
HINDUISM

9014/02

Paper 2

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MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 100

Published

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Generic Marking Principles

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

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:

Marks must be awarded in line with:

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

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:

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

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

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

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:

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

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:

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

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:

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

SECTION A

Question	Answer	Marks
1	<p>To what extent might an understanding of Samkhya philosophy help Hindus achieve liberation?</p> <p>Responses might include some of the following material:</p> <p>Samkhya philosophy seeks to explain the real/true nature of the universe (as distinct from its apparent nature); like other Hindu philosophies the intention behind this is to understand how liberation might be achieved. However, the extent to which it is accessible and helpful to Hindus in their lives is open to discussion.</p> <p>Samkhya teaches that everything in the universe is made up by different combinations of tattvas (elements). There is a total of 25 tattvas, the first of which is prakriti, the primordial matter from which everything else evolves. It is pure potentiality, which develops successively through the other 24 tattvas. In its primal state prakriti consists of the perfect balance of the three gunas (qualities) and evolution begins when this equilibrium is disturbed by the presence of purusha (spirit).</p> <p>The process of evolution is a continual cycle, or chain in which each thing is the product of another thing: prakriti evolves into buddhi (intellect), which in turn evolves into ahamkara (making of self/ego or I-maker). It is ahamkara which mistakenly identifies the self with purusha and so as being ultimately rather than apparently real. This mistake is informed by the other evolutes of ahamkara – manas (mind/thoughts and impressions), buddhindriya (physical senses), karmendriya (organs of action – tongues, feet, hands etc.) tanmatras (subtle elements) and mahabhuta (great elements – ether, air, fire, water and earth). The experience of these things, for example the sensory experience of taste, is not an encounter with an external reality but an evolutionary product of the ego creating the belief that there is an 'I' that can taste. It is the ego that both creates and feeds the delusion that it is purusha which both acts and experiences the result of that action.</p> <p>While evolution on the cosmic scale is an unending cycle of creation and destruction an individual can overcome this delusion by realising the truth. Liberation is achieved by becoming able to discriminate between the purusha's actual state and its apparent state. It is this realisation of its isolation from everything else (kaivalya) that results in freedom from karma and so puts an end to the process of rebirth. Put briefly, to become liberated is a process of learning to discriminate between the actual self and what one believes to be oneself. An analysis of the tattvas is what creates this knowledge, and the existence of misery and frustration in life is what drives a person to seek it.</p>	20

Question	Answer	Marks
1	<p>Set out in this way the philosophy of Samkhya appears to be clear on what liberation is and what is required to achieve it, but this is not necessarily the same thing as providing a helpful or usable path. It could be argued that focussing on theories of causation is actually a distraction rather than part of the path to liberation. Furthermore, putting the philosophy into any kind of action requires study, mental discipline and guidance. Patanjali's eightfold yoga offers one path towards achieving this, since it rests entirely on the understanding of the universe proposed by Samkhya, but it would be possible to practise the yoga without understanding the philosophy that underpins it.</p> <p>Overall, Hinduism is a diverse religion with many possible paths to follow and a discussion of Samkhya's utility could legitimately consider other paths, including the bhakti marga.</p>	

