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# **GCE AS MARKING SCHEME**

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**SUMMER 2019**

**AS (NEW)  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES  
UNIT 1 - OPTION E  
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF HINDUISM  
2120UE0-1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2019 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.

# **AS RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

## **MARKING INSTRUCTIONS**

### **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 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 15 marks</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><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>

Band	<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>
5	<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>
4	<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>
3	<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>
2	<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>
1	<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>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant analysis or evaluation.</li> </ul>

**GCE RELIGIOUS STUDIES**  
**SUMMER 2019 MARK SCHEME**

**Option E: An Introduction to the Study of Hinduism**

**MARK SCHEME**

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

**Section A**

1. (a) **Explain the concept of varna and different ways in which it affects the lives of Hindus.** [AO1 15]

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

- The word 'varna' literally means 'kind', although it is sometimes translated as 'colour' and is sometimes referred to in English as 'caste'.
- The origin of the varna system can be traced to the Aryan invasion of India in the second millennium BCE. They devised a class system to organise the new society created by their arrival. Initially they created a system of three varnas, later expanded to include a fourth – the Shudra.
- Hindus would also point to the religious origin of the varna system which is its divine justification. It is not a human hierarchy but a divinely ordained system. In the Rig Veda, the Purusha Sukta hymn refers to the sacrifice of a huge primeval man or giant called Purusha from whom the four varnas came.
- Every Hindu must follow general moral codes and each has duties according to his or her varna. This will affect the lives of those who belong to different varnas in different ways.
- Those who belong to the Brahmin varna are the providers of education and spiritual leadership. Their duties include studying and teaching the Vedas; performing sacrifices and religious ceremonies and teaching others how to perform rituals; giving and accepting charity; offering guidance especially to those in the Kshatriya varna; providing medical care and advice free of charge; never accepting paid employment; developing ideal qualities – honesty, integrity, cleanliness, purity, knowledge and wisdom.
- On the other hand, in comparison Kshatriyas are the protectors of society who are expected to display strength of body and character. They are also twice born. Their duties include – protecting citizens from harm, especially women, children, cows, brahmins and the elderly; ensuring that others perform their dharma and move on spiritually.
- Different again are the Vaishyas who are the productive class. They are twice born which means that they accept the sacred thread as spiritual initiation and must perform certain rituals and rites of passage. Their duties include – protecting animals, especially cows and the land; creating wealth and prosperity; producing goods; trading ethically; paying taxes to the Kshatriya.
- In comparison the Shudras are the workers and the only ones able to be employed by others. The other varnas must be self-employed and financially self-sufficient. Their duties include – to render service to others; to take pride in their work and be loyal; to follow general moral principles and to marry which is the only compulsory rite of passage.

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

- (b) **‘Varna is not relevant in today’s world.’**  
**Evaluate this view with reference to Hinduism.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

- Many would argue that the concept is far more important in rural areas than in urban communities. This reflects the more conservative, traditional nature of rural communities. Rural communities view any change with suspicion and in these areas varna is as relevant today as it has always been.
- Many Hindus believe that varnadharma is a divine law. Following this duty helps Hindus move forward on the path to liberation as it gains good karma and leads to improved status in the next life. They also believe that cosmic order depends on the principle of varnashramadharma and that stepping outside this principle would threaten order in creation.
- Other Hindus believe that the caste system has practical benefits. It gives order and structure to society and within that context gives each person a sense of identity and of belonging to a well-defined group within society, which also gives them a purpose in life.
- In urban communities there is a strange dualism between work and home. During the day a person may be unconcerned with varna as it is impractical to follow varna traditions, for example when using public transport. However at home with members of the family varna traditions can be important.
- Some would argue further that the growth of individualism has resulted in the fading away of social distinctions and has therefore made the varna system largely redundant.
- Varna is not compatible with the goal of equality in modern society. Some would argue that it is a system that disadvantages sections of society in favour of others.
- Varna according to many is not politically or socially acceptable.
- Many would argue that the varna system still has an important role in the major events of Hindu life like marriage and religious worship.
- However in modern India relationships between different people and different varnas has certainly become more relaxed.

