

Markscheme

May 2024

World religions

Standard level

Paper 2

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Paper 2 markbands

| Marks | Level descriptor |
|--------------|---|
| 0 | The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below. |
| 1–3 | The response demonstrates minimal knowledge and understanding in relation to the demands of the question. There is little use of relevant terminology. The response is descriptive in nature. Any conclusions presented are superficial, anecdotal or common-sense. |
| 4–6 | The response demonstrates some relevant knowledge and understanding of the beliefs/ concepts/ practices/teachings of the specified religion in relation to the demands of the question. There is some use of relevant terminology. The argument is limited and the analysis is only partially consistent with the knowledge and understanding demonstrated. There is some use of examples, but these are generally vague and do not support the argument. There is a limited conclusion(s), but this is not supported by the evidence presented or examples. |
| 7–9 | The response demonstrates mostly relevant and appropriate knowledge and understanding of the beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings of the specified religion in relation to the demands of the question. There is use of relevant terminology, but this is not always consistent. There is an argument, which is generally supported by the analysis; connections between beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings are identified but not developed. The argument at times lacks clarity and coherence but this does not hinder understanding. There is a conclusion(s) but this is only partially supported by the evidence presented and the examples used. |
| 10–12 | The response demonstrates relevant and appropriate knowledge and understanding of the beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings of the specified religion, and this is demonstrated throughout the essay. There is consistent use of relevant terminology. The argument is structured and coherent and supported by the analysis; connections between beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings are identified and developed. There is a conclusion(s) supported by the evidence presented, with relevant examples. There is a partially developed evaluation. |
| 13–15 | The response demonstrates detailed, relevant and appropriate knowledge and understanding of the beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings of the specified religion, and this is demonstrated throughout the essay. There is consistent use of relevant terminology. A reasoned argument(s) is well-structured and coherent and supported by the analysis with connections between beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings clearly identified and effectively developed. There is a conclusion(s) supported by the evidence presented, and effective use of examples. There is a developed evaluation; any minor inconsistencies do not detract from the strength of the overall argument. |

Section A

Hinduism

1. Compare how the supreme being in Hinduism can be understood as either personal or non-personal.

It is a Hindu belief that Brahman is the ultimate reality. Hindus aim is to become one with Brahman in spiritual unity. Brahman can be understood in different ways, including nirguna and saguna.

Non-personal form:

- Belief in a supreme being may be found in the sanatana dharma (eternal teachings). This conceived without form or shape is known as nirguna Brahman.
- Formless Brahman represents a presence that is unlimited and found everywhere. Brahman is in everything.
- A physical representation might be seen as limiting. Formless nirguna helps to express abstract qualities such as pure energy, power and reality.
- Nirguna Brahman is not represented by statues but may be shown by the aum symbol. This represents the sound which began the universe, which is also formless.
- Hindus might think of their soul or essence which will leave their physical body and enter another in cycles of reincarnation and think of this as a way to understand the difference between form and formless.
- It is important to understand Brahman in both aspects, nirguna and saguna, to achieve moksha.
- It can be difficult to think of the formless, so Hindus may turn to saguna to help them realise Brahman.

Personal form:

- Murtis are images or statues that Hindus worship as representations of saguna Brahman. Devotion to the image enables the worshipper to connect to Ultimate Reality more clearly.
- Brahman may be represented as three physical forms, called The Trimurti: Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Sustainer and Shiva the Destroyer. Devotion to these gods, helped by their physical forms, can help worshippers enter higher spiritual realms.
- In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Shiva refers to devotion to murtis (images) as a way to achieve union with Brahman.
- Gods and goddesses can take human forms as Avatars. They help people and inspire them to find greater awareness of spirituality in their lives in the time within which the incarnation takes place.
- Ishwara or Ishta-Devata is the worship of a personal god. Hindus may choose a god to become devoted to. They keep a murti (image) of that god at home and think about and meditate before their god and give puja to the god.
- This form of god helps Hindus to focus their devotion. They think of the god and dedicate all that they do to the deity. They make speak to the god and avoid anything that may lead them to become distanced.

Accept any other relevant answer.

