

# Markscheme

**May 2025**

**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
<b>0</b>	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
<b>1–2</b>	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.
<b>3–4</b>	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.
<b>5–6</b>	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. Just as in this body the embodied soul passes into childhood, youth and old age, so also does the soul pass into another body; the firm person does not grieve at that.

Bhagavad Gita 2:13 (adapted)

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

Candidates might cite or interpret some of the following points:

- The soul is to be found within the current body
- The soul can pass between different ages
- It passes from childhood to youth
- It passes from youth to old age
- The soul also passes on into another physical body
- The firm person does not 'grieve' or mourn this.

*Accept other valid points.*

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

- (b) Explain the Hindu belief that humans are caught in an endless cycle of reincarnation. **[6]**

- Hindus believe in samsara, the concept of a cycle of life, in which there is birth, death and rebirth. The rebirth refers to the atman (soul), which transfers from one physical body to a new form.
- Rebirth is dependent on the actions of a person, known as karma. Good actions may result in a favourable re-birth, whereas bad actions may result in the soul being re-born into a less favourable body, which may also be another animal or creature or plant.
- The atman (soul) is part of the same ultimate reality, Brahman. During the cycles of reincarnation, Hindus follow the path of Jnana to gain more knowledge of this ultimate reality.
- Different forms of Hinduism have different ways of conceptualizing the relationship between God and the human being. The bhakti (loving devotion) tradition often sees God in personal terms and as different from the human being.
- Bad karma has a corrupting effect on the world. This catches Hindus into leading lives which are focused on worldly distractions and may prevent a soul from gaining deeper knowledge.
- The atman (soul) achieves knowledge that it is the same as Brahman and this realisation of reality frees the soul from its worldly reincarnations and enables it to reunite with Brahman.

*Accept other relevant answers.*

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

## Buddhism

2. The basic meaning of compassion is not just a feeling of closeness, or just a feeling of pity. With genuine compassion we not only feel the pains and suffering of others but we also have a feeling of determination to overcome that suffering. One aspect of compassion is some kind of determination and responsibility. Therefore, compassion brings us tranquillity and also inner strength. Inner strength is the ultimate source of success.

The Nobel Evening Address. Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Oslo, Norway, 11 December 1989.

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

Candidates might cite or interpret some of the following points:

- Compassion is more than a feeling of closeness.
- Compassion is more than a feeling of pity.
- Compassion is more than feeling the pains / and sufferings of others.
- To be determined to overcome the suffering of others is genuine compassion.
- Determination is one aspect of compassion.
- Responsibility is one aspect of compassion.
- Compassion brings tranquility, or peace of mind.
- Compassion brings inner strength.
- Inner strength is another way of expressing determination.
- Tranquility is another way of expressing determination.
- Inner strength is the ultimate source of success.
- Compassion leads to inner strength; inner strength is the source of success.

*Accept other valid points.*

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

- (b) Explain how Buddhists develop wisdom to achieve Enlightenment. **[6]**

*Candidates might discuss aspects of the Buddha's life-story, Buddhist teachings and/or Buddhist practices that help Buddhists to develop wisdom, and link these to Enlightenment.*

- The development of compassion is important to Buddhists but it must be applied with wisdom.
- Buddhists look to the example of the Buddha's life as inspiration for developing wisdom because gaining wisdom was fundamental to the Buddha's own Enlightenment. For example, the Buddha's defeat of Mara's temptations whilst meditating beneath the bodhi tree, which led to him attaining Enlightenment.
- Buddhists aim to study and follow the Buddha's teachings, dhamma/dharma (teachings of Buddha, also the truth) to develop wisdom about the nature of the self, of reality, how to overcome karma, and how to be released from samsara. The Buddha taught that without such wisdom, Enlightenment cannot be achieved.
- The Buddha taught that samsara is perpetuated by 'ignorance/illusion, craving and hatred/aversion', known as the Three Poisons (sometimes called the Three Fires). Buddhist teachings help Buddhists to understand the causes of this, and Buddhist practices help them to cultivate wisdom instead of ignorance. Cultivating wisdom breaks the cycle of samsara necessary for Enlightenment by extinguishing the poison/fire of ignorance.
- The Buddha taught the Noble Eightfold Path as guidance for attaining Enlightenment. 'Right Understanding' and 'Right Thought' are collectively described as the wisdom (panna/prajna) strands of the Noble Eightfold Path. Through

studying panna/prajna, Buddhists develop their understanding of wisdom by learning that wisdom draws on understanding the true nature of reality to make rational judgements and is not based on superficial emotions.

