



Cambridge International AS & A Level

HINDUISM

9487/03

Paper 3 Hinduism: Philosophy and Religion

May/June 2023

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 60

Published

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

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PUBLISHED**Generic Marking Principles**

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

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:

Marks must be awarded in line with:

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

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:

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

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

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

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:

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

PUBLISHED**GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:**

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

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:

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

Generic Marking grids

These level descriptors address Assessment Objectives (AOs) 1 and 2, and should be used in conjunction with the indicative content for each question in the mark scheme.

Assessment Objectives**AO1: Knowledge and understanding**

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the specified topics and texts

AO2: Analysis and evaluation

Analyse and evaluate the specified topics and texts

Generic marking principles

- 1 Examiners should start at the lowest descriptor, if the answer meets all the criteria they should then move to the next level and so on. The Examiner should repeat this process until there is a match between the overall answer and the descriptor. Examiners should use a best-fit approach when deciding upon the level, it is possible for a different level to be chosen for each AO.
- 2 If the Examiner identifies all aspects of the level descriptor within the answer then the highest mark for the level should be given. Examiners should also make reference to the indicative content when deciding on the mark within a level to ensure that there is sufficient relevant content evident within the answer for the level and mark. Examiners should be prepared to credit material in answers which is not contained in the indicative content.
- 3 The Examiner may need to make a judgement within a level or between two or more level statements. Once a ‘best-fit’ level statement has been identified, use the following guidance to decide on a specific mark:
 - Where the candidate’s work **convincingly** meets the level statement, you should award the highest mark.
 - Where the candidate’s work **adequately** meets the level statement, you should award the most appropriate mark in the middle of the range.
 - Where the candidate’s work **just** meets the level statement, you should award the lowest mark.

A Level Marking grid

Level	AO1 Knowledge and Understanding	Marks	Level	AO2 Analysis and Evaluation	Marks
Level 4	Explorative with detailed significant knowledge • Uses a range of detailed and relevant knowledge. • Confident understanding demonstrated through making connections between ideas and development of discussion. • Addresses all aspects of the question. • Exploration of the wider context if relevant.	10–12	Level 5	Assesses alternative conclusions with analysis of points view • Analyses the importance and/or strength of different points of view • Uses accurate evidence to support a coherent and well-structured discussion. • Coherent conclusion which evaluates knowledge and points of view and assesses alternative conclusions.	16–18
Level 3	Explains significance of knowledge • Uses a range of accurate and relevant knowledge. • Good understanding demonstrated through explanation of significance of knowledge used in developing the discussion. • Addresses most aspects of the question. • Good understanding of the wider context, if relevant.	7–9	Level 4	Coherent conclusion supported by evidenced points of view • Discusses different points of view in some detail • Uses accurate evidence to support a well-structured discussion. • Coherent conclusion which evaluates knowledge and points of view	12–15
Level 2	Range of knowledge partly addressing the question • Uses a range of knowledge with some accuracy • Demonstrates understanding through use of appropriate knowledge, may be less well developed • Partially addresses the question. • Uneven engagement with the wider context, if relevant.	4–6	Level 3	Clear conclusion with different points of view • Recognises different points of view and discusses at least one in some detail • Uses accurate evidence to support discussion. • Clear conclusion to the question which is linked to a range of knowledge and points of view.	8–11

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Level	AO1 Knowledge and Understanding	Marks
Level 1	Limited answer to question with limited knowledge / understanding - Identifies a limited range of knowledge some of which may not be accurate. - Demonstrates basic understanding - Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question. - Limited reference to the wider context, if relevant	1–3
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