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



2. (a) **Explain the concept of ashrama and different ways in which it affects the lives of Hindus.** [AO1 15]

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

- The ashramas are the four main stages or periods of life – the student stage; the householder stage; the retired person stage and the ascetic stage.
- The ultimate purpose of observing the four ashramas is to help a person achieve moksha, liberation from reincarnation. There are specific duties associated with each ashrama.
- Each ashrama will have a different influence on the lives of Hindus.
- Those who are in the Brahmacharya – the student stage – will have specific duties. Traditionally boys were expected to live away from home during this stage and study with a guru for several years to foster spiritual values. However today only a few Brahmin families follow this tradition to the full extent. This stage begins for members of the three upper varnas after the ritual of the sacred thread when they are reborn. The duties at this stage include – studying the Vedas and other texts; living a celibate and simple life; serving the guru and collecting alms for him; learning how to set up and maintain household worship; developing appropriate qualities such as humility; understanding and performing various rituals.
- In comparison those in the Grihastha – the householder stage – will have different responsibilities and duties. This is the stage when a Hindu decides to marry and accept family responsibilities which include having children, forming a family, following a career and becoming an active member of the community. The duties at this stage include – making money and enjoying pleasure in an ethical manner; performing sacrifice and observing religious rituals; protecting and nourishing family members; teaching spiritual values; giving to charity.
- Comparing this with the Vanaprastha ashrama– the retired person stage – the duties are again seen to be different. This stage begins when a man reaches old age. When his son has a family and is ready to take over the leadership of the household, he and his wife will retire. Some choose to withdraw into a secluded area or they may involve themselves more with bhakti of a god or goddess. Others go on pilgrimage when they may be accompanied by their wife but all sexual relations are forbidden. The duties at this stage include – devoting more time to spiritual matters; going on pilgrimage.
- Sannyasa – the ascetic stage – has its own specific duties. Traditionally it is only available to men who exhibit the qualities of a Brahmin. The Sannyasin become wandering hermits, leaving their family and living a life dependant on God alone. They seek spiritual enlightenment and power. The duties at this stage include – controlling the mind and senses, fixing the mind on the Supreme; becoming detached and fearless, fully dependant on God as protector; becoming aware of the self and of God.

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

- (b) **‘Hinduism is a religion of duty.’**  
**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

- Many Hindus themselves refer to their religion not as Hinduism but as sanatana dharma, "eternal religion," and varnashramadharma, a word emphasising the fulfilment of duties (dharma) appropriate to one's class (varna) and stage of life (ashrama). This in itself shows the importance of the concept of dharma within the religion.
- Dharma is seen in Hindu philosophy as representing order with laws to govern creation. Dharma with its religious and moral laws binds Hindus in harmony with that order. This is a very important principle in Hinduism and as such duty can be argued to be the most important part of Hinduism.
- Hindus see life as a duty and opportunity to fulfil the aim of creation and be part of God's eternal dharma.
- They believe that religious duty is the primary aim of human life and the way that a Hindu can fulfil the four aims of life – kama, artha, dharma and Moksha.
- According to some Hindu sources there are four types of dharma – cosmic, social, human and self.
- The Vedas and the Dharmashastras refer to the ten most important duties in Hinduism. These duties cover every aspect of Hindu life.
- However, although it seems that duty is the overriding factor in Hinduism and in a Hindu's life many believe that there is free will and choice within the religion.
- Hindus can choose a deity as their personal or family deity and followers of bhakti would argue that it is based on loving devotion which is not a duty.
- They would also point out that the essence of bhakti where caste differences are not emphasised proves that Hindus are not bound by duty.
- Others would argue that taken as a whole, Hinduism is a religion of beliefs and it is those beliefs, not duty, which are the basis of all Hindu actions, rituals and festivals.

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

## Section B

### 3. (a) Explain the spiritual significance of Durga Puja. [AO1 15]

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

- One feature of Durga Puja that is particularly significant is the worship of Durga as the mother goddess. According to many Hindus Durga Puja is the greatest Hindu festival in which God is adored as Mother. Hinduism is the only religion in the world which has emphasised to such an extent the motherhood of God.
- Durga represents the Divine Mother and the power of Shakti or cosmic energy. She is the energy aspect of Shiva.
- The goddess is a divine not human mother and her images reflect her supernatural power. Her care and love for her human children is so great that she will do anything to protect them.
- As mother of the universe she personifies tender love, wealth, power, beauty and every virtue.
- Hindus believe that worship of Durga as divine mother gives material prosperity and spiritual freedom. Everyone is blessed with her loving mercy and is protected by her.
- Some Hindus divide Navaratri into sections of three days in order to celebrate different aspects of the divine Mother. The first three days celebrate her power as Durga to destroy impurities, vices and defects. The next three days celebrate her as Lakshmi, the giver of spiritual wealth, who can give unlimited wealth to her worshippers. The final three days celebrate her wisdom as Saraswati. In order to have all round success in life, the blessing of all three aspects of the divine mother are needed.
- The complete image of Durga represents the belief that to become divine, then material desires must be kept under control. This is seen in the image of Durga standing on the demon. Hindus believe that by worshipping Durga it is possible to rid themselves of all desires and unfold divinity.
- The festival also reminds Hindus of some of the spiritual values that shape their identity, such as the duty to oppose evil, thanksgiving and the need to help others.

