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# **GCE AS MARKING SCHEME**

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**SUMMER 2023**

**AS  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - UNIT 1  
OPTION F: AN INTRODUCTION TO SIKHISM**

**2120UF0-1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2023 examination. It was finalised after detailed discussion at examiners' conferences by all the examiners involved in the assessment. The conference was held shortly after the paper was taken so that reference could be made to the full range of candidates' responses, with photocopied scripts forming the basis of discussion. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners.

It is hoped that this information will be of assistance to centres but it is recognised at the same time that, without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation.

WJEC regrets that it cannot enter into any discussion or correspondence about this marking scheme.

## **Marking guidance for examiners, please apply carefully and consistently:**

### **Positive marking**

It should be remembered that candidates are writing under examination conditions and credit should be given for what the candidate writes, rather than adopting the approach of penalising him/her for any omissions. It should be possible for a very good response to achieve full marks and a very poor one to achieve zero marks. Marks should not be deducted for a less than perfect answer if it satisfies the criteria of the mark scheme. Exemplars in the mark scheme are only meant as helpful guides. Therefore, any other acceptable or suitable answers should be credited even though they are not actually stated in the mark scheme.

Two main phrases are deliberately placed throughout each mark scheme to remind examiners of this philosophy. They are:

- “Candidates could include some or all of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.”
- “This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.”

### **Rules for Marking**

1. Differentiation will be achieved on the basis of candidates' response.
2. No mark scheme can ever anticipate or include every possible detail or interpretation; examiners should use their professional judgement to decide whether a candidate's particular response answers the question in relation to the particular assessment objective.
3. Candidates will often express their ideas in language different from that given in any mark scheme or outline. Positive marking therefore, on the part of examiners, will recognise and credit correct statements of ideas, valid points and reasoned arguments irrespective of the language employed.

### **Banded mark schemes**

Banded mark schemes are divided so that each band has a relevant descriptor. The descriptor provides a description of the performance level for that band. Each band contains marks. Examiners should first read and annotate a candidate's answer to pick out the evidence that is being assessed in that question. Once the annotation is complete, the mark scheme can be applied. This is done as a two-stage process.

#### **Banded mark schemes stage 1 – deciding on the band**

When deciding on a band, the answer should be viewed holistically. Beginning at the lowest band, examiners should look at the candidate's answer and check whether it matches the descriptor for that band. Examiners should look at the descriptor for that band and see if it matches the qualities shown in the candidate's answer. If the descriptor at the lowest band is satisfied, examiners should move up to the next band and repeat this process for each band until the descriptor matches the answer.

If an answer covers different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band and then the candidate's response should be used to decide on the mark within the band. For instance, if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content.

### **Banded mark schemes stage 2 – deciding on the mark**

Once the band has been decided, examiners can then assign a mark. During standardising (at the Examiners' marking conference), detailed advice from the Principal Examiner on the qualities of each mark band will be given. Examiners will then receive examples of answers in each mark band that have been awarded a mark by the Principal Examiner. Examiners should mark the examples and compare their marks with those of the Principal Examiner.

When marking, examiners can use these examples to decide whether a candidate's response is of a superior, inferior or comparable standard to the example. Examiners are reminded of the need to revisit the answer as they apply the mark scheme in order to confirm that the band and the mark allocated is appropriate to the response provided. Indicative content is also provided for banded mark schemes. Indicative content is not exhaustive, and any other valid points must be credited. In order to reach the highest bands of the mark scheme a learner need not cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content, but must meet the requirements of the highest mark band.

### **Awarding no marks to a response**

Where a response is not creditworthy, that is it contains nothing of any relevance to the question, or where no response has been provided, no marks should be awarded.