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

2. Discuss the importance for Hindus of obtaining the Three Objectives and satisfying the Three Debts

- The Three Objectives in Hinduism are dharma, artha and kama. These help Hindus to lead a good life which is morally and ethically sound.
- Following the objectives helps Hindus to build up good karma. This may bring them a favourable rebirth in the next life.
- Each individual has their own dharma. They have their own duties and aims, and these help them to lead a righteous life.
- There are different types of dharma. Sanatana dharma is the eternal duty to god for all Hindus, regardless of background. This may be seen as a code of conduct for daily life focused on god. This helps Hindus show humility, kindness and patience to others.
- The objective of dharma therefore helps Hindus as individuals and in communities, and some see the two as linked or even interchangeable.
- Kama is about love and pleasure. This can be for procreation as well as for personal interests, such as culture, art and music. This is important to fulfil natural desires and to produce children.
- The aim of artha is to gain wealth or income, which is necessary for life. This should not be seen as materialism, because the aim of gaining wealth is as a means to achieve moksha, rather than attachment to life in this world.
- The Three Objectives may be seen together with moksha as four principles. Achieving moksha, liberation from the cycle of reincarnation, is the aim behind following the moral duties contained in the Three Objectives.
- The Three Debts of Hinduism are to the gods; to the sages and to the ancestors. These help to preserve harmony in society and with the natural world.
- To repay the gods for having given human life, good acts should be done to show kindness to people in need and all living creatures.
- To repay the debt to the sages, a person should study the sacred texts and gain knowledge. They should pass on this knowledge to the next generation.
- The ancestor's debt is repaid by honouring the family reputation and carrying on the family by producing children.
- Vedic texts are linked to the importance of satisfying the Three Debts. Contemplating the Vedic texts helps to release an individual from the stages of debt.
- Performing sacrifices, such as sacrificing time for service in the temple, helps to repay the sages and is important in strengthening the community.

Accept any other relevant answer.

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

Buddhism

3. Discuss different ways in which Buddhists venerate the Buddha.

- Candidates may implicitly or explicitly infer that the Buddha is venerated for his exemplary qualities and spiritual achievements; he is not worshipped as god or God who is responsive to human affairs.
- Candidates may argue that Buddhists venerate the Buddha by trying to emulate his qualities in their own lives through following the dharma, as they interpret it.
- Through puja towards iconic (ie anthropomorphic) images of the Buddha, or towards aniconic images (ie symbolic representations) of the Buddha's qualities. Candidates might explain different elements of the puja and their symbolic meanings. They might comment on puja as an individual and/or communal practice.
- Candidates might refer to the offering of flowers, incense, light and food plus the chanting of verses (sometimes from the holy texts) in front of Buddha images.
- Through following the dharma in their daily lives as monks, nuns, or laity. For example, by following the Noble Eightfold Path, the Five precepts, and the greater (monks and nuns) and lesser (laity) vows.
- Through systematized study and / or oral recitation of scripture, e.g. recitation of the Three Jewels, Pali Canon (Theravada) or Diamond Sutra, Heart Sutra and Lotus Sutra (Mahayana).
- Through keeping the dharma alive and passing it on to subsequent generations through monastic and lay communities.
- For monks and nuns, through keeping the Vinaya (monastic rules).
- Through respectful treatment of Buddhist spiritual leaders who emulate the qualities of the Buddha; Dalai Lama is just one example.

Accept any other relevant answer.

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

4. “Ahimsa (non-violence) is the most important of the Five Precepts.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Candidates should show understanding that the Five Precepts sit within the fourth spoke of the Noble Eightfold Path, which is Right Action.

Candidates should show understanding that Ahimsa is listed first in the list of the five precepts, which are: (i) ahimsa (non-harm, non-violence); (ii) not to take what is not given; (iii) not to misuse the senses, and especially to abide by fidelity, chastity, respectful relationships; (iv) honest speech, refrain from dishonest and slanderous speech; (v) avoid toxicants that inhibit clear thinking.

Points in support of the statement

- Ahimsa means avoidance of intentional harm to others and to self. Harm may be caused by action, speech or thought. Causing intentional harm to others generates de-meritorious karma causing spiritual harm to the Self through continued entrapment in samsara [cycle of life, death and rebirth].
- Ahimsa comes first in the list of five.
- As a concept, ahimsa encompasses the other four precepts.
- Ahimsa promotes compassion, which is Buddhism’s central ethical standpoint.
- It is impossible to keep the other four precepts without practicing ahimsa.