Level	AO2 Analysis and Evaluation	Marks
Level 2	Attempts conclusion with a supported point of view - Discusses one point of view - Uses supporting evidence for one or more relevant point. The support may not be wholly relevant or accurate. - Attempts a conclusion to the question which is linked to knowledge and/or a point of view.	4–7
Level 1	Basic conclusion with a point of view - States a point of view. - Little or no supporting evidence. - Attempts a basic conclusion.	1–3
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1(a)	Explain how M K Gandhi used Christianity as a source of ethics. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 12 mark level descriptors (AO1). Candidates might refer to some of the following: While Gandhi was unequivocally a Hindu and drew his primary inspiration and philosophy from the Bhagavad Gita, he was always clear that he had great respect for other religious traditions that shared his own personal commitment to peace as the primary moral value. To Gandhi peace was a condition of truth, and God is truth, and truth God. Gandhi found in Christianity a parallel to this idea in Christ's teaching that God is worshipped in spirit and in truth. Gandhi regarded Jesus Christ as a divinely inspired figure, and, possibly, even as an avatar of the divine, which would give his words divine authority. Whenever Jesus spoke of peace, Gandhi accepted this as divine teaching and advocated it to his followers as being of great spiritual value. In particular, he was impressed by the Sermon on the Mount, which he saw as being of equal value and authority to the Bhagavad Gita. The Sermon on the Mount is an account of a speech given by Jesus to his followers. It appears in two slightly different versions in the New Testament, one with a slightly more spiritual emphasis, and the other emphasising values pertaining to social justice in the material world. The Sermon on the Mount calls for Christians to be pure in spirit, to be meek, merciful and to hunger and thirst after righteousness. It also requires them to be peacemakers and to pray for and forgive their enemies. These values agree very well with Gandhi's concept of satyagraha, where his followers are required to use peaceful means to bring about righteousness. Like the satyagrahas, the Christians whom Christ addresses can expect to be persecuted and ill-treated because of their commitment to righteousness or dharma. In this way, the Sermon on the Mount became a source of inspiration and teaching for Gandhi, and he used it both in his formulation of the concept of satyagraha and in communicating those ideas to his followers. By showing the virtues that are outlined in the Sermon on the Mount and striving through peaceful methods to bring about social justice, Christians will bring about the 'Kingdom of God'. This is variously understood within Christianity as being either a heavenly kingdom, or a state of affairs that exists on earth when all live in accordance with Divine will and the result is universal prosperity, peace and justice.	12	Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks. All accurate material will be credited as appropriate.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1(a)	This again fits very closely with Gandhi's idea of the Ramaraj, or state where everything happens in full accordance with the requirements of dharma. Gandhi's vision of the Ramaraj was of a state where the lowest in society were protected and given a voice in the running of the state in a way that accorded well with Christ's teachings that the first would be last and that the lowest elements in society would be raised up in the Kingdom of God. Hence, Gandhi found in the teachings of Jesus a number of things that fitted well with his own ideas of dharma, satyagraha and the Ramaraj. Thus, he could accept those teachings as divinely inspired and use them to further inform his own developing philosophy and view of Hinduism.		

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1(b)	‘M K Gandhi's teachings about ahimsa have given non-Hindus a false impression of Hinduism.’ Discuss. AO2 – Analysis and evaluation. Responses will be marked according to the 18 mark level descriptors (AO2). Candidates might refer to some of the following: Ahimsa, literally ‘harmlessness’ is one of the key moral values of Hinduism. All Hindus adopt the idea of ahimsa to some extent or another. Sanatana dharma (usually translated as ‘eternal dharma’) contains the defining virtues or duties of Hindus independent from their gender, ashrama or varna. These virtues include generosity, piety, compassion and harmlessness or ‘ahimsa’. For Gandhi, ahimsa was the defining virtue of Hinduism, which should apply to all Hindus equally. He developed his idea of ahimsa by drawing on religious traditions outside of Hinduism such as Jainism and Christianity. Within Hinduism generally, vegetarianism was considered within the wider context of ritual purity and was therefore considered necessary for brahmins who needed to preserve their ritual purity in order to conduct the rituals correctly. It was not widely practiced by the other varnas. From Jainism, however, Gandhi took the idea of ahimsa as extending to all living things at all times. He believed that for any Hindu to kill or harm a living thing was adharmic. He took this idea to England where he was instrumental in the emerging Vegetarian Society. Because of his prominence and later fame, many non-Hindus, particularly in Britain, adopted the mistaken idea that all Hindus were vegetarian all of the time, and thus a false impression of Hinduism was formed. Furthermore, Gandhi gave the impression that this commitment to ahimsa was universal within Hinduism. However, within varnashramadharma there are those who are obligated to use violence under certain circumstances in order to live a dharmic life. These are the kshatriyas, the second varna whose dharma is regal and military. The Bhagavad Gita, a text which Gandhi himself revered, makes clear that where there is a conflict within Sanatana dharma and varnashramadharma or svadharma then the latter must prevail. Thus, Arjuna’s dharma as a kshatriya was to fight in the war, rather than to uphold ahimsa. Gandhi, however, developed the idea of satyagraha or ‘truth force’ by which his followers ‘fought’ for justice using exclusively peaceful methods which upheld ahimsa. Again, because of his fame in the West, and the extent to which his teachings became widely known, it could be argued that the non-Hindus in the West formed the false impression that all Hindus were pacifist.	18	Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks. Credit all relevant discussion. Candidates can argue for or against the claim as long as their discussion is focused on the question. Candidates are free to express and defend a personal opinion in relation to the question, but are not obliged to do so.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1(b)	Having said this, religions change and develop over time with the introduction of new ideas. It was not only non-Hindus who listened to Gandhi and many Hindus came to accept his ideas and teachings. Thus, the teachings of Gandhi contributed to a process called Sanskritisation, whereby features that had once been restricted to brahmins, such as pacifism and vegetarianism, became much more widespread within Hindu communities as a whole. Thus it could be argued that while Gandhi did not reflect the situation that existed within Hinduism accurately, and he certainly did not reflect the diversity of both opinion and practice that existed within Hinduism; he did, nevertheless contribute to a change within Hinduism at the time, which led to a much more widespread adoption of the principles of ahimsa and vegetarianism, meaning that the impression he gave to non-Hindus was at least to an extent, an accurate one.		