## AS Generic Band Descriptors

Band	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions</b>    15 marks</p> <p><i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i></li> <li>- <i>influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</i></li> <li>- <i>cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</i></li> <li>- <i>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i></li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>13-15 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• An extensive and relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates extensive depth and/or breadth. Excellent use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate use of specialist language /vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A detailed, relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7-9 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A satisfactory response, which generally answers the main demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth in some areas. Satisfactory use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4-6 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Basic level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A basic response, addressing some of the demands of the question set.</li> <li>• Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates limited depth and/or breadth, including limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Some accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1-3 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Low level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A very limited response, with little attempt to address the question.</li> <li>• Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates very limited depth and/or breadth. Very limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Little or no reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary</li> <li>• Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication.</li> </ul> <p><b>N.B.    A maximum of 1 mark should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'</b></p>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant information.</li> </ul>

<b>Band</b>	<b>Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions 15 marks</b> <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
<b>5</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>13-15 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set.</li> <li>• The response shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed.</li> <li>• The response shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7-9 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed.</li> <li>• The response shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4-6 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed.</li> <li>• Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1-3 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• An attempt has been made to identify and address the issues raised by the question set.</li> <li>• Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence.</li> <li>• Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary.</li> <li>• Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication.</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant analysis or evaluation.</li> </ul>

**GCE AS RELIGIOUS STUDIES – UNIT 1**  
**OPTION F: AN INTRODUCTION TO SIKHISM**  
**SUMMER 2023 MARK SCHEME**

To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

**Section A**

**Either,**

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**(a) Examine the importance for Sikh identity of worship in the gurdwara. [15]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- There are four doors into a Gurdwara, known as the Door of Peace, the Door of Livelihood, the Door of Learning and the Door of Grace. These doors are a symbol that people from all four points of the compass are welcome, and that members of all four castes are equally welcome. This is an important part of Sikh identity.
- Everyone sits on the floor in a Gurdwara. This is to be humble before the Guru Granth Sahib and because it gives everyone a place of equal status to sit. Equality being a prominent feature of Sikh identity.
- The langar as a food kitchen was an essential part of any gurdwara in its provision of free meals for all people regardless of caste or religion in the local community in the Punjab.
- It enabled the followers of Guru Nanak to practise his ideal of sewa which was selfless service to others. The organisation and serving of langar to the members of the community provides the opportunity to practise sewa in the present day.
- In modern day food kitchens (langars) everyone sits together on the floor and free food is provided to everyone regardless of ethnicity and race so it is a strong expression of equality
- In contemporary society Lessons in the gurdwara provide education in Sikh culture for children, teaching them Sikh ethics, scriptures, customs and traditions.
- The gurdwara can provide guidance for the community in diaspora situations and this in turn safeguards Sikh identity and practice.
- It is a gathering place for festivals and special occasions which strengthen the community bonds and are an expression of identity.
- It is a place for congregational worship in the presence of the Guru where the Sikh community (sangat) can gather daily for kirtans (hymn singing) and listen to readings from the Adi Granth. Sikhs express their identity through worship.
- On special occasions important rites of passage such as naming ceremonies and marriages take place here. Again they are an expression of distinctive Sikh beliefs and practices.
- Sometimes the gurdwara accommodates the granthi and others who organize daily services and who is available to the community as a spiritual leader. One of his roles is to maintain the integrity of Sikh identity.
- The initiation rite of amirt sanskar also takes place in the gurdwara which has the role of giving some Sikhs the chance to show full commitment to their faith and acts as an example to others.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