Points for not supporting the statement

- There is no hierarchy in the Buddha’s dharma; all teachings are of equal importance. The Noble Eightfold Path is symbolised as a wheel not a ladder to show that the teachings are equal and interconnected.
- Ahimsa does not stand alone but is made up of the four other precepts.
- Taking only what is given promotes generosity and equity and helps to avoid creating karma-generating attachments. It may be interpreted at a personal level, for example not stealing someone else’s possessions. It may also be interpreted at communal and global levels, for example the equal distribution of global resources to mitigate poverty and promote social equity.
- (iii) Avoiding misuse of the senses is often interpreted as promoting fidelity and respect towards others and oneself in relationships. For monks and nuns it means celibacy, and often complete separation of men and women. For laity it means honesty and faithfulness in personal relationships. Fidelity may be interpreted according to cultural contexts; for example, for some cultures it may mean sex only within marriage, for other cultures it may mean monogamy without the necessity of marriage.
- (iv) Honest speech can be interpreted as truthfulness and can also be interpreted as respect and integrity when speaking to or about others. This would include avoidance of slanderous, hurtful or vacuous comments. The Buddha taught that silence is preferable to harmful speech.
- (v) Mental discipline is an important feature in Buddhist teaching, so intoxicants that inhibit clear thinking should be avoided. Toxicants might include chemical stimulants such as drugs or alcohol. Toxicants might also be interpreted as banal information or misinformation that clutter and distract the mind.

Accept any other relevant answer.

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

Sikhism

5. Examine the use of Gurmukhi in Sikhism.

- Gurmukhi is the name of the script used in Sikhism. Literally it means from the Guru's mouth, showing that it is more than an everyday language and carries spiritual significance.
- The Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of Sikhism, is written in Gurmukhi. In services in the Gurdwara, Sikhs read the Guru Granth Sahib in the original script and language, not in translation.
- Gurmukhi evolved for a thousand years before Guru Nanak, from old Brahmi and Sanskrit languages. The words in Gurmukhi bring together different dialects which were used by saints. Some phrases have been included from Persian and other Indo-Aryan languages, reflecting the rich heritage of Sikhism which draws on multiple traditions.
- The second Guru, Guru Angad Dev, standardised the Gurmukhi script. He used it to write down the hymns and life of Guru Nanak, so that Sikhs could read and understand them.
- Vowels were included and letters included where they depicted sounds of the spoken language, making it easier for Sikhs to say their devotions accurately, and make their recitation beautiful.
- Guru Angad Dev wanted to make the Adi Granth, the first collection of the Guru Granth Sahib, more easily accessible to people. At this time normally only people with specialist religious training could read and thereby access to scriptures. Gurmukhi made the text accessible to many more people.
- Standardisation of the language ensured that it could be passed down accurately, and the authentic meaning would be retained.
- When new copies of the Guru Granth Sahib are made, the words of Gurmukhi are placed on exactly the same place in every book, showing the importance Sikhs give to maintaining the language.
- The language of Gurmukhi can be difficult for Sikhs nowadays to understand, so a translation is sometimes read afterwards to help them understand the passages. But the original Gurmukhi is the language used for the prayers taken from the holy scriptures.
- Sikhs usually send their children to learn how to read Gurmukhi in the Gurdwara. This is particularly important for Sikhs living outside of India so that the young can maintain their heritage through learning the language.
- Gurmukhi is used today for writing the Punjabi language and is the most important script used by Sikhs today.

Accept any other relevant answer.

