

Markscheme

May 2026

World religions

Standard level

Paper 1

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Part (a) responses are marked using question-specific markschemes.
Part (b) responses are marked using question-specific markschemes **and** the paper 1 part (b) markbands. Responses are assessed using a **best-fit** approach.

The first part (a) of the question, worth 3 marks, tests knowledge and understanding of a key idea or concept associated with the text. This part of the examination can be answered using bullet points. The second part (b) of the question, worth 6 marks, tests knowledge and understanding of the idea or concept in relation to the text and religion.

Students should be credited marks in part (b) for material which they have already presented in part (a).

The markschemes contain indicative content and are not meant to represent the only possible correct answers; other valid points must be accepted and marked on their merit.

Paper 1 part (b) markbands

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	The response displays little understanding of the demands of the question. The response is descriptive in nature and where examples are referred to, they are factually incorrect, irrelevant or vague. Terminology used is incorrect or inaccurate.
3–4	The response displays an understanding of the demands of the question, but these are only partially addressed. There is some explanation, but this is not fully developed. Examples used are generally appropriate and relevant but do not always support the explanation. The use of relevant terminology is mostly accurate, with some inconsistencies.
5–6	The demands of the question are met. The response contains a well-developed explanation, which is effectively supported by appropriate and relevant examples. The use of relevant terminology is accurate throughout the response.

Section A

Hinduism

1. Truly, there is no purifier in this world like knowledge. The person who has perfected Yoga finds it [knowledge] in the Self in time. One who is full of faith, who is devoted to it, and who has subdued all the senses, obtains this knowledge; and, having obtained the knowledge, goes at once to the supreme peace.

Bhagavad Gita 4:38-39 (adapted)

- (a) Identify **three** teachings in this passage. [3]

- Knowledge makes things in this world pure
- Knowledge does this in a unique/ better/ different way/ unlike anything else
- A person who has become expert in Yoga can find their own self in time
- Several things are mentioned about what leads to this knowledge
- These things include being full of faith
- Those who are devoted or focused to their faith
- Those who have controlled/ subdued all of their senses
- The person who has got this knowledge goes straight away to the supreme peace.

*Award [1] for each relevant point up to a maximum of [3].
Accept other relevant points.*

- (b) Explain the importance of Jnana (path of knowledge) to Hindus. [6]

- Hindus refer to Jnana as a kind of sacred knowledge, which derives from the ancient Sanskrit. It means knowledge through which someone knows the self
- A person may have some knowledge which helps achieve money or wealth. But they are still in a state of delusion because they do not have greater spiritual realisation
- Finding the best way through worldly life is something Hindus seek help with. They can ask from enlightened spiritual teachers, read the sacred texts and find help from many different perspectives
- Study, insight, meditation, prayer and Bhakti (leading a path of devotion), accumulation through rebirths, and understanding of scriptures all help to raise a Hindus awareness
- Finding Jnana helps Hindus in this life and guides them to good actions (Karma). These affect how they are reborn in the cycle of life, death and rebirth
- Jnana is the basis of dharma (law or teachings). Right conduct, being pure and finding self-awareness all flow from this. These things help Hindus to achieve a favourable reincarnation in the next birth
- Jnana can also be found through yoga. There are different yogic paths which can lead to moksha (liberation), with individuals guided to the one which best suits their personality. Jnana yoga involves study of texts to realise the self and the nature of who we really are
- Ultimately, Jnana can help Hindus escape from Samsara, the cycle of life, death and reincarnation. In escape, they find moksha (liberation).

Accept other valid points.

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

Buddhism

2. It is difficult to find one word to explain the whole concept of the term *dukkha/dukha* as the First Noble Truth, and so it is better to leave it untranslated than to give an inadequate and wrong idea of it by conveniently translating it as “suffering” or “pain”.

What the Buddha Taught, p. 17 (adapted)

- (a) Identify **three** teachings in this passage. [3]

- Dukkha/dukha is the First Noble Truth of Buddhism
- The concept of dukkha cannot be explained by one word; this means the concept of dukkha/dukha is complicated
- The individual words ‘suffering’ and ‘pain’ are sometimes used as convenient translations of dukkha/dukha
- The individual words ‘suffering’ and ‘pain’ are inadequate translations because they do not explain the whole concept of dukkha/dukha. This can lead to people have a wrong, or incomplete, idea about what dukkha/dukha means
- It is better to use the term ‘dukkha/dukha’ than to translate it into a different word that may not give an accurate explanation of what dukkha/dukha means
- The author of the passage believes an accurate understanding of dukkha/dukha is important.