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
2(a)	Explain the different attitudes of Hinduism and Jainism towards the Vedas. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 12 mark level descriptors (AO1). Candidates might refer to some of the following: Hinduism regards the Vedas as divinely revealed (shruti), and as the foundational basis of ritual, philosophy, natural history, and science. Hindus believe that all knowledge is contained within the Vedas. Thus, for a religious tradition within Hinduism to be considered valid or orthodox (astika), it must be able to trace its thought and/or practice to an interpretation of the Vedas. While Hindu traditions might understand and interpret the Vedas differently, leading to varying ideas about the relationship between the atman and Brahman, or the nature of yajna, they all ultimately derive their legitimacy from them. Jainism is a religious tradition that has its roots in a period of spiritual and ethical development and change within Hinduism, which also led to the development of Buddhism. It shares with Hinduism a belief in karma and its role in gaining liberation; and it shares the strong commitment to ethical values that is indicative of traditions that developed at this time. The Virtues emphasised in Jainism are very close to the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism and the niyamas of Samkhya. The major point of diversion from Hinduism is that while Jainism does believe in the possibility of liberation for the individual jiva, it rejects the concept of a God or any ultimate Divine being or reality. Hindu traditions, derived from the Vedas, all acknowledge the divine in some way, either as Brahman (saguna or nirguna) or as a multiplicity of divine beings. While the religion and gods associated with the Vedas have changed and so modern Hinduism looks very different to the religion of the Vedas, nevertheless, the influence of the Vedas can be seen in modern Hinduism in the incorporation of Vedic hymns and rituals. Jainism does acknowledge a number of gods but does not hold that they are eternal or that they had a role in the creation of the world, which is eternal. It is possible to be incarnated in the body of a god in order to ‘use up’ positive karma, but the gods themselves are trapped in samsara and play no role in liberation.	12	Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks. All accurate material will be credited as appropriate.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
2(a)	Jainism is based on the teachings of the 24 Tirthankaras or spiritual beings who have appeared over the course of millions of years. The 23rd and 24th Tirthankaras, Parshvanatha and Mahavira are believed to have lived in the 6th and 9th centuries BCE respectively. The main scriptures of Jainism are the Agamas, believed to have been orally transmitted from the sermons of the Tirthankaras. Jains reject the authority of the Vedas, relying instead on their own scriptures which are entirely separate from the Hindu body of scripture, and rely on the teachings of the Tirthankaras to point the way towards liberation. They reject Vedic teaching and ritual entirely, regarding much of its content as superstition.		