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

6. Discuss attitudes to conversion in Sikhism.

- Sikhism has a distinct identity, including guidelines for dress with the five Ks, its own scriptures and leaders. Despite this, conversion is not often seen a feature of Sikhism.
- The Gurus respected and drew on writings from many different religious traditions including Hinduism and Islam. They looked on other philosophical traditions as inspirational and not as competitors.
- In his time, Guru Nanak Dev Ji was highly regarded as a spiritual teacher by some Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists he met. The Gurus sought to inspire others with their spiritual teachings. In this way, Sikhism was promoted without asking anyone for conversion.
- Some Sikhs oppose preaching in the style of missionary teachers, believing this can put off someone who is searching for deeper meaning on their own spiritual path.
- Some Hindus from the low caste Dalit background decided to convert to Sikhism, attracted by the equality they found in the faith.
- 3HO (Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization), also known as Sikh Dharma, was founded in America in 1970 by Harbhajan Singh Khalsa, also known as Yogi Bajan. This was founded to promote Sikhism. Some of its members promoted conversion to the faith.
- 3HO set up Yoga camps and promoted vegetarianism and meditation, which inspired some people in western countries to take interest in the faith, especially those searching for a spiritual path. Through this organisation some people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds converted to Sikhism.
- There is no special ceremony for conversion. A person may be considered Sikh if they feel that is where their heart lies. It is not necessary to take on a new name, although some people do so in a naming ceremony at a Gurdwara.
- The process of conversion includes learning about Sikh prayers, rituals and lifestyle. A convert to Sikhism is expected to refrain from alcohol, smoking and extra-marital sexual relations. Most also eat a vegetarian diet.
- Sikh converts need to learn their prayers, particularly the early morning Sadhana which is normally said at home. This involves developing a disciplined routine. Sikhs believe this will bring the Guru's blessing on the convert and their family.
- It is not necessary for a partner who is not a Sikh to convert at the same time, though new Sikhs may influence them gently with aspects of Sikhism.
- Some Sikh converts may wish to become members of the Khalsa and go through an amrit ceremony, after which they may wear the 5Ks as symbols of their identity, taking pride in their new religion.

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—Hinduism **or** Buddhism **or** Sikhism—justify the importance of **two** religious festivals.

The focus of the question is the importance of the two religious festivals. Candidates have free choice about what festivals they choose.

Responses might include differences in cultural or geographical practices and should be credited accordingly.

Buddhism

- Buddhist festivals include Wesak (Vesak), full moon in May, celebrating the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death; Asala (also known as Dhamma/Dharma Day), celebrating the Buddha's conception, renunciation and first sermon; Kathina (giving of robes to monks); Vassa/Varsa (rain retreats); and Obon Matsuri (homage to the dead) in Japan.
- Different schools of Buddhism have different dates for festivals and different ways of celebrating them.
- Different schools of Buddhism sometimes celebrate different festivals.
- Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism commemorate Wesak (Vesak) in different ways. In Theravada Buddhism Wesak commemorates and celebrates the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death. In Mahayana Buddhism Wesak commemorates and celebrates the Buddha's enlightenment.
- Japanese Buddhist traditions celebrate the birth of the Buddha in April.
- Commemorating important episodes in the Buddha's life-story through festivals is important for keeping their memory alive for subsequent generations.
- Celebrating the Buddha's enlightenment as a great spiritual achievement is an important source of inspiration for Buddhists.
- The Buddha's enlightenment is of special importance because it enabled him to teach the Dhamma/Dharma, the means of liberation.
- Asala commemorates and celebrates the Buddha's first sermon after his enlightenment, where he first taught the Dhamma/Dharma. This is sometimes known as 'setting in motion the wheel of Dhamma/Dharma' and set out the Four Noble Truths.
- Celebrating the Dhamma/Dharma is important because it is the bedrock of Buddhism and reminds Buddhists of the Buddha's generosity in sharing the Dhamma/Dharma with his followers.
- Kathina (giving of robes to monks) to signify the interdependent relationship between the lay community and the monks. Historically and traditionally important because it happened to the Buddha. The community makes the robes in a special way to honour to ardour of the vocation.
- Vassa/Varsa (rain retreat) is important because it recollects the practices of the Buddha and his followers and became part of a monastic tradition. On the final day of the retreat, Kathina is held and, in some countries, opportunities for ordination.
- Festivals are important as special times when Buddhists remember the importance of the Buddha and the dharma in their lives and express their gratitude.
- Some Buddhists observe additional vows and are more disciplined in their religious practice during festival times. This is important to them in their own spiritual journey.
- Festivals are important because they bring Buddhist communities (sangha) together in celebration. This helps to unite communities and reinforce their presence. For example, Buddhists celebrate Wesak and Asala with congregational puja; decorating their Buddhist Centre with lanterns, flags and flowers; attending special services; and joining in a procession.

- Festival times are important because Buddhists make contributions to the sangha by making donations to Buddhist Centres and monastic communities.