- (b) Explain Buddhist teachings about the causes of dukkha/dukha. [6]

- Dukkha/dukha describes the Buddhist belief that existence in samsara is not satisfactory. This is the First Noble Truth. Buddhism teaches there are different causes of dukkha
- Dukkha/dukha is caused by craving or greed (tanha/trishna). This is the Second Noble Truth. There are different types of craving or greed that include attachment to things and aversion to things. For example, someone might crave wealth (attachment) and crave to be rid of poverty (aversion). Craving can include attraction or aversion to physical, mental, ideological or social states
- Impermanence or the absence of wealth is closely related to dukkha/dukha as when things change in an undesirable way dukkha/dukha can be caused.
- Dukkha/dukha is caused by ignorance to the truth of the Buddha’s teachings; especially the teaching of anatta/anatman (no permanent self). This causes someone to be in a state of delusion or illusion. Understanding that there is no permanent self means there is no ‘self’ for dukkha/dukha to affect, and no ‘self’ to be reborn into samsara. Full realisation of the truth of Buddhist teachings ceases rebirth in samsara; ending existence in samsara ends dukkha/dukha. Deluded or illusional believe in a permanent ‘self’ causes rebirth in samsara and so causes dukkha/dukha
- Dukkha/dukha is caused by hatred. Hatred is one of the three fires, or three poisons taught by the Buddha. A disposition of hatred keeps someone trapped in samsara. Dukkha/dukha is a condition of being in samsara. The opposite of hatred is compassion. So, to escape samsara and its associated dukkha/dukha a compassionate disposition is necessary.

Sikhism

3. I claimed for myself the possessions of others, sucked into the whirlpool of reincarnation. All are travellers, who have gathered under the tree, held by their many bonds. The Company of the Holy is stable and permanent; there, the Lord's Praises are sung. Nanak seeks Sanctuary.

Guru Granth Sahib 537 (adapted)

- (a) Identify **three** teachings in this passage. **[3]**

- A person took other people's belongings
- They were caught up in the difficult process of life, death and rebirth
- This is a whirlpool or turbulent time, a process of reincarnation
- The people are travellers through this
- They are going to come together under a tree
- The people's many connections will keep them together
- The Holy ones are stable company
- The Holy ones are permanent and will always be there
- There, the religious service of praise is sung
- Guru Nanak looks for refuge or safety.

Accept other valid points.

*Award **[1]** for each relevant point up to a maximum of **[3]**.*

- (b) Explain how reaching the sach khand (realm of truth) is freedom for Sikhs. **[6]**

- The sach khand (realm of truth) is the final stage of five realms described by Guru Nanak, founder of Sikhism
- It is a state of human consciousness which is the final stage a person can achieve
- The sach khand can therefore be described as freedom, because it is free from the attachment to place in this world
- Worldly focus on money, possessions, materialism, careers and so on are all left behind, and the worry and stresses of these things no longer concern an individual
- All sense of moh (attachment) is left behind as are the worldly emotions of krodh (anger), kam (lust), haumai (ego-centredness) and lobh (covetousness)
- Those who have reached sach khand are no longer distracted by anything. Their minds are free
- All desires and individual motivations are left behind, even the desire to achieve truth, because a person's mind becomes free of all desires
- In this state, they can see the totality of the whole truth, which does not have an individual perspective
- A person is God-centred and attains God in this state
- Some think of sach khand as a kind of heavenly abode where a person's spirit goes after death
- It is more accurate to describe it as a place of freedom transcending death.
- When the realm of truth is reached then God is experienced as Niranker (the formless one)

Accept other relevant answers.

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

Section B

Judaism

4. They say that for the first thirteen years of a person's life the Evil Urge is greater than the Good Urge. There in his mother's womb, a person's Evil Urge grows with him. After he emerges into the world he starts breaking the Sabbath and nothing is there to stop him. After thirteen years the Good Urge is born.

Avot D'Rabba Natan 16:2 (adapted)

- (a) Identify **three** teachings in this passage. [3]

- There is the Good Urge/inclination (yetzer ha ra)
- There is the the Evil Urge/ inclination (yetzer ha tov)
- The Evil Urge is greater than the Good Urge
- This applies for the first thirteen years
- The Evil Urge grows with the baby in the womb
- After birth the Evil Urge causes the breaking of Sabbath laws
- Nothing can stop the Evil Urge
- It is after the age of thirteen the Good Urge is born.

Accept other valid points.

Award [1] for each relevant point up to a maximum of [3].