Question	Answer	Marks
2	<p>Discuss the claim that yoga is more than physical exercises.</p> <p>Responses might include some of the following material:</p> <p>Patanjali's Eightfold Yoga consists of eight limbs – yama (discipline), niyama (conduct), asana (posture), pranayama (breath), pratyahara (withdrawal of senses), dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation) and samadhi (absorption). Of these it is only asana that explicitly references physical movement of a type likely to be considered exercise, although other limbs involve the physical body. Outside the context of Hinduism 'yoga' is often used to mean a form of exercise based on asana. The idea is that these postures are beneficial for physical health, regardless of any connection to personal conduct, morality or philosophy. Various systems of yoga exist within this understanding, and while most have origins within Hindu philosophy and/or religion it is likely that many practitioners are focussed primarily, if not entirely, on the physical practice and its bodily benefits.</p> <p>Within the Hindu context the eight limbs of Patanjali's yoga are sometimes presented as being divisible into outer and inner limbs, depending on whether they are more closely concerned with physical or non-physical aspects of the practice. This division might help non-practitioners understand the path more fully, but it is not usually intended as a signal that the limbs can or should be practised separately. The eight limbs are generally understood to be interdependent; no single one alone can bring a person to the ultimate goal of harmony between physical and non-physical aspects of being.</p> <p>Practised together the eight limbs are a path to achieving citta-vritti-nirodha (mind-activity-cessation). The asana (perhaps accompanied by pranayama practice) might well result in a healthier body, but it cannot achieve the shutting down of all mental distractions that Patanjali taught was essential to achieve liberation. Yoga is a term applied to many different paths and disciplines in the context of Hinduism, for example it is sometimes used as a synonym for marga (path). But it still refers to a process, discipline or system of practice with liberation as its ultimate goal; these paths touch on the real or ultimate nature of the individual in diverse ways but for most of them a sole focus on the body and its health would constitute an attachment to samsara rather than liberation.</p> <p>In the view of reality proposed by Samkhya philosophy the ego creates belief that the 'I' which experiences is purusha, the ultimately real self. Allowing mental modifications of any kind is a distraction, preventing the realisation that this is not the case. The eight-limbed practice of yoga allows for all the different kinds of distraction to be identified and controlled, which allows the identification of the empirical self as the true self to be broken. Both physical experiences and states of mind distract consciousness, hence the need for both inner and outer limbs.</p> <p>While yoga is often used as a generic term Patanjali's Yoga Sutras clearly present eightfold yoga as a unified system with a focus on liberation.</p>	20

Question	Answer	Marks
3	<p>‘The world is an unreal mirage.’</p> <p>Assess the significance of this teaching of Sankara.</p> <p>Responses might include some of the following material:</p> <p>Sankara’s Advaita Vedanta is a monist philosophy, which argues that Brahman is the only reality however many different apparent things there seem to be within the world. The substance of the universe is Brahman, and Brahman is all that there is. Brahman does not actually change, any more than clay does when made into a pot, however when the mind is deluded by maya it may appear that reality consists of multiple things, and that those things can change.</p> <p>The statement that the world is an unreal mirage is, on the face of it, consistent with this philosophy. Certainly, it was Sankara’s view that change is only ever apparent, and the ultimate reality does not truly change. This is a position of satkaryavada, which means that the effect pre-exists in the cause, or that cause and effect are identical. However, to present this as a denial that the world in which we find ourselves has any reality is an oversimplification because Sankara distinguished three different levels of reality:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Paramarthika or Supreme reality, which is the ultimate, ontologically accurate, reality that contains the other levels and cannot be assimilated into them; 2 Vyavaharika or pragmatic reality, which is empirically true within a given context but is not ultimately true. It is the waking, material world. 3 Prathibhasika or unreality, which is based in imagination. It is at this level that a rope may be seen as a snake, as ignorance of its true nature leads to superimposition. However, the realisation that it is in fact a rope is only recognition of its nature in vyavaharika, not an understanding of paramarthika. <p>Seeing a rope as a snake in no way changes either its status within pragmatic reality, or its true nature. The ultimate truth is still Brahman, and the practical truth is still that it is an inanimate rope. But while the belief that it is a snake holds the beholder it will be affected by their belief that a snake is present in the room with them, and their behaviour is likely to change when they realise their mistake. Their behaviour is informed first by what they imagine to be real, and then by what is empirically real. While it is true that according to Sankara neither of these states is the ultimate reality neither are they wholly illusory or unreal.</p> <p>The significance of this teaching can be interpreted in different ways including the necessity to distinguish between the ultimately real and the ultimately unreal.</p>	20