Hinduism

- Festivals are important in Hinduism as a way of remembering and celebrating important stories about Hindu gods and goddesses.
- For example, Holi commemorates the story of Prahlada who was faithful to Vishnu and refused to worship the King (his father) as a god. Prahlada defeated his siblings and proved his faithfulness to Vishnu through ordeal by fire.
- For example, Divali celebrates the story of how Prince Rama rescued his wife Princess Sita from the demon Ravana with the help of his friend Hanuman, the monkey god.
- Celebrating such stories through festivals is important because they remind Hindus of their important messages, for example, Prahlada's faithfulness, the King's hubris, Vishnu's power, Rama's bravery, Hanuman's heroism and Sita's chastity.
- Festivals are a way of remembering important stories about the pantheon and passing them on to subsequent generations. This is important to Hindu community and culture.
- Festivals are important in bringing Hindu families and communities together in celebration, community spirit and community identity.
- For example, during Holi Hindu communities come together in playful gatherings where they throw coloured powder (gulal) at each other. One explanation for this is to celebrate Krishna's mischievous character and his love for his consort, Radha.
- For example, during Divali communities may organise firework displays and extravagant illuminations. Hindus may decorate their homes and streets with diva lamps, candles, and fairy lights. Families may exchange cards and gifts and prepare special food, especially sweets.
- Festivals are important for learning about Hindu teachings. For example, Divali teaches about the Hindu concept of dharma; that social stability depends on maintaining proper social order, illustrated by Rama and Sita's return.
- Divali teaches about Hindu philosophy by celebrating the triumph of good over evil; knowledge over ignorance; light over darkness. This is symbolised by lighting diva lamps and other types of illuminations.
- Festivals such as Navaratri and Dassehra are important because they celebrate and honour the power of goddesses in the Hindu pantheon, for example Durga. This recognises the equal importance of gods and goddesses.

Sikhism

- Festivals are important for commemorating and celebrating important events in Sikh history that are associated with the development of Sikhism. For example, Vaisakhi (New Year's Eve, anniversary of the Khalsa being realized on Earth) celebrates the founding of Khalsa Sikhism in 1699 by the tenth guru, Guru Gobind Singh. This was the start of the Panth Khalsa, which means 'the Order of the Pure Ones'. This is important because it marks the start of a new and enduring community identity for Sikhs.
- Festivals are important for commemorating and celebrating important episodes in the lives of the Gurus. For example, Divali celebrates the story of the release in 1619 of the sixth guru, Guru Hargobind, from Gwalior Fort where he was imprisoned by the Moghul Emperor Jahangir.
- Festivals celebrate the lives of the Gurus who are central to Sikh religious and community life. Gurpurb commemorates births and deaths of the gurus. Special significance is given to the birth of Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru. Celebrations include a community procession with the Guru Granth Sahib.
- Festivals commemorate and celebrate exemplary and inspirational Sikhs in history; for example, the loyalty of the Panj Piare, beloved ones (Vaisakhi); the bravery of and martyrdom of Sikh scholar and community leader, Bhai Mani Singh (Divali).

- Festivals are important because they retell the origins of important Sikh rituals. For example, Vaisakhi recounts the story of the Panj Piare ('five beloved ones') who were the first Sikhs to be initiated (baptised) into the Khalsa Sikh community. Initiation to the Khalsa Sikh community is called amrit sanskar and includes sprinkling initiates with amrit (sugar water) to replicate the original ceremony.
- Festivals are important because they explain the origins and significance of Sikh symbols of identity. For example, Vaisakhi explains the origin and meaning of the Five K's and the names Kaur (for women, meaning Princess) and Singh (for men, meaning Lion).
- Festivals celebrate special times in the year. For example, Vaisakhi is a harvest festival that originally celebrated the first harvest of crops.
- Festivals are important for bringing the Sikh community together in unity. At festival times Sikhs typically go to the gurdwara for special celebrations that include continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib (Akhand Path), singing prayers (kirtan, shabad), processions with the Guru Granth Sahib, music and dancing, and community celebration dinners (langar) and distribution of sweets.
- Festivals are an important opportunity for Sikhs to come together to commemorate and celebrate their community identity and history; and in particular their historic struggle for religious and community autonomy (e.g. Divali).

Accept any other relevant answer.