- (b) Explain Jewish beliefs about free will. [6]

- There are many different views regarding how far God intervenes in humans lives and how far people have free will
- There is a freedom of choice - it is not divinely managed
- The Torah teaches that humans have free choice to follow the God given mitzvot
- The Torah reflects that humans have freedom to choose their course of actions e.g. Genesis 3.22
- Jewish scriptures also show that God is the creator, and he alone knows when people are born and die. 'Without your consent you were born, and without your consent you live, and without your consent you die'. (Sayings of the Father 4:29)
- Those who fulfil their duties will be rewarded
- Humans are not born with sin but with inclinations or urges to do bad or good inclination (yetzer ha ra /yetzer ha tov)
- Those who fulfil their duties will be rewarded
- Although humans have free will it is believed by many Jews that it is not possible to hide evil acts from God.
- Rosh Hashanah and the Ten Days of Repentance give time for humans to atone to God.

Accept other valid points.

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

Christianity

5. Jesus replied, “You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honour your father and mother,’ and ‘love your neighbour as yourself.” “All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?” Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

Matthew 19-21 (adapted)

- (a) Identify **three** teachings in this passage. [3]

- Jesus says you shall not murder
- Jesus says you shall not commit adultery
- Jesus says you shall not steal
- Jesus says you shall not give false testimony
- Jesus says you should honour your father and mother
- Jesus says you should love your neighbour as yourself
- Jesus says there are additional ways to ‘be perfect’ / gain treasure in heaven
- Performing acts of charity; these include selling your possessions
- Giving to the poor
- References to following Jesus.

- (b) Explain why living by the teachings of Jesus is not the only thing needed for salvation within Christianity. [6]

- Throughout Jesus’ teaching, he emphasised the importance of and the means to salvation
- No one can gain forgiveness of sins through even the greatest works of self-sacrifice
- Eternal life is beyond human achievement
- Salvation is through grace and achieved by the atonement of Jesus Christ on the Cross
- It is necessary to believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour
- The law is an external standard achievable by human effort. Grace is the term Christians use to describe God’s unconditional love for everyone, whether or not they have behaved as He wants them to
- Jesus’ life is an example for all Christians
- It is important to put faith into action, according to some Christians.

Accept other valid points.

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

Islam

6. When death comes, a person says: “O my Lord! send me back to life, so that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected.”
“By no means! It is but a word they say.”
Before them is a Partition until the Day they are Raised up.

Qur'an 23:99-100 (adapted)

- (a) Identify **three** teachings in this passage. **[3]**

- When death comes, a person may ask God to send them back to life
- The reason for this is so that they can do good works
- The works are to make up for things they have neglected
- The reply given is that they will not be sent by any means
- God says it is only words or request, nothing more
- This is a false understanding because there is no reincarnation in Islam
- Coming next is a period of Partition, a gap between worldly life and the next
- The Partition carries on until the Day they are resurrected
- They are raised up on that day.

Accept other valid points.

*Award **[1]** for each relevant point up to a maximum of **[3]**.*

- (b) Explain why Muslims believe Allah punishes some for a period of time after death. **[6]**

- According to Muslims, Allah judges people on the Day of Judgement and sends them to paradise (janna) or hellfire (jahannam) according to how they lived the test of life on earth
- Some feel it is necessary to have a fear of hellfire to help keep Muslims on the straight path, and follow the obligations of Islam, as well as hope for paradise
- Allah is considered both judge as well as compassionate forgiver. There is also no limit to Allah's power. So, it is believed Allah is not restricted to sending souls to hellfire forever and can choose to make this period temporary
- Allah is described in the Qur'an as proportionate in meting out punishment according to the severity of the misdemeanour
- Those who have committed minor sins might be forgiven; some who have committed major sins might face a temporary punishment; or some might have erred so much they face permanent hellfire
- Sins from life on earth may need removing in a time of cleansing, before entry into paradise, where there can be no sin
- Punishment can take place in a period of waiting, after death, whilst a person is in the grave awaiting Judgement Day. Rewards can also be gained at this time, influencing a person's future and possibly reducing time in hellfire to a temporary period
- All is within Allah's gift. No one knows if or how long anyone will be punished for
- There are different opinions amongst Muslims about temporary punishment.

Accept other relevant answers.

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

Section C

Taoism

7. The Great Virtue is to follow the Tao and only the Tao.
The Tao is shadowy and intangible.
Intangible and evasive, and yet within it is a form.
Evasive and intangible, and yet within it is a substance.
Shadowy and dark, and yet within it is a vital force.
This vital force is real and can be relied upon.

Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching 21 (adapted)

- (a) Identify **three** teachings in this passage. **[3]**

- The greatest way (virtue) is to follow the Tao
- Only the Tao should be followed
- It is hard to understand but within it is a form
- It is hard to identify but it has a substance
- It is not explicit but it is a vital force
- The force of the Tao is real
- The force of the Tao can be depended on
- The nature of the Tao may be grasped intuitively but not explained.