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
2(b)	‘Hindu and Jain ideas about liberation are the same.’ Discuss. AO2 – Analysis and evaluation. Responses will be marked according to the 18 mark level descriptors (AO2). Candidates might refer to some of the following: All Hindu traditions share the common ultimate aim of moksha or liberation. Ideas about what exactly liberation is and how best to achieve it vary within Hinduism, so that there is not one single theory of liberation. Most Hindu ideas about liberation, however, do share a concern with Vedic teachings, particularly the Upanishads, and with Deity or Ultimate reality in some form. There are generally seen to be three margas or paths to liberation in Hinduism, all of which can be deduced from the Vedas. Jnana or the way of knowledge, involves careful study of the scriptures, usually under the guidance of a guru, and periods of intense meditation in order to gain experiential knowledge of the truth that the atman is non-different from Brahman, the ultimate reality. Once this has been realised the atman is no longer subject to false impressions of mortality and limitation. The path of karma, or action, is better suited to a householder and consists of performing dharmic action with no attachment to the outcome of the action, or expectation of reward. This frees the atman from the effects of karma, which keep it trapped within samsara. The path of bhakti involves loving devotion to a personal god or Ishvara. Moksha occurs through the love and grace of the god or goddess worshipped. Within the Samkhya tradition, liberation comes about as one identifies with purusha, or pure consciousness, rather than with prakriti or matter, which includes the ego. Jainism is similar in that it shares the key concepts of karma, dharma and moksha. However, it differs in key areas, as it does not acknowledge an ultimate, creative divine force, and rejects the authority of the Vedas as a source of information on how to achieve liberation, instead focussing on the teachings of the Tirthankaras, and particularly Mahavira. Within Jainism, the Tirthankaras have a clearly defined role in pointing the way towards liberation, that is absent in Hinduism. Jainism is closer to Samkhya than to any other form of Hinduism in that it believes in a multiplicity of jivas that are eternally distinct, and which can achieve liberation without the aid or even understanding of a Divine power such as Brahman. However, there are still key differences.	18	Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks. Credit all relevant discussion. Candidates can argue for or against the claim as long as their discussion is focused on the question.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
2(b)	Hinduism tends to understand the atman as an unchanging and eternal element of a person, which might be seen as identical with the divine. For Jains, the jiva is eternal, but not unchanging, taking on the dimensions of the individual it inhabits in each lifetime. Jainism also differs from Hinduism in its understanding of karma. Jains believe that this is a material substance made of particles that 'stick' to the jiva, making it heavy and so trapping it in samsara. In order to achieve liberation, it is necessary to stop acquiring new karma, and to 'clean away' existing karma. This is done through the Three Jewels of Jainism, right faith, right knowledge and right action or conduct. Liberation is only practically accessible to ascetics. For most lay Jains the main aim is to collect sufficient good karma for a good rebirth that brings the individual closer to being able to achieve liberation. Those that have achieved liberation are Siddhas, having passed beyond samsara they are omniscient and eternal. There are clear similarities between Jainism and Hinduism. In both cases karma is a key factor in keeping the atman or jiva trapped within samsara and the way to avoid this is through dharmic or righteous living and/or spiritual knowledge or understanding. The moral principles to be followed are similar in each tradition, although Jainism puts a greater emphasis on ahimsa than Hinduism, and extends it to all living things since the jiva goes through all forms of life on its journey to salvation. However, there are very significant differences. There is a disagreement over what karma actually is and the mechanism by which it traps the atman or jiva in samsara. Furthermore, Jains believe that the jiva actually changes over time, and from life to life. Some Jains believe that a jiva can be inherently good or evil and that knowingly committing a very evil act can lead to a jiva being beyond the possibility of liberation. Furthermore, there is no place in the process of liberation for a God, gods, or Ultimate Divinity within Jainism, making its differences from Hinduism substantial and significant.		