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

Section B

Judaism

8. Examine the importance of Kabbalah (mysticism) in Judaism.
- The Kabbalah is the Jewish esoteric teachings which have evolved since the period of the Second Temple. Many of the ideas were later absorbed into popular customs.
 - Traditionally it was believed to have been revealed to Adam or as a secret part of the oral law to Moses. It means 'received tradition' but was never taught publicly.
 - The goal of the Kabbalah is to uncover the hidden life of God with the secrets of his relationship with creation. It deals with the deepest questions regarding the Creator, the universe and human souls.
 - Unlike the Torah and Talmud which were meant to be accessible to all, the Kabbalah was taught one to one from master to disciple. Scholars had to understand the other aspects of the Torah before beginning to study the Kabbalah.
 - One system of the Kabbalah is the Lurianic system which introduced the concept of Tikkun Olam (reparation of the universe).
 - The Zohar (meaning brilliance) is a particularly important work in the Kabbalah. This is claimed to have derived from the writings of the Talmudic sage Simeon bar Yochai. It describes life after death, including references to reincarnation.
 - Many say that the Talmud teaches how to serve God, but the Kabbalah teaches how to become one with God.

Accept other relevant answers.

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

9. “Pesach (Passover) is the most important festival for Jews.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?

To answer this question fully candidates will be expected to refer to some other Jewish festival(s) to justify their claim.

Points in support of the statement

- Pesach is important because it celebrates and commemorates the liberation of Jews through the Exodus from 400 years of slavery. It is seen as a turning point in Jewish history.
- Pesach is an important festival for the family to celebrate together.
- The Torah states that Pesach should be celebrated as a Festival of Freedom each year Exodus 12:14.
- As the question asks if Pesach is the most important, all relevant references to why other festivals are important should be credited.
- Pesach is the longest Jewish festival as it lasts either 5 or 7 days depending on where it is being celebrated.
- Through the story of the Exodus the miraculous power of God is shown.
- Pesach is important in remembering and reliving past experiences of Pesach and how suffering can be over-come and reaffirms identity.
- Pesach is particularly important as a family occasion, and it is celebrated with communal meals in the home.

Points for not supporting the statement

- There are many festivals in Judaism, and each has a historic and personal importance.
- Celebrating Sukkot is a mitzvah.
- Yom Kippur is a time of judgement and atonement. It is considered as the holiest day and therefore many would consider it the most important festival.
- Pesach is an important festival but not the ‘most important’.
- Each family might consider a specific festival is the most important due to their personal opinion and practices.
- Shabbat is such an important festival as shown by the fact it is celebrated every week. The observing of Shabbat fulfils one of the Ten Commandments. It is a special time for family and community to join together. As the first festival mentioned in the Torah, it is often considered the most important.

Accept other relevant answers.

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

Christianity

10. Examine the authority of the Bible in different Christian denominations.

Candidates may include the following points:

- In all Christian denominations the Bible has very high authority and status and traditionally is believed to be the inspired word of God.
- In the 19th and 20th centuries rationalistic, Western secular views of scripture led to some Christian churches adopting a more individualistic, liberal approach to the authority and use of Holy Scripture.
- In Catholic and Orthodox denominations, the authority, interpretation and use of the Bible is rooted in Church tradition, especially that of the Church Fathers.
- All denominations root the authority and use of the Bible in Apostolic tradition (the tradition of the apostles of Jesus Christ) but there are differences in interpretation as to what this means.
- For Catholic and Orthodox traditions, apostolic tradition must be interpreted through the authority and teaching of the institution of the Church, which is regarded as divinely inspired.
- In the Roman Catholic tradition, this is rooted in the authority of the Papacy and the Magisterium.
- Protestant and Evangelical denominations may give what they call 'supreme' authority to Holy Scripture and may believe that later teachings of the Catholic Church have undervalued this authority in favour of the authority of what they deemed to be solely human institutions.
- Catholic and Orthodox denominations believe that Protestant traditions elevated the authority of the individual believer above that of sacred, divinely inspired Church traditions.
- Reference may be made to different canons of Holy Scripture, e.g. Protestant Churches tend to restrict it to 66 books, believing that only they are divinely inspired, but may be used for historical and reflective purposes. Catholics and Orthodox give more authority to the so-called Apocryphal books, including them in their bibles.
- Christians interpret the authority of the Bible in different ways, for example, literalist and liberal approaches. These approaches can often be found within and across the different Christian denominations.
- The authority of the Bible is reflected in its varying uses in public worship and private devotion.