- (b) **‘Fulfilment of religious needs rather than social needs is the most important role of the gurdwara.’**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[15]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- On a daily basis, Sikhs receive a hukam or divine order in the form of a hymn from the Guru Granth Sahib, either in a Gurdwara or at home. Similarly, at the end of a service, after the ardas, the Adi Granth is opened at random and a portion is read. This shows that the religious role of the gurdwara is the most important in a Sikh's daily life.
- Many Sikhs do this daily, regarding the verses as words from God which they will find helpful during the day. This is called vak lao, taking advice
- On special occasions, the Granth Sahib is recited non-stop from cover to cover by a string of readers. This continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib is known as an akhand path. It is regarded as the highest and the noblest ceremony in the Sikh religion, and can be performed on any important occasion.
- For many Sikhs listening to the Guru Granth Sahib being read by the granthi is the most important part of Diwan as it contains the main concepts and teachings of Sikhism. It also expresses the religious role of the gurdwara.
- Another important practice is Kirtan the singing of hymns and shabads (verses) from the Guru Granth Sahib. Sikhs often sing kirtan because it helps them to feel connected to Waheguru and focus on Waheguru's qualities. It reminds them of the oneness of God and comforts them.
- Some might refer to Karah Parshad. It is blessed food made from wheat flour, sugar, butter, flour and water. It is distributed to everyone at the end of services and symbolises the belief in equality and the oneness of humanity. Everyone is encouraged to have some Karah Parshad. This symbolises the idea that no one should leave empty handed. This could be argued to show both a religious and social role to the gurdwara.
- Many would argue that the most important practice in the gurdwara is performing sewa through the langar. The langar (or free kitchen) was introduced by Guru Nanak, who was the founder of Sikhism and the first Guru, because of his belief in the oneness of humanity. He offered free meals to everyone, regardless of their caste, gender or wealth. It was a place where everyone gathered and ate together. The langar is also the free food that is served in the kitchen. This could again be seen as a religious and social role of the gurdwara.
- Many Sikhs serve langar to people outside the gurdwara. There is usually a waiting list of people who want to provide the langar each week. This is because they want to serve God, and by helping others they feel they are doing this. It reminds Sikhs that all people belong to the same human family and therefore should be treated equally. This could be argued as showing that the religious and social aspects cannot be separated.
- Others see the gurdwara mainly as a community centre for the Sikh community.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**



Or,

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 (a) Examine the spiritual values expressed in the Sikh festival of Diwali. [15]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- The celebration of the festival confirms and strengthens spiritual beliefs and virtues.
- The festival of Diwali commemorates an important event in Sikh history when Sikh heroism and willingness to risk life to save others including those from a different faith were evident. Self-sacrifice is an important Sikh virtue.
- It also reminds Sikhs to focus on bravery and courage in the face of persecution. It reminds Sikhs of their duty to protect their religion and beliefs.
- It reminds Sikhs of their spiritual beliefs as expressed in the symbolism of the festival. It is an expression of the duality within Sikhism of the importance of spiritual and temporal virtues.
- It also reminds Sikhs of important beliefs in their faith such as devotion to God and freedom and salvation.
- The celebration reminds Sikhs of the struggle between good and evil and how good always overcomes evil, light overcoming darkness.
- Importance of unity within the Sikh community is celebrated during Diwali. The unity of the Sikh community has been and is essential to its survival as expressed in the Khalsa.
- Expression of Sikh values of equality which is one of the most important features of Sikhism and readiness to be a martyr for faith and to fight persecution.
- Importance of valour and compassion for others.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

- (b) **‘Vaisakhi is more important than Diwali in Sikhism.’**  
**Evaluate this view.**

**[15]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- It is a celebration of the role and contributions of Guru Gobind Singh who many believe gave Sikhism its unique identity. He founded the Khalsa at the Vaisakhi assembly at Anandpur. It can be argued that this was the most important event in the history of Sikhism, the event which safeguarded the religion for the future.
- Vaisakhi is a celebration of Sikhism – a reminder of the unique teachings of the faith and the duty of Sikhs to protect them
- It reminds Sikhs of their history and traditions and is therefore a chance to express the pride Sikhs take in their religion.
- It also focuses on the role of the panj piars in the events at Baisakhi – their complete commitment to their beliefs. They act as role models for Sikh identity – an unwavering commitment to faith.
- It is a celebration of the origins of the Khalsa which many would associate with Sikh. It is a celebration of the five outward signs of Sikh identity given at Vaisakhi by Guru Gobind Singh.
- It reminds Sikhs of the values identified with Sikhism – protecting the truth; the importance of community and a duty to oppose oppression and protect the oppressed. Expressing these values in everyday life is a way of expressing Sikh identity.
- Vaisakhi unites the Sikh community - as its celebrated by Sikhs all over the world. It is therefore a worldwide expression of Sikh identity.
- However some would argue that Diwali is the most important festival.
- It celebrates the self-sacrifice and victory of Guru Hargobind
- It celebrates the victory of good over evil – it is a very important message in all aspects of life
- It is a ‘happy’ festival’ in terms of practices such as firework displays
- It brings the Hindu and Sikh communities together to celebrate to celebrate Diwali in a tone of merriment and sense of triumph.
- Many would argue that all festivals within a religion are of the same importance.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