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

- (b) **'Durga is the most important deity in Hinduism.'**  
**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

- Many Hindus would argue that Durga, the goddess of power and strength, is the most important goddess in Hinduism. She has many names, many personas and many facets.
- She is worshipped as Mahishasuramardini or Shakti the destroyer of evil; as Sati, Kali and Parvati, the consort of Shiva. She is the mother of bounty and wealth and of beauty and knowledge because her daughters are Lakshmi and Saraswati the Hindu goddesses of wealth and knowledge.
- Durga represents purity, knowledge, truth and self-realisation. She also represents the power of the Supreme Being that preserves moral order and righteousness in the universe. She is the energy aspect of Shiva. Without Durga, Shiva has no expression and without Shiva, Durga has no existence.
- Durga in Sanskrit means a fort which is a place which is protected and where people can go to find refuge. Durga protects humanity from evil by destroying evil forces such as selfishness, jealousy, hatred and anger.
- She is also a manifestation of the stronger side of the feminine.
- She is Shakti the divine power and assumes the powers of the male gods to save the universe. This is one major reason why she is regarded by Hindu women with such respect.
- She is also seen as two other popular Indian goddesses - Sati and Parvati - both consorts of Lord Shiva, though at different points in time. Though all three are worshipped separately, they are seen to be the form of the same goddess Durga which ultimately shows her importance.
- Durga is regarded as the supreme deity by her devotees and in many aspects is believed to have a similar role to the highest held male deities.
- In Devi Mahatmaya, a Hindu text on the goddess Durga, it is stated that Durga is the world, and as the earth itself, she conveys cosmic stability. Durga also protects of her devotees.
- The importance of Durga is also shown through the major festival associated with her – Durga Puja.
- However Durga's importance within Hinduism is relative. Many other Hindus would argue for the superior importance of other gods and goddesses.
- For Vaishnavites Shiva is the supreme being and for Shaivites it is Shiva. Other Hindus would argue for Krishna or Rama and others would argue that they are all important as each one is an expression of Brahman.
- Ultimately the most important god or goddess for any Hindu is the one that is the focus of their personal devotion.

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

4. (a) **Explain the significance of belief in karma and reincarnation in achieving moksha.** [AO1 15]

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

- In Hindu thought Karma means action and the fruits of action and is the force that drives reincarnation. It is the principle of cause and effect and reflects the nature of the universe – any activity must be paid back. According to some it reflects the Newtonian principle that every action produces an equal and opposite reaction.
- It operates on a moral basis – a good action whether mental or physical leads to a good effect and a bad action to a bad effect.
- There are different aspects of karma which are stored reactions that determine each soul's destiny – Sanchita karma – accumulated karma; Prarabdha karma – fruit-bearing karma; Agami karma – karma in the making.
- In Vedic literature there are analogies which attempt to explain the three types of karma and their relationship - Sanchita karma is portrayed as a granary. The portion taken from the granary and put in the shop for future daily sale corresponds to agami. That which is sold daily represents prarabdha.
- In the Vedic religion a person's situation in this life is thought to be the result of karma, in the past life or lives as karma is accumulated throughout a person's reincarnated lives. Reincarnation is necessary to work off the karma gathered in previous lives.
- It is therefore possible to purify karma and make it good leading the atman to return to Moksha to be united with God.
- All Hindus believe that the individual soul (atman) exists in a cycle of birth into a body, followed by death and then reincarnation into a new body, although not necessarily a human one.
- The ultimate aim of the soul is to be freed from this cycle altogether by attaining liberation (Moksha).
- The quality of the life of the soul is reincarnated into depends on the previous life, on karma.
- The concept of reincarnation and karma are wrapped up in each other.
- Hindus therefore aim to live their lives in a way that will earn them good karma and eventually free them from rebirth altogether.