- ‘Right Effort’, ‘Right Mindfulness’ and ‘Right Concentration’ are collectively described as the meditation (bhavana) strand of the Noble Eightfold Path. Meditation is an internal practice that many Buddhists undertake to cultivate wisdom about the nature of self and reality necessary for enlightenment. Vipassana meditation is one type of meditation that some Buddhists practice to develop insight.
- Monks, nuns and lay Buddhists often seek guidance from senior Buddhist leaders to deepen their understanding of Buddhist teachings in order to further develop wisdom. They might do this by joining a monastic or lay Buddhist community, or by reading or listening to sermons by senior leaders.
- Through their routine religious practices Buddhists may deepen their wisdom necessary for Enlightenment. For example, through puja (veneration), Buddhists are reminded of the important teachings of anicca/anitya (change or impermanence) and anatta/anatman (lack of permanent self) as the puja flowers fade and the smoke from the incense dissipates. Realization of anatta/anatman is an essential step on the path to Enlightenment.

## Sikhism

3. Suffering is the medicine, and pleasure the disease, because where there is pleasure, there is no desire for God. You are the Creator Lord; I can do nothing. Even if I try, nothing happens. I am a sacrifice to Your almighty creative power which is pervading everywhere.

Guru Granth Sahib 469 (adapted)

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

Candidates might cite or interpret some of the following points:

- Suffering is a medicine for people
- This is linked to a disease, which is pleasure
- This is explained because when in pleasure, people lack desire for God
- God is acknowledged as the Creator Lord, who is being addressed in this passage
- Humans do not have any power to do anything
- Their efforts do not result in anything happening
- Humans are in reality a sacrifice to a power which is spread everywhere
- This is identified as God's almighty creative power.

*Accept other valid points.*

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

- (b) Explain Sikh beliefs about the role of God in creating the human condition. **[6]**

- God in Sikhism is one without form, creator of everything and permeating within everything in the universe, transcendent and immanent. Included in this is the creation of all things, humans and the world humans live in.
- God is the only reality and the human condition, according to the senses felt by humans, is an illusion. The only thing which is real is God and the human soul is a reflection of the divine soul.
- Sikhs believe God may be considered the first and supreme guru.
- God made everyone with a deep, inner sense of jot (divine spark) or realization of God. However, the human condition means that many are focused on their own haumai (ego-centredness), so they are not in a sense of awareness of God in all.
- It is a pilgrimage through life and life's experiences to leave behind human-centred emotions and become focused on God and living according to the gurus. One who reaches this condition is known as gurmukh (God-centred).
- The Sikh holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib, describes God as compassionate to everyone. God created the human condition as an opportunity to leave behind manmukh (the follower of the ego).
- God has already created divinity within each individual: the journey of finding it is part of the human condition in life.

*Accept other relevant answers.*

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

## Section B

### Judaism

4. Anyone who does not believe in him [the Messiah] or does not await his coming, denies not only the statement of the other prophets, but those of the Torah and Moses, our teacher.

Melachim uMilchamot Ch11:1 (Laws of Kings)

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

Candidates might cite or interpret some of the following points:

- Those who don't believe in the Messiah don't just deny the statements of the other prophets.
- Those who don't believe in the Messiah deny the statements of the other prophets and also those of the Torah and Moses.
- Those who don't await the coming of the Messiah don't just deny the statements of the other prophets.
- Those who don't await the Messiah deny the statement of the other prophets / deny the statements of the Torah and Moses.
- Moses is the teacher.
- It's important to believe in the Messiah.
- It's important to await the coming of the Messiah.
- A belief in the authority of the other prophets, the Torah and Moses is interrelated to a belief in the coming of the Messiah.