Marks should also be given for Bible quotations concerning the authority of the Bible, e.g.

- "Man/humanity cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Deuteronomy 8.3; Matthew 4.4.)
- "The word of God is living and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, joint and marrow" (Hebrews 4.12).

Accept any other relevant answer.

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

11. “Church and state should always be separate.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Points to support the statement

- In Matthew 22:21 Jesus referred to the separation of Church and state matters when asked about whether or not to pay taxes to an oppressive, occupying state (Rome). “Then he (Jesus) said to them, ‘Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s’”.
- Candidates might refer to Christians who have refused to obey state laws demanding that citizens worship the State/Emperor leading to persecution and martyrdom.
- Jesus rejected the popular messianic expectation of the time that he would lead an armed uprising/political revolution against the Roman state and re-establish a political Kingdom of Israel. Instead, Jesus preached a spiritual revolution (e.g. loving the enemy and calling people blessed who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake) and establishing a spiritual kingdom of heaven (“My kingdom is not of this world” John 18.36).
- Some denominations refuse to take part in any state led conflict, e.g. the Jehovah Witness tradition and many Mennonites/Amish. They believe their authority can only come from God and are not willing to take up weapons for an earthly state/government.
- Candidates may refer to contexts where conflict may arise between Church and State, e.g. same-sex marriages, conscientious objectors and also medical issues such as abortion and euthanasia.

Points against the statement

- The New Testament epistles (letters) urge Christians to respect the State authorities (e.g. the Roman Emperor) and obey its laws and pray for the King/Emperor even when they are being oppressed by the State.
- When the Roman Empire legalised Christianity and later made it a State religion, the relationship between Church and State changed and for many centuries the two institutions became inseparable.
- In many states, some Christians and Churches have acted as a voice of conscience and engaged in open critique and protest, e.g. to defend the interests of the poor and oppressed in society. Oscar Romero and the Liberation Theology movement in South America. Sometimes the Church has led rebellion against the state and its institutions, e.g. Baptist Church members leading rebellions against slavery in Jamaica.
- Traditions of civil disobedience led by Church leaders, e.g. Martin Luther King Junior and the civil rights movement in the USA.
- Candidates may refer to contexts where the state protects the practices and beliefs of Christians, e.g. blasphemy laws.
- In some countries the head of state is required to represent the Church.

Marks should be awarded for references to the influence of any Old Testament traditions and literature that have influenced Christian thinkers and movements with respect to the relationship between Church and State.

Accept any other relevant answer.

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

Islam

12. Examine the importance of tafsir (the science of interpretation or exegesis of the Qur'an) for Muslims.

- In the early days of Islam, Muhammad made comments about the Qur'an, and his companions told people what it meant. After they died, commentaries began to be made, first orally, then later written.
- The Qur'an is considered the literal word of Allah by Muslims, so understanding its meaning guides their daily life and practice and is used to help make Shari'ah law.
- These commentaries helped to explain what verses in the Qur'an meant, so that generations of Muslims living after the Prophet could understand its meaning.
- There are different types of tafsir. Distinction is made between tafsir made by the early companions who knew Muhammad, and those made later who exercised their personal opinions and rational thinking.
- Islamic scholars suggested conditions which qualified a person to make a tafsir. It is essential to have knowledge of Classic Arabic, the language of the Qur'an. It helps to have understanding of the roots of the Arabic words, because they give rise to a range of meanings.
- The Qur'an refers to itself and its verses. Some are clear and some are metaphors; some have hidden meanings. tafsir clarify these verses.
- tafsir vary according to the school and perspectives they represent. For example, those written from a Shi'a perspective and those that take an inner (esoteric) approach to meaning. Their tafsir helps to root their tradition in the Qur'an.
- Scholars suggest that without tafsir guidance, Muslims might go astray and follow their own desires. This might sow the seeds of disunity in the Ummah.
- Dehlavi, also known as Shah Waliullah, developed approaches to tafsir. He referred to five sciences of tafsir: the science of rulings; debate; Allah's favours; incidents of the past; and the science of what happens after death.
- The Qur'an refers to abrogated verses: earlier revealed verses replaced by later ones. Scholars disagree on their number. Dehlavi took the view that there were only five and explained these for Muslims.
- Dehlavi wrote that it was necessary for a commentator to know the context of the revelation of a verse, and the specific meaning which flows from this. He criticised those who had made commentaries without this knowledge.
- Dehlavi also said that it was important to know which verses had a single meaning and those which could be interpreted in different ways. He said that commentators should keep to the interpretations of the early Arabs in this regard.