Question	Answer	Marks
4	<p>‘There are three realities: Brahman, individual selves and the world.’</p> <p>Assess the claim that this philosophy is non-dualist.</p> <p>Responses might include some of the following material:</p> <p>It is the case that Ramanuja’s Vishishtadvaita Vedanta is called non-dualist; the name means ‘qualified non-dualism’. It is equally the case that in this philosophy more than one thing is said to be absolutely real. These two facts seem to be contradictory; reconciling them depends on understanding the nature of the qualification which Ramanuja applied to a monist understanding of Brahman as the only absolutely real substance.</p> <p>The monism which Ramanuja sought to qualify is that proposed by Sankara, which argues that nothing is absolutely real other than Brahman and any plurality or change is only apparent. Rather than a position of satkaryavada (the effect pre-exists in the cause) and vivartavada (manifestation through appearance) Ramanuja takes a position of parinamavada (real transformation) arguing that Brahman continually transforms its substance into the world of plurality.</p> <p>Ramanuja does not disagree that Brahman is one. Instead he argues that within that oneness is relationship between Brahman as Lord (Ishvara) and individual devotees. This gives a place to devotion that is missing from Advaita Vedanta, but it also qualifies the oneness of Brahman. Ramanuja uses the analogy of a rose and its redness to argue that this qualification of oneness is an intrinsic aspect of Brahman’s nature: as a rose cannot exist without its redness (or whatever other colour it may be) Brahman cannot exist without individual selves. These aspects to Brahman’s nature are both distinct and inseparable.</p> <p>Crucial to understanding this qualification is that for Ramanuja there is no qualityless (nirguna) Brahman, Brahman is wholly with qualities, which manifest as real transformations in the empirical world. These manifest pluralities are all ontologically the same substance – Brahman – but they are true transformations, meaning Brahman is active and able to have a relationship with individuals. The analogy of the spider creating the web out of its own substance may be used. The qualities which Brahman has are real in the Absolute sense, rather than imposed by ignorance – Brahman really is compassionate, rather than human minds projecting an idea of compassion onto the nirguna reality.</p> <p>Because the transformation of Brahman is real the plurality of individual selves and the material world which result are also absolutely real. They are made of Brahman, and in their creation Brahman has manifested an absolute and ultimately real change. No one of these elements can be reduced to any of the others (they are ultimately real) but neither can any of them exist without the others, and it is this which allows this philosophy to be classified as non-dualist, albeit in a qualified sense.</p>	20

SECTION B

Question	Answer	Marks
5	<p>‘Ahimsa is the foundation of Jainism.’ Discuss.</p> <p>Responses might include some of the following material:</p> <p>The three Jewels of the Jain ethical code are a core aspect of the religion. These three jewels are right view, right knowledge and right conduct. The third of these is often considered to be dependent on the other two but together these three principles encourage an avoidance of preconception and superstition, the development of accurate knowledge about the real nature of things, a willingness to distinguish truth from untruth, avoidance of attachment and other impurities of thought and action and an avoidance of doing harm. For many Jains motivation for right conduct is achieved through right faith and right knowledge, because without these two elements the reasons for one’s actions will be wrong and so the actions themselves cannot be wholly right. What is clear, however, is that ethical behaviour is at the heart of Jainism. As with Hinduism individual actions create karma, which obscures the true nature of the soul (jiva) and binds it to the cycle of rebirth.</p> <p>Ahimsa is an important aspect of right conduct. It is one of the five vows (ahimsa – harmlessness, satya – truth, asteya – non-thieving, brahmacharya – chastity, aparigraha – non-possession), which apply both to Jain ascetics and householders, although ascetics have a stricter interpretation of them. Ahimsa is often understood as ‘non-violence, but its literal meaning is closer to ‘harmlessness’. Its application to Jain lifestyles is broad, extending to thoughts and words as well as actions. A Jain striving to practise ahimsa in their life is striving to avoid even the desire to do harm to another living being. Even accidental harm, caused through carelessness, carries a negative karmic consequence although it is not as bad as intentional harm. It is ahimsa that leads to well-known Jain practices such as sweeping the ground before walking to clear it of small creatures, wearing a mask to avoid breathing in insects and/or not eating root vegetables which harm other life forms when pulled up and which may be considered living themselves (since they are able to sprout into new plants).</p> <p>By avoiding doing harm to others, Jains also avoid doing harm to themselves by inhibiting the ability of the soul to achieve moksha. Ahimsa also extends beyond the avoidance of harm (which could be seen as a negative/passive ideal) to include compassionate action. Compassion is an essential part of right view, and through it ahimsa relates to charitable and virtuous actions.</p>	20

Question	Answer	Marks
5	<p>Although ahimsa is central to Jain ethical thinking, not all Jains follow the practices for which Jainism outside India is probably best known. Jain communities tend to be practical in their outlook and connect the ability to observe an ethical lifestyle with the spiritual development necessary to achieve liberation. Jain householders (laypeople) have not yet achieved the level required to want to renounce day-to-day activities and for this reason the five vows apply differently to them than to monks or nuns; for lay people they are the anuvratas (small vows) while ascetics take the more complete mahavratas. The difference is of scope rather than substance, so monks and nuns vow to avoid even accidental injury to a living being – while householders vow only to avoid direct and deliberate causing of harm.</p> <p>It is always possible to imagine situations where one ethical principle comes into conflict with another – for example a situation where telling the truth about something would lead directly to harm being caused. There is scope for discussion around such issues, involving the nature of the situation and the substance and motivation of any untruth being told. However, for most Jains, ahimsa would take precedence over satya in a situation where life or well-being is at risk, because the harm done by allowing violence is greater – not only to the victim of the violence but to the Jains own soul (jiva).</p>	