## Section B

Either,

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 (a) Explain how the Guru Granth Sahib is regarded as a living guru in Sikhism. [15]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Guru Gobind Singh declared it to be a living Guru and his successor, thus bringing an end to the line of human gurus. This act has enormous implications for the role of the book within the community. As such it is regarded as a living guru.
- It is the supreme authority of the Sikhs as it is considered a living Guru and has the authority of the Gurus' teachings rather than the word of God. This is why it is sometimes called 'Gurbani', meaning the Guru's utterance. It is also known as the Adi Granth. A great many of the rituals and practices of Sikhism affirm this central and distinctive role.
- The Guru Granth Sahib has a central and essential role in naming ceremonies; rites of passage; worship; formation of doctrine; education. A human guru.
- On a daily basis, Sikhs receive a hukam or divine order in the form of a hymn from the Guru Granth Sahib, either in a Gurdwara or at home. Similarly, at the end of a service, after the ardas, the Adi Granth is opened at random and a portion is read. Many Sikhs do this daily, regarding the verses as words from God which they will find helpful during the day. This is called vak lao, taking advice. At the core of the idea of the hukam is to understand it so that one may apply it one's life. It is consulted for daily advice in much the same way as a human guru would be. Again this is the role of a living guru.
- No Sikh ceremony is regarded as complete unless it is performed in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib again showing that it is regarded as a living guru.
- Guru Granth Sahib remains as a permanent unchangeable guide for all Sikhs as a living Guru or Teacher. It is a representation of the undaunted strength of the Sikh community.
- As a living guru it lays down moral and ethical rules for development of the soul, spiritual salvation and unity with God.
- The Guru Granth Sahib is truly unique among the world's great scriptures. It is considered the Supreme Spiritual Authority and Head of the Sikh religion, rather than any living person.
- It is treated with same detailed devotion as a living Guru, e.g. chauri waved over it and laid to rest at night.
- In worship the Guru Granth Sahib is the source of teaching for all sermons
- In daily life Guru Granth Sahib remains as a permanent unchangeable guide for all Sikhs as a living Guru or Teacher. Through the Guru Granth Sahib Sikhs learn to live respectful, faithful and honest lives.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

- (b) **‘The Guru Granth Sahib is not relevant for Sikhs today.’**  
**Evaluate this view.**

**[15]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- It could be argued that many Sikhs do not understand the words of the Guru Granth Sahib but can still feel the devotion for God. It could be argued that the essential requirement for being a Sikh is understanding God.
- It could be argued that the guidance given in the Guru Granth Sahib because it was written hundreds of years ago is no longer relevant today.
- It could also be argued that the Guru Granth Sahib does not address the specific problems of contemporary society.
- Some could argue that being a Sikh is more practically based on living life based on the principle of selflessness today rather than on the teaching and guidance of the Guru Granth Sahib. Equality is a concept and practice that many would argue is an essential part of being a Sikh.
- It can be argued that faith and devotion is the basis for all other aspects of being a Sikh so living a good life as a Sikh has to be rooted in faith in the Guru Granth Sahib which makes it relevant to all Sikhs.
- The nature and purpose of the Guru Granth Sahib is to have complete faith and devotion to God and the saving power of God. Therefore it can be argued that this is essential guidance for being a Sikh is always relevant.
- The main principles of selflessness and overcoming evil tendencies and developing divine nature are the teachings in the Guru Granth Sahib so understanding these will ensure life will be lived as a Sikh.
- The Guru Granth Sahib gives profound insights into the nature of reality and forms the basis for Sikh outlook on life based on gratitude for human existence.
- The Guru Granth Sahib is the focus of all Sikh ceremonies and therefore to understand the Guru Granth Sahib is to understand the nature and purpose of these ceremonies.
- The Guru Granth Sahib is also the focus of Sikh worship. Practice and lifestyle and therefore it could be argued is a complete guide to being a Sikh and therefore relevant to all Sikhs.
- Sikhism has no other holy book with the same status as the Guru Granth Sahib
- Some candidates could argue that other guidance for being a Sikh is needed in contemporary society, such as the Rahit Maryada.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

