the sacred texts can differ from practice. Both Hinduism and Sikhism recognise that violence has a role in human society. Buddhism stresses non-violence but, in practice, some Buddhist communities have used violence.

Hinduism

Teachings that can be interpreted as recognizing that violence has a role in life

- Hindu traditions recognise a warrior caste (kshatriyas), whose role is to defend and protect the community, even if this involves violence.
- A member of the warrior caste has a duty to use violence for this purpose.
- The Bhagavad Gita illustrates that there can be a just war in defence of what is true.

Teachings that can be interpreted as supporting non-violence

- Hindus do not support violence unless it is undertaken by the warrior caste.
- In everyday life, Hindus should be non-violent and respect other people. Particularly important is respecting members of one's family.
- Honour killings should have no place in Hinduism.
- Violence done by members of one caste to another caste should have no place in Hinduism.
- Candidates might also refer to vegetarianism, suicide, euthanasia, and abortion.

Buddhism

Teachings that can be interpreted as recognizing that violence has a role in life

- There are no direct teachings in Buddhism that support violence. Most countries with a majority of Buddhists, however, have armies to defend the country against outside attack.
- Some Buddhists believe that it is justified to use violence to defend Buddhism against threats.

Teachings that can be interpreted as supporting non-violence

- The first of the five precepts that lay people undertake is not to harm any living beings.
- This refers to violence towards humans and animals.
- If a person harms another living being, then harm will come to them through the principle of karma.
- In the Eightfold Path, "right livelihood" involves not having employment in activities that harm living beings, such as trade in arms or the killing of animals.

Some candidates may note that the so-called Kalachakra Prophecies mention the possibility of a Holy War with Islam.

Some candidates might also mention that the Buddha sought to resolve conflicts non-violently and taught monks that they should not retaliate when attacked but should develop a mind of loving kindness.

Sikhism

Teachings that can be interpreted as recognizing that violence has a role in life

- The five Ks worn by many Sikhs includes a small sword that represents a Sikh's duty to fight on the side of good, and to protect the weak and vulnerable from harm.
- Violence is, therefore, permitted if the cause is good.
- This extends to a righteous war.

Teachings that can be interpreted as supporting non-violence

- Sikhs believe humans are equal and that Sikhs should involve themselves in service to humanity.
- They also try to reduce their greed and selfishness, and recognise that other religions contain truth.
- All of this supports an ethic of non-violence.
- Sikhs should not attack others because of their beliefs or because they are different.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

Section B

Judaism

8. “Judaism does not welcome converts.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Candidates may refer to some of the following points:

- There are distinct attitudes between different traditions. Not all Jewish conversions are accepted by all Jews. The more Orthodox a community is, the less likely it is to accept a conversion.
- Judaism is not a missionary religion and there is the belief that there is no need to convert as Judaism is not the only path to God. Although not encouraged there has been a history of conversion, *eg* Ruth.
- The process is governed by Jewish religious law. There are also two ritual requirements: a male convert must undergo circumcision or if already circumcised, a single drop of blood is drawn as a symbolic circumcision. The convert must undergo immersion in a Jewish ritual bath, a mikveh, with appropriate prayers.
- Potential converts must be sincere/convert for the right reasons/convert for their own will/will live an observant Jewish life.
- The only reason that is normally accepted is that the person believes the faith and culture of the Jewish people is right for them. Reasons of convenience are not normally considered as valid.
- Reform/Progressive synagogues offer conversion courses that involve 12–18 months of study, usually with both partners attending if the person wishing to convert is in a relationship. It is also important that the person attends services and participates in other aspects of communal life.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

9. Discuss Jewish teaching and practice in relation to divorce.

Candidates may refer to some of the following points:

- Recognition regarding diversity of practices and interpretation of teachings.
- In the Orthodox tradition a civilly divorced woman must obtain a get (divorce decree) from her husband in order to remarry. A child born of a woman's remarriage after a non valid divorce is considered illegitimate. The reform movement considers all civil divorces valid.
- Considered by all as a last resort and support will be given by the community to try and keep a marriage together. Gittin 90a in the Talmud “Tears fall on God's altar for whoever divorces his first wife”.
- Practice – Giving of a get (agreement) by the husband to the wife. Difficulty of the giving of a get. The get is referred to by name in the Talmud but also is referred to by *sefer keritut* in Deut 24:3. The bill is written by the husband and handed to the wife in the presence of others. Most progressive communities do not issue a get and do not require one for remarriage.
- In Jewish history, divorce has been the prerogative of the husband only, although the Talmud established several circumstances under which a husband could be compelled to divorce his wife: if the marriage was childless after ten years; if the husband refused to have sex with his wife; if the husband beat his wife; or if the husband contracted a "loathsome" disease. Around the year 1000 CE, rabbinical law stated that a wife could not be divorced without her consent.
- A religious divorce is not granted until the secular legal formalities are completed.
- The situation regarding the chained women (*agunot*) who cannot receive a get from their husband. Candidates may refer to contemporary situations including the role of the community and rabbis.
- Traditionally, Jewish divorce is granted by a rabbinical court (*bet din*, "house of judgment") in addition to the civil court. This is now voluntary everywhere except Israel, where the rabbinate still controls matters of marriage and divorce. The *bet din* is made up of three rabbis knowledgeable in the laws related to marriage and divorce. A scribe and two disinterested witnesses should also be present.
- If the divorce is granted, a get is drawn up in hand-lettered Hebrew. The wife is prohibited from marrying for 90 days, to ensure that if she quickly remarries and becomes pregnant there will be no questions of paternity.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

Christianity

10. To what extent would you agree that blasphemy laws are needed to protect Christianity and the Christian Church?

Candidates may refer to some of the following points:

- The key text for blasphemy is: “Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin” (Mark 3:29).
- Laws relating to the offence of blasphemy, usually defined as the act of insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence for a God, to religious or holy persons or things, or toward something considered sacred or inviolable vary from country to country as do the religions protected by such laws.
- There is no blasphemy law in the USA because it would be unconstitutional. The penal code of Pakistan prohibits blasphemy against any recognized religion.
- From 1949 the UK courts called for the repeal of the blasphemy laws. When the position of the Blasphemy Law was considered in the United Kingdom in 2008 its abolition gathered the support of many leaders including the Archbishop of Canterbury and it was abolished in May of that year. The courts had decided that the Law only applied to the Church of England and therefore was unjust.
- One view that might be considered is that although people might find blasphemous remarks objectionable, who is actually suffering, the blasphemer or the blasphemed?
- A further valid point is that if such laws are needed to protect Christianity, what does this say about the strengths of these organisations?

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

11. “The hierarchy of many Churches is a weakness not a strength.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Candidates may refer to some of the following points:

- Although many recently established Churches along with other groups such as the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) do not have an overarching hierarchical structure, nevertheless most of the established denominations have a clear “top down” approach to authority and religious rulings. These have evolved over time in a largely patriarchal format.
- Some may argue that such a hierarchy is based on Jesus and the 12 disciples and the Early Church, followed by St Peter. Others might say that it is the natural structure of things and that any successful organisation evolves to have leaders: either *primum inter pares* or *servus servorum dei*.
- It can be argued that this strong hierarchy has kept the Churches together and ensured a unity of doctrine and practice. On the other hand it can also be said that such a structure stifles debate and development and can lead to a situation where some adherents might feel less equal than others.
- Some candidates may mention that the voices of women and young people may be stifled and that change can also be slowed.
- Candidates may bring relevant examples from their own experience *eg* Pentecostal, Seventh-Day Adventists, *etc*; if these are corroborated with evidence, they should be credited.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

Islam

12. Analyse the two parts of the shahadah.

Candidates may refer to some of the following points:

- The shahadah is the first pillar of Islam.
- It penetrates all the other pillars of the faith.
- The shahadah is said aloud three times before witnesses when a person wishes to become a Muslim, to submit himself or herself to Allah.
- The shahadah is in two distinct parts. Muslims express belief in both parts of it.
- The first part, the core of the shahadah – “I testify that there is no god but Allah” – stresses the uncompromising monotheism of the Islamic faith (tawhid). There is no doctrine in Islam more important than this.
- The first part of the shahadah rejects the polytheism of Muhammad’s fellow-Arabs and it challenges the Christian doctrines of the Trinity and the divinity of Jesus (see Qur’an 4:171).
- The first part of the shahadah is very often found in the prayer niches of mosques and on Islamic coins. This reminds Muslims of God’s role in human life.
- The second part of the shahadah – “I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of God” – affirms and validates Muhammad’s prophethood. He is truly the Messenger of Allah.
- The second part of the shahada reminds Muslims of the monotheistic prophets who preceded Muhammad and whose preaching he confirmed and perfected. He is the Seal of the Prophets.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