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
3	Assess the claim that Hinduism is best described as a cultural identity. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 12 mark level descriptors (AO1). AO2 – Analysis and evaluation Responses will be marked according to the 18 mark level descriptors (AO2). Candidates might refer to some of the following: Hinduism is, in itself, a problematic term, having been devised by outside powers to describe the religious traditions followed by those in the region of the Sindhu (Indus) River. Generally speaking, it refers to traditions that are based on the principles of karma, dharma and moksha and that accept the authority of the Vedas. There are various opinions as to when and by whom Hindu was used to refer to a religion rather than to a geographical region. Certainly, before India was colonised by both Muslim and English powers, the peoples of India did not classify themselves purely by belief or religion (a term that is, itself, highly problematic), but also by their region, jati, language and cultural identity. The fact that the very different traditions of Vaishnavism and Shaivism are both classed as Hindu is to some extent a result of the imposition of the word as a blanket term to cover a very wide and diverse set of beliefs and traditions. Culture is also a contested term, and its relationship to religion is ambiguous and fluid. As Hinduism is founded on the idea of dharma, it is orientated towards action, and so links closely to the idea of culture. As Hinduism is a living tradition that changes over time, the relationship between the largely Western ideas of religion and culture within it is fluid and complex. It is most common, especially in the West, to perceive Hinduism as a religion. It is perhaps more accurate to regard it as an umbrella term referring to a wide range of religious traditions. There are good reasons to regard Hinduism as religious as it fits with most of the more common definitions of religion. There is a belief in God, gods or an Ultimate Reality that is perceived as divine. There are scriptures, some of which are regarded as divinely revealed, and there are rituals that involve prayer, worship, and offerings. The main aim of all Hindu traditions is soteriological, involved with the best way to achieve moksha or liberation from rebirth. All of this is in keeping with how religions are generally defined and indeed Vivekananda was very keen to present Hinduism as a world religion at the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago in 1893. His main concern was to present Hinduism as an ancient and coherent religion that was at least the equal of any of the other world religions represented at the Parliament.	30	Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks. Credit all relevant discussion. Candidates should provide discussion which analyses the similarities and differences between the two.

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
3	Furthermore, while most Hindus are of Indian ethnicity, and Hinduism does not generally actively proselytise, there are modern Hindu movements that are open to anyone, and where many, if not most of the followers are of American or European white descent. These include the International School for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) and the Sathya Sai International Organisation among others. Converts to these groups are attracted by the religious and soteriological aspects of these forms of Hinduism and are often unfamiliar with Indian languages and culture. For these reasons it could be argued that Hinduism is most accurately described as a religion, or as a family of religions. Many Hindus reject the term Hinduism to refer to their religion, preferring to use Sanatana Dharma (The Eternal Dharma), which places the tradition outside of the confines of time, or, less commonly, Vaidika Dharma, meaning the dharma relating to the Vedas. Dharma is, itself, a complex term, while it can be translated into English as 'religion', its range of meaning is much wider than this, encompassing 'duty', 'order' 'righteousness' and 'that which upholds'. Thus, its meanings are much wider than the Western perception of religion, although that is one of the things encompassed by it. There is no straightforward translation of 'religion' into either Sanskrit or any of the modern Indian languages and this is part of the problem with defining Hinduism straightforwardly as religion. The majority of Hindus are of Indian ethnicity, and live either in India or in diaspora communities elsewhere, where there are mandirs and temples built for their use. Mainstream Hinduism does not traditionally proselytise, and while it is not unknown for non-Indians to convert to Hinduism, it is very uncommon. Thus 'Hindu' is at least in part an ethnic designation as well as a religious one. Also, Hindus do not generally see their identity purely in terms of religious belief, but also in terms of language, geographical location, jati and other factors that relate to culture, rather than religious belief. The political Hindutva movement seeks to define Hinduism as a cultural, and political identity, regarding it as the core feature of Indian identity, and seeks to promote this in India above the 'imported' cultures such as Christian and Islamic. While this is still presented in religious language it reflects a cultural identity that goes far beyond this. For these reasons it might be more accurate to regard Hinduism as a cultural identity which encompasses religion in the Western sense, but which goes far beyond this.		