Question	Answer	Marks
6	<p>To what extent does Theravada Buddhist teaching on liberation agree with Hinduism?</p> <p>Responses might include some of the following material:</p> <p>Buddhists share several concepts with other religions that originated in India. These include belief in karma as a determining factor in rebirth and a belief that liberation is the ultimate goal of rebirth into a human life.</p> <p>A central teaching of Buddhism is that liberation or nirvana can be achieved by becoming free from the effects of desire or craving. This is a matter of avoiding the distractions of living through discipline of both mind and body – as set out in the Noble Eightfold Path. These eight principles of Right View, Right Resolve, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Concentration and Right Mindfulness cover all aspects of living and lead a person to detach themselves from the ever-changing material world. Such detachment extinguishes craving and thus results in nirvana. The Noble Eightfold Path is the Fourth Noble Truth, the core principles of the Buddha’s teaching, and it is therefore agreed upon by all Buddhists (although historically different qualities have been emphasised as the central focus). By contrast Hinduism encompasses many different paths to liberation, including the jnana, bhakti and karma margas.</p> <p>Karma is linked with liberation in both Buddhism and Hinduism. For Buddhists, karma is not a tangible thing which can attach in some way to a permanent core self which is then reborn under the influence of that karma, as is the case for most Hindus. Karma cannot work this way in Buddhism as the principle of anatta, or no permanent self, is also central to Buddhism. So, although freedom from karma is an important part of liberation for Buddhists, it is of a different nature to freedom from karma for Hindus. In Buddhism karma is more a matter of action/cause and consequence: a person forms an intention, and acts upon it; that act causes others, which cause yet others. Karmic results (karmaphala) are those consequences of an action which arise from its moral quality and the intention behind it, in other words they are more/other than the physical/natural consequences of an action.</p> <p>The nature of the state of liberation is also likely to differ between Buddhists and Hindus. Again, Hinduism encompasses different ways of understanding liberation because of different ways of understanding atman, Brahman and the relationship between the two. Because of anatta and because Buddhism does not have a concept of Brahman (or a comparable alternative concept of either deity or the Absolute) ideas about the state of being liberated may be less clear in Buddhism. While moksha is clearly a state of existence in Hindu thought, nirvana can be understood as extinction.</p>	20

Question	Answer	Marks
7	<p>Assess the claim that the life of the Buddha is more important than his teachings.</p> <p>Responses might include some of the following material:</p> <p>The Buddha's life story is also the story of the origins of Buddhism. The most commonly recounted events are of his birth as the son of a King, accompanied by a prophecy that he would be either a great king or a holy man. After a sequestered life intended to ensure the former, he leaves his palace and sees the Four Sights – an aged person, a diseased person, a corpse and a holy man. This led to his quest for enlightenment which was ultimately achieved, resulting in Buddhism as we know it today. In this presentation his life and its key events are almost synonymous with his core teaching on the importance of freeing oneself from suffering. His quest for enlightenment included unsuccessful and hazardous approaches which post-Enlightenment teaching offers alternatives to, but these events occurred before he was the Buddha and so might not be considered as an example to follow.</p> <p>Other events in his life are less foundational but offer examples of how to live according to the Eightfold Path, how to be part of the Sangha and so on. The life of the Buddha offers an example of Buddhist values which can be understood by everyone. Similarly, places where significant events took place or where artefacts associated with the Buddha are kept have become sites of pilgrimage for Buddhists.</p> <p>Any incident can be expanded upon to illustrate its impact on modern Buddhism. However, it is also true that the Buddha found enlightenment without an example to follow, so the possibility of achieving it without a guide remains. It is also true that one could encounter, and follow, the Noble Eightfold Path without any knowledge of the Buddha's life. There are many modern schools of Buddhism, and many living guides and teachers within them who arguably have more direct relevance and authority than the life of the Buddha.</p> <p>Even if the Buddha's life is considered an example or an ideal it is the teachings which resulted from his enlightenment which are the most important – the events of the Buddha's life do not constitute one of the Four Noble Truths after all, and too great a concern with those events could even be a distraction from the path the Buddha's teachings offer.</p>	20