Accept any other relevant answer.

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

13. “The most important role of Allah is creator.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Points in support of the statement

- Muslims believe that Allah is the ultimate creator of everything, including the heavens, universe, the earth and everything in it. They usually refer to Allah as first cause: Allah is beyond creation, and Allah was the first cause to begin the creation of the universe.
- One Hadith tradition suggests Allah says: ‘I was a hidden treasure and I desired to be known, so I created the world.’ The creation reflects the beauty of the creation and is referred to as containing ‘signs’ in the Qur’an. Allah created signs to guide people to the straight path.
- Allah is referred to as both the first cause and the continuing creator. Allah predestined all events which are written on a tablet kept in heaven. Allah continues to be the cause behind all events and as the All-Powerful can choose to intervene in creation.
- It could be argued that all the qualities of Allah are dependent on Allah as creator. No judgment, no test, no compassion could be given if Allah had not fulfilled the role of creator in the first place.

Points for not supporting the statement

- Allah has ninety-nine names or attributes. Creator is one besides others such as Judge.
- Some Muslims see all of Allah’s roles as linked and equal: Allah created humans, guides them, is compassionate towards them then judges them in the afterlife.
- Another important role of Allah is to test people. Adam and Hawa, his wife and the first woman, were sent to earth from the Garden of Paradise for disobeying Allah. This was a test of faith which all Muslims today also undertake on earth.
- Although all Muslims would agree that Allah had a role in creation, some (such as Ibn Arabi) see the creation as an eternal reflection of Allah which is subtly different from Allah as creator. Therefore, the complexity of opinions about this role may be acknowledged.
- The many attributes of Allah are generally considered as different but not more or less important than each other.

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—Judaism **or** Christianity **or** Islam—discuss attitudes to abortion.

Christianity

- There are different attitudes to abortion within Christianity. Attitudes might be influenced by different sources of authority (e.g. papal bulls, sacred texts and teachings), interpretations of those sources, the law of the country, interpretations of the teachings of Jesus.
- Attitudes often depend upon beliefs about when life begins and the sanctity of life. For many Christians the belief that the incarnation of the Son of God began at conception informs their attitudes to when life begins and its sanctity.
- Catholic, Orthodox and many Protestant denominations forbid abortion as they teach all life is sacred from the point of conception.
- Many Christians believe that to terminate life is a moral evil.
- Many Christians disagree with abortion as they believe it goes against the commandment 'thou shalt not kill'.
- The Didache (early authoritative Christian teachings) forbids the killing of an embryo.
- Some Christian denominations believe that abortion should be permitted if the mother's life or permanent health is in danger.
- Some Christians consider that circumstances need to be taken into account, e.g. in the case of rape.

Islam

- Islam teaches that God creates life and is the only one who can take life.
- The Qur'an does not specifically refer to abortion although Surah 6:151 forbids the killing of children for economic reasons. It is believed on the Day of Judgement a child has the right to ask why it was killed.
- Although Islam teaches that abortion is haram (forbidden), many Muslims permit abortion if the mother's life is in danger. They consider it the "lesser of two evils".
- Some schools of Islam allow abortion up to the first 16 weeks of pregnancy but others up to the first seven weeks. The difference relates to beliefs about when ensoulment takes place.

Judaism

- There are different attitudes regarding abortion in Judaism.
- Jewish law does not consider an unborn foetus as a 'person' until it is born. Once born then the mitzvot of Pikuach Nefesh (setting aside a law to save a life) would be a major consideration.
- The Ethics of the Fathers (4:29) refers to situations concerning abortion although this text is often interpreted in different ways.
- Usually, Orthodox Jews forbid abortion as God is the Creator, and only he can take life. Often a Rabbi would be consulted to support a decision.
- Reform Judaism permits abortion in some circumstances, such as if the mother's life is at risk.

Accept any other relevant answer.

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