Or,

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 (a) Examine the concept of God within Sikhism.

[15]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- The opening sentence of the Sikh scriptures is only two words long, and reflects the base belief of all who adhere to the teachings of the religion: Ek Onkar "Ek" is One and "Onkar" is God - "There is only one God."
- Sikh understanding of God is mainly taken from the teaching of the Mul Mantra 'One God, True Name, Creator, Without Fear, Without Hate, Eternal, Without Birth, Self-revealed, By the Guru's Grace.'
- Sikhs believe in the Oneness of God. Unity of God as distinguished from the many gods of Hinduism.
- Sikhs believe that there is only one God but that this is the God of all religions. No single religion can claim to be the only true way to Waheguru, and different religions are just different ways towards Waheguru.
- Sikhs believe that God is eternal and has not come to earth in any bodily form. This distinguishes the Sikh notion from Hindu avatars.
- God is creator, created the world and is immanent in all things animate and inanimate. Sikhs believe that God created human beings and imbued them with the ability to know right and wrong. God also created the Earth for the enjoyment of human beings. Although God created the universe within his being, the universe is not God itself, and prior to the creation of a distinct universe, God was alone.
- God has shown grace by revealing the gurbani (God's word) which is found in the Guru Granth Sahib, understood by Sikhs as the living presence of God.
- God is self-revealing and could not otherwise be known. Sikhs believe that God can't be understood properly by human beings, but he can be experienced through love, worship, and contemplation.
- God as nirguna and saguna, without form and with form, or without qualities and with them.
- God's nature is two-fold in the Sikh religion and the first part is transcendent. God exists outside of the material world and has no gender and no form. In the transcendent form, God exists outside of time and the cycle of death and rebirth that characterizes existence for followers of Sikhism.
- Although the Sikh God is transcendent, he also has a very real presence within the world, known as his immanent form. God's immanent form manifests itself in his Word, which guides and sustains the universe.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

- (b) **‘The concept of God is the most important concept in Sikhism.’  
Evaluate this view.** [15]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- The concept of God is the most important concept in Sikhism because God is Everything to the Sikh: His attributes are endless and all goodness, mercy and love are contained in Him. He has created all things and remains enshrined within them as both mind and matter.
- He has created all things and remains enshrined within them as both mind and matter. This influences Sikh attitudes towards a number of issues such as abortion, euthanasia and the environment.
- God is the Divine Father who cares for His children, bestows upon them all the manifold blessings of this world and listens to their prayers. He knows the most secret desires of every heart and is the essence of love and forgiveness. This is important for Sikhs in their daily lives and when facing life's problems.
- God is directly accessible to everybody and man's soul itself is a part of the Immortal One. This is important to the Sikh understanding of human nature.
- The concept of God influences every aspect of a Sikh's life so that even in the midst of all pleasures or pain, or all the various activities of life, he will be aware of the goodness of God and the manifold blessings with which He endows the creatures of His creation.
- According to Guru Nanak, the purpose of human life is to enable the being to appreciate the face of his relationship with the Eternal Spirit and to facilitate his becoming reunited with Him.
- However other concepts can be viewed as more important or just as important.
- Sikhism teaches equality of all people. Sikhism preaches that people of different races, religions, or sex are all equal in the eyes of God. Sikhism teaches the full equality of men and women.
- Sikhism teaches religious freedom. All people have the right to follow their own path to God without condemnation or coercion from others.
- Sikhism teaches service to others. The primary task in life should be to help the poor, needy, and oppressed. The Sikhs have a long heritage of speaking out against injustice and for standing up for the defenceless.
- It could be argued that in a religion all concepts are equally important and inter-dependent on each other.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