SECTION C

Question	Answer	Marks
8	<p>‘The most important aspect of Shiva is as a loving husband and father.’</p> <p>Evaluate this statement.</p> <p>Responses might include some of the following material:</p> <p>Shiva is one of the three deities that make up the Trimurti – Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva; creator, maintainer and destroyer. Given the title of destroyer it may seem obvious that Shiva has far more important duties than family ones since he plays a crucial part in the cycle of creation and destruction that forms the material world in which human beings are born and live.</p> <p>However, Shiva’s nature is inherently contradictory. He is the destroyer, dancing a wild dance through which destruction is achieved. He is also the saviour of the world when he drinks the poison brought to the surface during the churning of the ocean. Shiva engages in both hedonistic and ascetic extremes of behaviour. Common depictions of Shiva address both sides of his nature and include Nataraja, dancing the dance of destruction, and the meditating yogi who has conquered his passions. Shiva might also be depicted as half male, half female and as the Shiva Linga.</p> <p>It is therefore clear that Shiva’s nature is complicated, and devotees of Shiva might address themselves to different aspects of him at different times. But it is also true that his family life is important and plays a part in many stories about him and about other deities. His first wife Sati died, and Shiva devoted himself to meditation until she was reborn as Parvati. Their marriage is considered by many Hindus to be the perfect example of a married lifestyle and they are commonly depicted together.</p> <p>For many Hindus, living within the contemporary world, the familial aspects of Shiva might resonate most closely with their own concerns. If a personal relationship is sought with a deity who understands the concerns of their devotees, then a householder is more likely to connect with Shiva the husband and father than Shiva the erotic ascetic. On the other hand, however, there are Hindus who devote themselves to practices of austerity that reflect this aspect of Shiva, perhaps living on cremation grounds and covering their bodies in ashes.</p>	20

Question	Answer	Marks
9	<p>‘Lakshmi is not concerned with material wealth.’</p> <p>Discuss.</p> <p>Responses might include some of the following material:</p> <p>Lakshmi is the goddess of wealth and prosperity and this relates to both material and spiritual wealth – she is not simply a goddess of money, although she is commonly worshipped by business people and entrepreneurs. Her name is derived from the Sanskrit for ‘goal’, reflecting her concern with the goals of life. These goals do include worldly prosperity, an aim that is most commonly associated with the grihastha (householder) ashrama. It is not an unworthy or inappropriate aim for a religious Hindu since it is through the economic activity of the grihasthas that society is able to function and the other ashramas can be followed. In Hindu mythology Lakshmi is the wife of Vishnu and provides him with the wealth he needs to maintain and preserve the world.</p> <p>However, worldly wealth is not the only aim of life, nor is it a dharmic aim for Hindus outside the grihastha ashrama. That does not mean that Lakshmi can have no significance for other Hindus. The four hands of her murti represent the four purusharthas – dharma, artha, kama and moksha – but also represent both activity in the physical world and the spiritual activities that lead to liberation.</p> <p>Attachment to wealth or being greedy for excessive wealth would create bad karma, regardless of the ashrama one is in or the dedication one shows to Lakshmi. If material wealth is to be sought from the goddess, then it should always be sought in accordance with dharma. According to the Naradasmriti (one of the Dharmashastras) money can be white, black or spotted. White money is morally acquired – through earnings in accordance with one’s status or through inheritance. Black money is wholly immoral and gained through dishonest means such as robbery or fraud. Spotted money is more ambiguous in nature, including interest earned on a loan or gifts given above a fair payment for service. Lakshmi should not be petitioned regarding anything other than white money. She is usually depicted seated on and/or carrying a lotus flower, which represents purity independent of its surroundings. Elephants, signifying activity and strength, and owls, representing the search for knowledge are also associated with Lakshmi. Taken together these symbols demonstrate that she rewards honesty and effort.</p> <p>Other deities associated with wealth, such as Kubera/Kuber, might form part of the discussion, providing evidence that Lakshmi’s concerns are wider than purely material wealth.</p>	20