Accept other valid points.

*Award **[1]** for each relevant point up to a maximum of **[3]**.*

- (b) Explain the connection between the fu and the Tao. **[6]**

- The Tao is like a system of guidance and it's important to live in accord with the teachings of the Tao
- In the Tao everything in the universe is unified and connected
- The fu is an important concept of the Tao which means returning to the beginning or the root
- It is used to describe the teachings of the Tao that everything flows out of the Tao and flows back to the Tao
- This flow creates a basic balance by returning to the source
- Tao Te Ching 16 illustrates this by showing there is birth, flourishing and finally death
- The Tao Te Ching 16 teaches the importance of recognising all must return to the source and this creates serenity
- The fu is cyclical and teaches that the Tao brings everything forward and then returns back to its origin. E.g. day and night, plants grow and wither.

Accept other relevant answers.

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

Jainism

8. Jains believe harmful action (himsa) result in karmic bondage; this means the soul is invaded and weighted down by subtle matter which ensures that at death the jiva is reborn in this or another world (samsara).

Harmless Souls: Karmic Bondage and Religious Change in Early Jainism
with Special Reference to Umasvati and Kundakunda, p. 1 (adapted)

- (a) Identify **three** teachings in this passage. **[3]**

- Some actions can be harmful
- Harmful actions cause karmic bondage for the soul (jiva)
- Karma is subtle matter
- Karmic bondage means karma invades the soul (jiva)
- Karmic bondage means the soul (jiva) is weighted down by karma
- A soul (jiva) weighted down by karma will be reborn
- Rebirth occurs in samsara
- Samsara can be this world, or another world like this one.

Accept other valid points.

*Award **[1]** for each relevant point up to a maximum of **[3]**.*

- (b) Explain Jain teachings about samsara. **[6]**

- Samsara is the cycle of birth, death and rebirth
- The literal meaning of samsara is 'to wander about'
- Samsara is eternal; it is without beginning or end
- All living creatures are caught up in samsara
- The physical body is reborn into samsara. The physical body is not conscious and is not the true self. The physical body is the vehicle for the jiva
- The jiva (soul) is conscious and is the true self. The jiva is eternal
- When the physical body dies the jiva leaves it and enters a new physical body to be reborn in samsara. This is rebirth or reincarnation. Rebirth is instantaneous
- Living creatures are stuck in the cycle of samsara because of karma
- Karma accrued during the current incarnation in samsara determines the nature of the next incarnation in samsara
- Karma from negative actions bind living beings tightly to samsara. The most severe negative action is violence towards others, hence the Jain emphasis on non-violence (ahimsa). One example of non-violence (ahimsa) is the mouth-covering (muhpatti) worn by some Jains to prevent inhaling and harming insects and micro-organisms
- Having a spiritual outlook and a calm mind during death contributes to a positive rebirth in samsara
- Liberation from samsara is called moksha
- Liberation from samsara is only possible in a human incarnation
- Liberation from samsara occurs when the jiva is free from karma and its effects
- Liberation from samsara is not inevitable
- Liberation from samsara in this realm (world) is not possible in the current era
- It is possible to be reborn in a different realm of samsara from which liberation is possible in the current era because a Jina (an enlightened being) is teaching there. These realms of samsara are called karmabhumi.

Accept other relevant answers.

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

Bahá'í Faith

9. You are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal with one another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. He Who is the Daystar of Truth bears Me witness! So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth. The One true God, He Who knows all things, Himself testifies to the truth of these words.

Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 14 (adapted)

- (a) Identify **three** teachings in this passage. **[3]**

- We are the fruits of one tree / the leaves of one branch
- We should deal with each other with love and harmony
- We should deal with each other with friendliness and fellowship
- The Daystar of Truth bears Me witness
- The light of unity can illuminate the earth
- The One true God knows everything
- He testifies to the truth of these words.

Accept other valid points.

*Award **[1]** for each relevant point up to a maximum of **[3]**.*

- (b) Explain how Baha'is work towards achieving salvation. **[6]**

- Acknowledging the oneness of God and the unity of the manifestations of God (prophets)
 - Being involved in God's plan for the whole of humanity
 - Working towards world unification
 - Working towards a universal faith
 - Condemning all forms of prejudice
 - Working towards global peace
 - Aligning lives with the teachings as revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and his successors.
 - Salvation is a process rather than a single event. It actively involves both God and humanity
 - A combination of faith and works is necessary. Good works, without the right motivation, do not contribute to the process of salvation.
-