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

- (b) **‘The next life is far more important than the present life.’  
Evaluate this view with reference to Hinduism.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

- Many Hindus would emphasise the importance of the present life as it is the stage on which Hindus can live according to Hindu beliefs and principles.
- It is also important because it is an opportunity to build up good karma. All of the paths to achieving good karma are achieved in one's present life. It is in the present life that the principle of varnashramadharma is acted upon.
- Another path is yoga which again is part of the present life.
- Some Hindus believe certain funeral rites in this life will help their next life thus are important to be carried out in this life for example lighting a candle to guide the atman, cracking the skull so the atman is not trapped, cremating the body and scattering the ashes in a holy river such as the Ganges.
- It can be argued that moksha (liberation) acts as the positive motivation for Hindu religious practice.
- Because past lives affect future ones, a person is never sure about their reincarnation and the suffering that might accompany it because of past actions. Therefore it could be argued that the present life is the most important as ensuring good karma in the present life will ensure a good future life.
- However since the future life forms the basis and reason for the fulfilment of many of Hindu practices in the present life it is not easy to decide which is the more important – the actions themselves or the reason for those actions.
- It can be argued that the two, of course, are fundamentally linked since Hinduism is a cyclical religion following the pattern of birth, death and rebirth. Both the present and future lives and their importance combine in the pursuit of a Hindu's goal in life – the attainment of Moksha.
- In conclusion this is an issue where it is difficult to separate the two main components from each other. The main issue for consideration is whether the present life has importance in itself or only as a preparation for the future life.

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

5. (a) **Examine the role of the Ramayana and Mahabharata in Hindu daily life.**  
[AO1 15]

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

**Ramayana**

- Ramayana one of the two great Indian epics and offers lifestyle models to Hindus.
- Rama the hero of the epic lived his whole life by the rules of dharma. Hindus regard him as a hero and teach their young people to 'be as Rama' or 'be as Sita'.
- Ramayana is widely used to show moral values and ethics.
- It shows the ideal relationship between brothers. It also shows the duty of brothers standing up for each other in times of need. Lakshmana gave up all his status as a prince to voluntarily live with his brother in exile.
- It is also used to show the importance of honouring a promise made. When Dasrath began to weaken on actually keeping his promise and pleaded with Rama not to leave, Rama reminded his father of the value of a promise given.
- It is also used as a model of the 'ideal son' and deep love and devotion to parents. Rama states that he would not dishonour his father by breaking the promise he had made to Kaikeyi.
- It also teaches Hindus the values of life and the ways to uphold them. Characters in the Ramayana are role models in developing divine qualities – righteousness, purity, patience, devotion and forgiveness.

**Mahabharata**

- The longest epic in world literature. The Bhagavad Gita is a book within the Mahabharata and one of the most important characters is Krishna. It tells the story of the Great War between the Pandavas and the Kauravas.
- It is widely used in the teaching of moral and ethical values.
- The importance of dharma is a thread throughout the epic. Krishna warns Arjuna – 'do your duty and do not think about its rewards.' It warns against acting for selfish reasons on the basis of greed and desire. The good of others needs to be taken into account.
- It reminds Hindus that they are social as well as moral beings.
- It teaches support for family values and the importance of tradition.
- It is also used to promote justice and fairness – Krishna was intent on the triumph of good over evil whatever the cost.
- It also shows that blind pride and wrong actions have serious consequences.
- It also shows Hindus how to achieve the four human goals of dharma, artha, kama and moksha.

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

- (b) **‘The Vedas are the most important Hindu texts.’**  
**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 15]**

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

- Many regard the Vedas as the most important since they are regarded as the oldest scriptures in the world.
- It is believed they were revealed by God at the beginning of time for the benefit of humankind and are therefore inseparable from Brahman. This gives them divine authority and importance.
- They embody the entire range of knowledge spanning the sacred and secular. Their truths are eternal and timeless.
- They are shruti texts not of human origin and are still used today for ritual ceremonies and as a source of great wisdom and truth.
- However the Upanishads also have a very special status because they explain the Vedas and reveal sacred truths in philosophical formulas. They are not products of human intelligence but the whisperings of God to man.
- They are regarded as being as relevant and inspiring today as they were when they were first written. They are a mix of philosophy and practicality.
- They teach that everything must be done out of love for God and this is what gives them their importance.
- The great Hindu epics the Mahabharata and the Ramayana are smriti scriptures which means that the teachings are remembered rather than being directly revealed by a divine power. Some would argue that this diminishes their importance but others point out that they are well known by all Hindus.
- They are of human origin and guide the daily conduct of individuals. They also list the codes and rules which govern the actions of Hindu communities. They are open and accessible to all regardless of social background and education.
- Although the Bhagavad Gita is a section of the Mahabharata many Hindus give it a special status. It is the most famous and well known of all Hindu scriptures. Many believe it not only gives wisdom but very valuable practical advice for life.

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