Question	Answer	Marks
10	<p>Assess the claim that murti puja enables any Hindu to directly experience the divine.</p> <p>Responses might include some of the following material:</p> <p>Murti puja is probably the most common form of Hindu worship, and it is certainly the one most commonly taught as part of Religious Studies. It is not however the only form Hindu worship can take; others include pilgrimage, meditation, physical austerity and yajna and any of these might enable a direct experience of the divine.</p> <p>Murti puja is the ritual worship of a deity in the form of a physical image of the said deity (this is the murti). It can take place at a home shrine, in temples and/or other holy places – anywhere an image (which is not necessarily representational) is present. Typically, murti puja involves making an offering of some kind to the deity, which is returned in the form of prasad (lit. grace or favour). Prasad is most commonly food, but it can also be other non-food items previously made as offerings; the proximity of such items to the deity imbues them with blessings, and the consumption (wearing, or other appropriate use) of them passes this to the devotee. Prasad is shared amongst everyone present during the puja ensuring that everyone can partake of the deity’s blessing.</p> <p>For most Hindus the murti is not merely an image, but one which houses the living presence of the deity as an indweller. This presence must be awoken, so not every image is a living deity, but once installed in a shrine the murti is an honoured guest and is treated as such. Murtis may be woken in the morning, washed and dressed, all of which are acts of devotion on the part of the worshipper and offer an interaction between the deity and their devotee.</p> <p>Murti puja might also involve darshan. This means both looking at the deity and being looked at by them; it is most easily understood as the meeting of murti and devotees’ eyes, but this should not be taken too literally – it can occur in the presence of murti which don’t have eyes. Through this mutual exchange the worshipper offers devotion and the deity bestows blessing.</p> <p>Murti puja is not the only form of worship or religious practice available to Hindus and it is not an exclusive practice. While it is particularly associated with the bhakti marga it might also be performed by Hindus following other paths. It is, however, an accessible way to approach the divine since it does not require specialist teaching, knowledge or material. It is also true that there are some Hindu groups which reject murti puja as the worship of idols, arguing that it is not Vedic in origin and/or that God is one while murtis create the impression of many gods.</p>	20

SECTION D

Question	Answer	Marks
11	<p>Compare the significance of the brahmacharya and vanaprastha ashramas to Hindu society.</p> <p>Responses might include some of the following material:</p> <p>The brahmacharya (student) stage is the first of the four ashramas, during which a Hindu studies with their guru. They live a celibate and austere lifestyle and serve their guru while they learn about the religion. The vanaprastha (forest dweller) stage is the third ashrama. Vanaprastha have passed through the grihastha (householder) ashrama, raised their family and made their economic contributions to society. Vanaprastha retire to live in the forest, either as solitary individuals or together with their wives (although they are usually committed to a celibate lifestyle). Most gurus are in the vanaprastha ashrama. If the ashramas are understood as the ideal path for a life then the vanaprastha ashrama represents the ideal aim of sharing the wisdom gathered throughout a life well-lived before one renounces the world entirely.</p> <p>Vanaprastha is often viewed as being almost synonymous with sannyasin, as if the two ashramas have the same concerns and live in the same way. This may be the result of changes in lifestyle in the contemporary world rendering dwelling in the forest and/or maintaining a traditional gurukul more difficult. However, in the ancient context in which the system of ashrama developed the two stages were clearly distinct.</p> <p>Since it is an ideal all four of the ashramas could be claimed as being equally significant because every Hindu (at least every twice-born Hindu) should pass through each one at the proper time. But each also has its own significance, not just for the individual but for society as a whole. The brahmacharya ashrama ensures that the religion is maintained and practiced according to established traditions, and instils religious values and a love of dharma in the young. On a purely practical level observing this ashrama provides an education for the children who are born to grihasthas, and this is a valuable service to society. The vanaprasthas who are providing that education are accorded the respect they have earned through their age and experience, and the progression through the ashramas means that older people are still of value to society even when no longer economically active.</p> <p>However, it can be argued that as an ideal the four ashramas have rarely been observed as a matter of course by most Hindus. The ideal is drawn from a particular form of Hinduism and is not available to all. Traditionally sudras cannot take upanayana (sacred thread), so cannot become twice born and cannot pursue this path through life. Fulfilling these traditional roles might also be less common in the contemporary world. As a non-universal practice, it is possible to take the view that these two ashramas, and the system of ashrama overall, does not make any significant contribution to society as a whole but is solely the concern of individual Hindus.</p>	20