13. Examine the concepts of Yawm al-din (Day of Judgment), paradise and hell in the Qur'an.

Candidates may refer to some of the following points:

- The crucial importance of the core Islamic belief in the Day of Judgment.
- The very opening of the Qur'an itself, the chapter called the Fatiha, in which God is called the "Master of the Day of Judgment".
- The Qur'an uses other eschatological terms such as "the Day of Reckoning" and the "Last Day".
- Some chapters of the Qur'an dwell on the punishments that await those who do not turn to the One God.
- Each human being on the Day of Judgment is responsible before God for his or her own actions. Paradise is promised to those who surrender to God (which is the meaning of "Muslim"), who believe and do good works.
- How hell and paradise are described in the Qur'an, with the stark contrast between the fire of hell to which the wicked will be dragged by the forelock to burn there forever, and the delights of paradise, where "there are gardens beneath which rivers flow".
- Paradise is for both believing men and women, for husbands and wives together.
- Some candidates may look at mystical traditions of Islam which do not take the teachings about the Day of Judgment literally.

Candidates may utilize personal knowledge of the Qur'an and if well corroborated they should be credited accordingly.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

Open-ended question

14. With reference to **one** religion, **either** Judaism **or** Christianity **or** Islam, examine attitudes to the interpretation of sacred texts.

Judaism

Candidates should be able to indicate there are variations in attitudes and practices between and within traditions.

Candidates may refer to some of the following points:

- Impact of the status and relationship between the first five books of the Jewish scriptures and the Oral Torah.
- The importance throughout history of the debates among rabbis forming interpretations and commentaries. Judaism therefore, has a history and tradition of interpretation through a range of important texts such as the Talmud and Halakhah and through Torah commentators such as Rashi. Candidates may explain issues of interpretation of each.
- Literalist interpretation considers all sacred texts divinely inspired and infallible without figurative interpretation. As such, importance is placed upon keeping mitzvot in the Torah rather than reasoning about or amending the sacred texts to suit contemporary situations.
- The contemporary interpretation and application of sacred texts is fundamental to study in yeshivot. Particularly significant is the interpretation of texts to support decisions regarding contemporary life-styles.

Candidates may also recognize the importance of the Midrash as an interpretation of the Torah, Neviim and Kethuvim (Tenakh) not in order to investigate their actual meaning but to understand the documents of the past.

Christianity

Candidates should be able to indicate that there are variations in attitudes and practices between and within denominations.

Candidates may refer to some of the following points:

- Literalist approach: this includes belief in the Bible as the inerrant Word of God with emphasis on a primary meaning without recognition of figurative or metaphorical interpretations of the texts. For biblical literalists the Bible would be interpreted literally unless it was otherwise clearly indicated.
- Biblical criticism: this includes exegesis and critical interpretation of the texts as a significant part of Christian tradition. Different Christians have different views on how to perform biblical exegesis with the two most common being revealed (inspired by God, not necessarily inerrant) and rational (higher criticism).
- Group interpretation of sacred texts is often encouraged through community activities and individual practice which focuses upon the interpretation of sacred texts as applicable to contemporary situations.

Candidates may also contextualize their responses recognizing the status of the Bible as a sacred text with a range of translations and interpretations.

Islam

Candidates should be able to indicate there are variations in attitudes and practices.

Candidates may refer to some of the following points:

- Impact of the status of the Qur'an as a Revelation with the Prophet Muhammad as the messenger and not the author.
- Impact of the belief that the Qur'an is the speech of God and, as such, the Arabic words are sacred. Emphasis placed upon the recitation of the Qur'an rather than critical interpretation.
- Tafsir is the science of interpretation or exegesis of the Qur'an and includes the understanding and uncovering of the will of Allah through the Qur'an. As such interpretation might include defining or clarifying less used words and explaining underlying thoughts in metaphors.
- Interpretation might include group or personal activities reconciling verses that seem contradictory. Often other Qur'anic verses will be used in this process leading many to believe this as the highest level of authenticity. Many verses or words in the Qur'an are explained or further clarified in other verses of the Qur'an.
- The role that the text has in the formulation of Shari'ah law.

Some candidates may refer to the rules of interpretation proposed by Dehlavi.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.