*Accept other valid points.*

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

- (b) Explain what Jews believe about a Messianic Age. **[6]**

In explaining what Jews believe about the Messianic Age, candidates may refer to the following:

- There are many different views regarding what is meant by a Messianic Age. There might be different beliefs across traditions and within traditions. Beliefs might be influenced regarding specific interpretation of sources of authority, e.g. the Torah and Maimonides.
- Although there are a variety of views regarding the nature of the Messianic Age, central to most beliefs is that a Messianic Age requires human activity through ethical and ritual practices. The idea is not to sit back and wait but to fulfil mitzvot as a process of tikkun olam (repairing the world).
- Many Jews believe that the Messianic Age is heralded by a Messiah. There is a diversity of beliefs regarding the nature of the Messiah. The Messiah is not considered as divine, but a human who is believed to be a descendant of King David.
- Some Jews believe that the Messianic Age is not heralded by an individual Messiah but by collective practices of humanity to create a just society. It is believed that by carrying out duties and fulfilling their mitzvot this time will be ushered in more quickly.
- One of the commonly believed characteristics of a Messianic Age is the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. Once the Temple has been rebuilt, all 613 mitzvot can be fulfilled.
- Many Jews believe that the Messianic Age will include Jews being gathered from all over the world to Jerusalem.

- Some Jews believe that the Messianic Age will be a sign of the end of the world and the physical resurrection of the dead. The Messianic Age is believed by many to include the raising of the bodies of the dead, who will be brought back to life and reunited with their souls.
- A Messianic Age is considered as a time of peace. Micah 4:1–4 describes it as a time when swords will be turned into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks. Peace will not be limited to pacifism, but there will be no desire for war. It will be a time of justice and harmony. There will still be poverty, for example, but all fully accept responsibility to care for those in want and need.
- Maimonides states that during the Messianic Age people will be busy trying to know the Eternal. It is also believed to be a time when there will be a greater study of the Torah to gain a full knowledge of God.
- The Kabbalah tradition considers the process of reincarnation is part of the process of the Messianic Age.

## Christianity

5. Not everyone who calls out to me [Jesus], “Lord! Lord!” will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. On judgment day many will say to me, “Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.” But I will reply, “I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws.”

Matthew 7:21–23 (adapted)

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

- Not everyone who calls out to Jesus ‘Lord’ will enter the kingdom of heaven.
- Not everyone who talks in a religious/Christian way will go to heaven.
- Only those who do the will of Jesus’ Father [God] will enter the kingdom of heaven.
- Those who actually do as God wills will enter God’s Kingdom.
- On judgement day, many will say to Jesus that they have prophesied, cast out demons and done miracles in his name.
- Jesus will tell many of them that he never knew them and will tell them to get away from him because they broke God’s laws.
- Doing spectacular, supernatural things, like prophesying, casting out demons and miracles is not sufficient to enter the kingdom of heaven.
- Doing God’s will and knowing Jesus are most important qualifications for entering heaven.

*Accept other valid points.*

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

- (b) Explain Christian beliefs about hell. **[6]**

In explaining what Christians believe about hell, candidates may refer to the following:

- There are many different beliefs amongst Christians about the nature and characteristics of hell. These may reflect different interpretations of the Bible and different Church traditions.
- The Bible describes it as a place where sinful people suffer for eternity.
- Biblical images that Christians have used to describe hell include a pit, an abyss, a place of eternal burning fire, darkness, wailing and weeping, gnashing of teeth.
- Jesus repeatedly teaches about hell as a place of pain, torment and as being the consequence of rejecting God/sin.
- Christians believe that those who are judged as rejecting God will experience some form of hell, but there are different beliefs regarding the nature of that state.
- Many Eastern Christian Churches believe that hell is not a place, but rather the experience of absence or separation from God’s light, love, joy and peace.
- The Western Churches, Catholic and Protestant, have traditionally believed that hell is experienced as a physical place of pain, torment, regret, anger and frustration, injustice and division.
- Most Christian Churches regard the concept of hell as inseparable from the belief that God created humans with free will and a genuine choice to accept or reject His love.
- Without serious consequences for the rejection of God’s love, the reality and depth of that free will and that love are seen as being diminished.
- Some have rejected the idea of hell because they see it as contradicting the belief that God is omnibenevolent.
- The Roman Catholic Church developed a belief in purgatory.

- Purgatory is believed to be a state between death and the final judgment day, which allows believers to amend/work off some of the sins committed in their earthly life and thereby avoid an eternity in hell.

## Islam

6. Muhammad is no more than an Apostle: many were the Apostles that passed away before him. If he died or were slain will ye then turn back on your heels [turn around]? If any did turn back on his heels not the least harm will he do to God; but God [on the other hand] will swiftly reward those who [serve him] with gratitude.