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
4	‘Puja is necessary in order for a Hindu to attain liberation.’ Discuss. AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 12 mark level descriptors (AO1). AO2 – Analysis and evaluation Responses will be marked according to the 18 mark level descriptors (AO2). Candidates might refer to some of the following: Puja is the name given to a collection of rituals and practices connected with the worship of a deity within Hinduism. These most often include murti puja, where an image of a god or goddess is bathed, dressed and given offerings of food, incense and bhajans. They can also include arti and havan ceremonies, involving a sacred fire, or an arti lamp. The arti lamp often has five flames, representing the elements or senses and symbolising the offering of the whole person and the whole cosmos to the divine. Puja can be carried out in a temple, or at a home shrine. In the home the woman of the household is usually responsible for keeping the family shrine and making sure that puja is properly observed, although a priest might be called in for special occasions, such as rites of passage, to ensure that everything is done correctly. Since some of the mantras and formulae associated with puja are taken from the Vedas (where they were originally associated with the Vedic yajnas or sacrifices) it could be said that elements of puja are taken from shruti scriptures directly revealed by the divine. Other elements of puja, including instructions about the exact proportions and attributes of the various murti used in puja are found in smriti texts and are therefore also given scriptural authority. Because of this, many Hindus would suggest that puja is supported, and indeed, required by scripture and so is a necessary part of human life. During the grihastha ashrama, one of the principal dharmas of a householder is to make sure that the debts to the gods are paid and a part of this process includes puja, and the maintenance of a family shrine. In contemporary Hindu society, Hindus who are retired (some would say the equivalent of the vanaprastha ashrama in the ancient system) often use their time to attend the temple more often and take part in puja in the hope that this will bring them closer to the divine and give them a better chance of attaining liberation.	30	Candidates do not need to refer to all of this material to gain the marks. Credit all relevant discussion. Candidates should provide a justified discussion which addresses the claim and comes to a conclusion.

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
4	Puja is often associated with the bhakti marga, the route to liberation that involves personal love and devotion to an Ishvara or personal deity. This is a deeply felt emotional connection which, at times becomes ecstatic. While there is no requirement for this to involve puja, it almost invariably does. This is a very direct engagement with the divine that does not require great learning or intellect or for a person to be of a particular varna or status, and as such is very popular. Some Hindus, including the poet Tulsidas, believed that in the current era of the Kali Yuga, where the original amount of dharma in the world has been reduced by three quarters and people are not naturally inclined towards dharmic behaviour or jnana, the only viable way to achieve moksha is through bhakti and so through puja. Any other method, he suggests, is like trying to climb up to heaven on the rain. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu, says that anyone who offers him so much as a leaf or a glass of water out of genuine and pure love will surely gain liberation, regardless of their gender or varna or what they have done in the past. While it is not absolutely specified that Krishna is referring to offerings made in puja, this is a valid interpretation of the text and one that is often made. For these reasons, many Hindus, particularly those that follow a bhakti path, would suggest that puja is a very good way to achieve moksha, and some would say that it is essential in order to do so. Darshan, an important part of murti puja, where a devotee sees and is seen by the deity, could be argued to be a form of liberation in its own right, dissolving the barrier between the human and the divine. For other Hindus, however, puja is not only unnecessary to achieve liberation, but might actually be a hindrance to it. The sensual and material nature of puja might serve to encourage attachment to the material world and so lead away from liberation. The Vedas do not mention puja as it is practised in modern Hinduism, in fact, as was pointed out by both the Arya and the Brahmo Samaj, they do not contain any reference at all to physical representations of the gods. Many forms of Hinduism consider puja, and particularly murti puja to encourage superstition and to show a superficial understanding of Hindu philosophy. According to the Advaita Vedanta tradition, moksha consists of the realisation that the atman and Brahman are 'not different'. This understanding is gained by the study of scripture under the guidance of a guru, and through meditation. Puja relates to Brahman as 'saguna' or having attributes, as particular deities are encountered and usually the divine is approached through an Ishvara or personal god or goddess. This leads a person away from experiencing Brahman as 'nirguna' or without attributes, and so coming to realise that all things are Brahman since nothing except Brahman has absolute existence. For this reason, puja might actually be harmful.		

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
4	Shankara, the founder of the Advaita tradition did allow that puja might be useful for those who were not spiritually advanced, since it encouraged moral behaviour and kept the mind fixed on the divine. However, he believed that a person should move beyond the need or inclination for puja as they became more spiritually mature and realised that the deity that they were worshipping had only contingent existence and was 'non different' to themselves. In contrast, Ramanuja's Vishistadvaita, does allow for the value of puja in attaining moksha, as he acknowledges the absolute reality of saguna Brahman. Consequently, the extent to which a Hindu regards puja as being necessary for liberation will depend on the school of Hinduism to which they belong and their own personal inclinations. Many would regard puja as not exactly necessary, but certainly very useful in attaining liberation, while others would see it as superstitious and misguided and would say that it is something that needs to be transcended before liberation is possible.		