Question	Answer	Marks
12	<p>‘The pursuit of material wealth is an obstacle to achieving moksha.’</p> <p>Discuss.</p> <p>Responses might include some of the following material:</p> <p>Purushartha literally means ‘object of human pursuit’. It is a key concept in Hinduism and refers to the four proper goals or aims of a human life. These aims are dharma (righteousness, moral values, duty), artha (material prosperity/wealth), kama (sensual pleasure) and moksha (liberation, spiritual values). These aims have a practical impact on how individual lives are lived, informing their actions, moral choices and contributions to society. They also have a spiritual or cosmic impact because actions and choices create karma which prevents liberation and because acting in a dharmic manner upholds rta, the cosmic order.</p> <p>The fact that material wealth is included among the purusharthas is an indication that it is not, in and of itself immoral or an inappropriate aim for Hindus. This is not to say that there are no restrictions or that wealth should/can be pursued regardless of other considerations. Traditionally it is only the grihastha (householder) ashrama that should pursue artha. In this stage of life the aim of artha is in accord with the duty of the individual to make an economic contribution to society and to support their family and religion. Outside of the grihastha ashrama the roles and responsibilities an individual has are different and therefore artha is not an appropriate goal. Therefore, it could be argued that pursuing artha outside the grihastha ashrama would be a barrier to liberation because the aim would be adharmic. It could create bad karma for the individual pursuing it and attach that person more strongly to maya, thus perpetuating rather than ending the cycle of death and rebirth.</p> <p>Ashrama is not the only determining factor in whether artha is a suitable goal. Even within the grihastha ashrama dharma is the fundamental principle which guides their pursuit. Motivation and the reasons for seeking these ends are important and a wrong motivation, greed or an excessive overwhelming desire for something would make the pursuit adharmic rather than dharmic in nature. Enough wealth to live comfortably and support a family is not morally wrong, but greed, loving money and the trappings of wealth for its own sake and/or hoarding it or being uncharitable could render the possession of wealth immoral.</p> <p>Overall moksha is the ultimate goal, and dharma is the universal principle that should guide individuals on how to achieve it. Other goals can be acceptable parts of that process, or they can be obstacles to that ultimate aim. Which they are depends on the context in which they are occurring, including both internal and external factors. There are accounts of individuals who have achieved moksha directly from the grihastha ashrama, which would indicate that material wealth does not necessarily provide an obstacle to liberation.</p>	20

Question	Answer	Marks
13	<p>‘Acting to create good karma prevents liberation.’</p> <p>Discuss.</p> <p>Responses might include some of the following material:</p> <p>Karma is created by human action. The law of karma is a way of accounting for the shape of an individual life – including both sufferings and pleasures – by connecting the state of things to their previous actions. These are usually (but not always) actions from a previous life time. All actions carry unavoidable consequences for the actor; these can be either positive or negative in the way they impact on their future state. Karma is therefore useful as a means of regulating undesirable behaviour – those who wish to avoid future negative consequences will also avoid engaging in behaviours that create it.</p> <p>Both good and bad karma shape each rebirth within samsara. However, good karma does not in and of itself result in liberation – it might enable rebirth in a heavenly realm (although this is not always considered a positive thing in the long term), but it is the removal of or detachment from karma which is usually associated with liberation from rebirth. In other words, one who acts with an attachment to the consequences of that action – a desire to create positive karma (sakam karma) – will not thereby achieve liberation, while one who engages in niskam karma (desireless action) creates no karma at all. This idea of karma marga/karma yoga is set out in the Bhagavad Gita.</p> <p>However, the paths of jnana and bhakti are also described in the Bhagavad Gita. Bhakti marga/yoga (the path of devotion) is said by Krishna to be the highest. This involves complete surrender (prapatti) to God, with liberation being the result of God’s grace. This makes karma of either kind essentially irrelevant as it could be argued that from a bhakti point of view God is the only real actor, and so there is nothing to which karma can attach. Alternatively, the law of karma might be understood as being under the control of a personal deity, rather than a more abstract cosmic principle. In either case it places liberation beyond the direct control of the individual and requires their focus to be on something other than the direct karmic consequence of their choices.</p> <p>These different paths can be understood in relation to the cat and monkey analogies for the human relationship with God. One way to relate to God is as a kitten, who is carried by its mother and hangs limply letting the cat do the work; alternatively, one might relate to God as a baby monkey carried on its mothers back and therefore required to contribute to its progress by hanging on tightly.</p>	20