Qur'an 3:144 (adapted)

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

- Muhammad is an apostle/prophet/messenger.
- He is nothing more than that.
- There were many apostles who came before Muhammad.
- The passage asks the reader/hearer if they would change/turn around if Muhammad died or was killed.
- Change/turn around could mean stop following Muhammad as an apostle/his teachings.
- If someone turned, this will not harm God.
- However, God will reward those who serve him.
- God will reward those quickly/swiftly.
- God will reward those with gratitude.

*Accept other valid points.*

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

- (b) Explain how following the teachings of the prophets helps Muslims to attain salvation. **[6]**

- According to Muslims, prophets were men sent by Allah as messengers to humanity at different periods and in different places.
- They all taught the same message of belief in tawhid (the oneness of Allah) and submitting to his will. It is Allah's will which ultimately decides salvation.
- This included warning people that they had gone astray, such as by practising idolatrous worship and immoral habits, which prophets asked people to turn away from.
- Prophets explained how to achieve salvation, meaning entering paradise in the akhirah (life after death), and told people they would face Allah's judgement in order to achieve this.
- The teachings and practices Muslims were expected to follow were laid out by prophets in a line from Adam, the first, to Muhammad, last and final prophet. The teachings of Ibrahim (Abraham) and Isa (Jesus) are included in this.
- The sayings of the prophets were not directly dictated by Allah but were divinely inspired, so are given special prominence as guidance.
- Muhammad completed these instructions by delivering a holy book of guidance, the Qur'an, and leaving his examples, the Sunnah, including practices such as prayer five times a day. Muslims believe following these practices, particularly those called the Five Pillars, may help them achieve salvation.

*Accept other relevant answers.*

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

## Section C

### Taoism

7. Tao generates one.  
One generates two.  
Two generates three.  
Three generates everything.  
Everything carries Yin and embraces Yang.  
The mixing of Yin and Yang becomes an entity.

Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching 42 (adapted)

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

Candidates might cite or interpret some of the following points:

- Tao produces one.
- One produces two and two produces three.
- Three produces everything.
- Everything has negative and positive elements.
- Everything carries yin.
- Everything that carries yin embraces yang.
- It is through the mixing of yin and yang that harmony is achieved.

*Accept other valid points.*

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

- (b) Explain how the Way is lived by balancing yin and yang. **[6]**

In explaining how the Way is lived by balancing yin and yang, candidates may refer to the following:

- Recognizing the distinct characteristics of yin and yang in order to achieve a balance rather than one dominating a way of life.
- Emphasizing one extreme over the other is what causes one to lose equilibrium, for example, recognizing that just as you need light so you need darkness.
- Recognizing the characteristics of yin such as feminine, dark, receptive, calmness and allowing things to naturally unfold.
- Recognizing the qualities of yang such as male, bright, assertive, focussed and bright.
- Yin and yang have different characteristics, and it is achieving the balance between these two polarities that is the goal.
- Through creating the balance, the natural flow of the universe is reflected.
- Creating the balance through living in harmony with nature and living a contemplative life in nature. It is the natural order which is Tao, the Way. This includes learning to 'go with the flow'.
- A balance is created by not exploiting nature but treating it well and learning from it.
- To not depart from the Way, as this upsets the natural order and the balance of yin and yang.
- It is important to balance yin and yang on an intuitive level.
- It is also important to balance yin and yang on a practical level as Taoists live their daily life.
- Many Taoists follow the Way by harmonizing their surroundings using feng shui.
- For some, balance is created through the design of houses. In China, many houses are built to face south because the sunshine eradicates yin.

- To achieve this balance, the Taoist approach emphasizes aligning oneself with the equilibrium flows of the cosmos and living in harmony with nature because of the belief in a natural order or ‘the Way’.
- By studying koans, forms of paradoxical statement, Taoists are supported in understanding the relationship between paradoxical and polar opposite concepts.

*Accept other relevant answers.*

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

## Jainism

8. The soul is now as motionless as a mountain rock. All the remaining karmas are eliminated. This stage of absolute motionlessness is the fourteenth and the last stage of spiritual development in the instant before death. The soul then frees itself of the sensation, body, lifespan and status karmas and attains disembodied eternal liberation.

Ayoga-kevali. The Fourteenth Stage of Liberation.