Or,

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| 0 | 5 |
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- (a)
- Examine the material and spiritual value of sewa within the Sikh community.**
- [15]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Sewa is selfless service to others and often takes the form of physical work, helping the community, gurdwara or langar, mental work, trying to understand the teachings of the Gurus and helping others to do the same, or by giving money to charity. This influences Sikh lifestyle and moral decisions when deciding if an action is in keeping with the aims of sewa or not.
- It can be sewa of the mind (Man) i.e. developing and using talents and creativity and giving to others, giving material possessions and donating to charity (Dan) or physical service (Tan)
- Service given physically (tan) - was not only sanctified by the Gurus, they also institutionalized it, that is, service in the Langar and serving the sangat (congregation) by preparing food, cooking food, feeding the sangat, washing the sangat's used dishes, cleaning the sangat's shoes and washing their feet. Tan is considered to be the highest form of sewa and is imperatively prescribed for every Sikh. "Cursed are the hands and feet that engage not in seva" (Bhai Gurdas, Varan, 27.1). In traditional Indian society work involving corporal labour was considered low and relegated to the humblest castes. By sanctifying it as an honourable religious practice, the Sikh Gurus established the dignity of labour, a concept then almost unknown to the Indian society.
- Sewa can also be performed through sharing material resources (dhan). For Sikhs, this means reaching out to serve and uplift all of humanity as an expression of devotion to God. Seva through material (dhan) means is often done by contributing dasvandh (a tenth of one's income) to the common coffers of the community or to another cause. The Sikh is specifically urged to direct seva at the poor. "The pauper's mouth is the mouth of the Guru", says the Rahitnama of Chaupa Singh. Seva through material means (dhan) or philanthropy (dan) was particularly sought to be made non-personal. Personal philanthropy can be debasing for the receiver and ego-entrenching for the giver, but self-effacing community service is ennobling. Seva must be so carried out as to dissolve the ego and lead to self-transcendence, which is the ability to acknowledge and respond to that which is other than oneself.
- Khalsa Aid serves suffering humanity by providing humanitarian assistance and financial aid to victims of disasters. Sikh support of this is an expression of sewa.
- Sewa is vital to the spiritual path cultivating humility and selflessness neutralising ego (haumai).
- True sewa as per the Sikh scriptures ought to be undertaken selflessly, without desire (nishkam), with no thought of getting anything in return. The practice of sewa destroys egoism and cultivates humility and compassion for others.
- The concept of Sewa means to serve with honour and devotion. Selfless service for altruistic purposes on behalf of and for the betterment of the community ie service performed without any thought of reward or personal benefit.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

- (b) **‘Sewa is the most important Sikh teaching.’  
Evaluate this view.**

**[15]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Candidates could argue that Sewa is the central and fundamental teaching of the gurus which gives Sikhism a distinctive emphasis. It is one of the features that gives Sikhism its unique identity.
- It was one of the first duties to be taught by Guru Nanak who promoted sewa in the first langars
- Sewa is the means of eliminating ego and effective in overcoming pride and selfishness which is a spiritual goal for Sikhs enabling them to fulfil their spiritual goal.
- The practice of sewa enables the Sikh to become God-centred rather than ego centred which leads to ultimate liberation.
- Selfless service is the most important because it develops compassion for others rather than the selfishness of doing something only for your own benefit/so it promotes gurmukh rather than manmukh attitudes
- The practice of sewa creates a harmonious, generous and united community which is of fundamental importance in Sikhism.
- It is possible to argue that other teachings are more important or just as important as sewa.
- Some would argue that there is nothing more important in Sikhism than the teaching on the concept of God as it is the basis of the whole religion.
- Others could argue for the teaching on the concept of the soul as it influences how Sikhs view humanity.
- It is possible to argue that the teaching on equality is the most important as it gives Sikhism its unique identity.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**