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

Candidates might cite or interpret some of the following points:

- In the last stage of spiritual development, the soul (jiva) is as motionless as a mountain rock.
- All remaining karmas are eliminated.
- Spiritual development has fourteen stages.
- The fourteenth stage, the last stage of spiritual development, happens in the instant before death.
- In the instant before death, the jiva (soul) frees itself from: sensation karma / body karma / lifespan karma / status karma.
- After death, the liberated jiva (soul) becomes detached from the physical body (i.e. the soul is disembodied).
- After death, the liberated jiva (soul) achieves eternal liberation (moksha).
- Liberation (moksha) is eternal.
- When the jiva (soul) achieves liberation (moksha), it no longer has a physical body.
- When the jiva (soul) achieves liberation (moksha), it no longer needs a physical body.

*Accept other valid points.*

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

- (b) Explain Jain teachings and beliefs about moksha (liberation). **[6]**

- Moksha (liberation) is the spiritual goal of Jainism.
- Moksha is a condition of the soul; not a place.
- Attaining moksha depends on extreme ascetic practices that most Jains believe only monks or nuns can uphold.
- Digambara traditions state that only monks can attain moksha.
- Shvetambara traditions state that monks and nuns can attain moksha.
- Jainism teaches that there are two categories of existence: jiva (soul) and ajiva (non-soul).
- The true nature of jiva is omniscience, energy and bliss. Jiva is individual, eternal and without physical body.
- The non-liberated soul is covered by karma. This prevents it from knowing its true nature.
- The non-liberated soul is embodied and trapped in samsara; a continuous cycle of birth, death and rebirth.
- The liberated soul knows its true nature. This is the state of omniscience.
- There are thirteen stages (gunasthanas) of spiritual development towards omniscience. The final, fourteenth, stage is moksha. (The fourth stage is belief in the Tirthankara's teachings. This is the start of progression towards moksha. The fifth stage is following the lay vows. The sixth stage is following the mendicant vows. The thirteenth stage, omniscience, is called kevalin).

- To achieve omniscience, the soul must be free of most types of karma. This is achieved by internal and external religious practices; including asceticism and an attitude of non-attachment cultivated by meditation. Asceticism avoids attracting karma. Non-attachment prevents karma from sticking to the soul.
- The fourteenth stage is moksha. This is the death of the physical body, which releases the soul from samsara and any residue karmas.
- A soul that has achieved moksha is called Siddha. Siddhas are free from karma and samsara, and do not have physical bodies. Siddhas reside at the top of the cosmos for eternity in a state of omniscience and bliss.

*Accept other relevant answers.*

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

## Bahá'í Faith

9. When they [human beings] ... become illuminated with the radiance of the sun of reality, and made noble with all the virtues, they regard this as the greatest reward, and they know it to be the true paradise. In the same way they consider that spiritual punishment ... is to be subjected to the world of nature; to be veiled from God.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions

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

- When humans are illuminated with the sun of reality and made noble with virtues, this is regarded as the greatest reward.
- Virtues make human beings noble.
- Illumination with the sun of reality and being made noble by virtues is true paradise.
- To be subjected to the world of nature is spiritual punishment.
- To be veiled from God is spiritual punishment.

*Accept other valid points.*

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

- (b) Explain what Bahá'is believe about heaven. **[6]**

In explaining what Bahá'is believe about heaven, candidates may refer to the following:

- Bahá'is believe that the afterlife is an evolving process through a series of spiritual realms. The highest realm is called the Abha or Most Glorious Kingdom.
- Heaven or paradise is not considered an actual place where people go. Unlike some other religious traditions, it is believed to refer to a symbolic positive state.
- Heaven or paradise is considered a condition in which a soul is brought close to God. This would be an evolving spiritual process. It is an eternal journey of the soul towards perfection and its degree of obedience to divine law. So the term heaven or paradise describes the states of nearness to and distance from God in this world and in the realms beyond.
- Heaven or paradise is illuminated with knowledge and is a state where all wars and national boundaries cease. It is here where people are unified in knowledge, peace and love of God.
- In order to 'go to' heaven or paradise, humans must study and learn and apply to their life the virtues and guidance of God. Anyone who learns and applies virtues and guidance of God 'goes to' heaven.
- Although heaven is perceived as a condition more than an actual place, it is still often described as a 'realm'.
- Many Bahá'is believe that in this realm they will encounter prophets and other historical people.
- In the Bahá'í scriptures, the term heaven is given many meanings, e.g. the opposite to something farther away from God, e.g. 'make mention of Me on My earth, that in my heaven I may remember thee' (Bahá'u'lláh, Hidden Words, Arabic no. 43).

*Accept other relevant answers.*

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

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