

GCE

Religious Studies

Unit **G577**: Hinduism

Advanced Subsidiary GCE

Mark Scheme for June 2017

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Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and the report on the examination.

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These are the annotations, (including abbreviations), including those used in scoris, which are used when marking

| Annotation | Meaning of annotation |
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|  | Level one – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin. |
|  | Level two – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin. |
|  | Level three – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin. |
|  | Level four – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin. |
|  | Level five – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin. |
|  | Highlighting a section of the response that is irrelevant to the awarding of the mark. |
|  | Point has been seen and noted, e.g. where part of an answer is at the end of the script. |

MARK SCHEME FORMAT 1

| | | Answer/Indicative content | Mark | Guidance |
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| 1 | a | <p>Explain the concept of maya.</p> <p>Candidates might begin by offering an English translation for the Sanskrit term 'maya'. This is commonly translated as 'illusion' but candidates might also use 'delusion', 'deception' or 'deceit'. Whichever translation is preferred most candidates will be able to move beyond a simple definition to explain the ways in which maya is understood by Hindus.</p> <p>Some candidates might consider the term as used in the Vedas, where it refers to the creative power of the divine to manifest the world. Maya can be understood as a magic trick, and it is this that makes it a suitable term to describe the creative activity of God, which is both confusing and mesmerising.</p> <p>Other candidates might explain maya as the illusion that the material world into which people are born is both real and distinct from Brahman. 'Illusion' in this context is used to describe a situation that is not as it seems to be, rather than implying that the world is a mirage. In this understanding the world is not as it appears and maya is the veil of ignorance that prevents people from recognising and understanding this. When knowledge pierces this veil and the true nature of things is understood liberation can be achieved. The nature of the reality to be understood varies somewhat with different philosophical schools and candidates might draw on any of these in their explanation.</p> | [25] | A comparison of different understandings of maya across different schools of Hindu thought is not required by the question, but is creditable as an approach. |

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| 1 | b | <p>Assess the view that maya means that human actions do not matter.</p> <p>A literal translation of maya as ‘illusion’ could lead to the belief that the world is wholly unreal and that actions within it would therefore have no value or meaning. Candidates might develop the more detailed understandings of maya as a concept that they have used in part a above to challenge this view, arguing that maya does not mean illusion in the sense of unreal or hallucinatory. They might suggest that ‘deceptive’ or ‘misleading’ would be a better way of understanding the term.</p> <p>An alternative approach might be to consider the goal of liberation, and the ways in which this relates to maya. For example, the jnana path is focussed on knowledge as a means of overcoming maya and so achieving liberation; this could be said to support the view that actions do not matter. However, if karma yoga is the chosen path to liberation then actions do matter. Candidates might also consider the yogas in a more abstract way, arguing that the fact of existence of paths to liberation implies that human actions do matter, even if people are deluded about the nature of reality.</p> <p>As a more general approach candidates might consider the issue of ethics and ethical behaviour. The law of karma means that actions affect rebirths within samsara and so ethical behaviour is important, regardless of whether or not we have a true understanding of the nature of things.</p> | [10] | |
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| 2 | a | <p>Explain the role of the Trimurti in Hindu understandings of deity.</p> <p>Candidates might begin by identifying the Trimurti and their roles within Hindu cosmology – Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver/maintainer and Shiva the destroyer. This representation can be used to explain how divine power creates, destroys and recreates the universe in a continuous cycle through the mythology surrounding these deities.</p> <p>Each of the Trimurti can also be understood and approached as an individual deity, although Brahma is not commonly worshipped in this way. Candidates might describe how both Shiva and Vishnu are worshipped as the supreme manifestation of deity. However, they are not generally understood as the only possible manifestation or form of the divine. Their roles might be explored through a consideration of the representations of the deity in murti, and associated symbolism, locations and/or events.</p> <p>Some candidates might present the Trimurti as significant or popular deities within a crowded pantheon of other gods and goddesses. They might use associated mythology to explore their relationships to one another and/or the world, as well as their relative importance.</p> <p>Alternatively, candidates might suggest that the Trimurti are themselves representations of specific aspects or powers of a single Supreme or Absolute power which is beyond human grasp or understanding. They might consider the concept of Ishvara as the focus of bhakti, as the supreme Purusha, a personal God, or saguna Brahman. The Trimurti could be said to represent the personal aspects, or aspects with attributes, of the Absolute.</p> | [25] | <p>Descriptions of the iconographic features of specific murti can be relevant if explicitly connected to the role of the named deity.</p> |
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| 2 | b | <p>To what extent can the term monotheism be applied to Hinduism?</p> <p>Candidates are likely to be aware of the many different named deities associated with Hinduism and this might lead them to argue that taken at face value the term 'monotheism' is wholly inappropriate and polytheism is a better fit, since that term describes a belief in many gods. Most candidates are likely to use this as a starting point for further discussion on the different forms Hinduism might take.</p> <p>Some candidates will consider alternative terms such as polytheism and monism to consider whether they offer a better fit as descriptors of the religion. Some candidates might argue that rather than being polytheistic Hindus understand the different deities as different parts or aspects of a greater whole or as lesser beings below another Supreme deity which might make monotheism (or henotheism) a better fit term. A personal devotion to a single named deity could also be considered sufficient to describe the individual demonstrating such devotion as a monotheist, without implying that this term covers Hinduism as a whole. Alternatively, Hinduism could be described as a monist worldview if all deities, and indeed everything else, is understood as part of a single Brahman.</p> <p>Candidates might conclude that one of these other terms is a better description for Hinduism as a whole or they might argue that Hinduism cannot be summed up in this way by any single term. It can be seen as a collection of different religions with different understandings of the divine, or as a single religion with a complex understanding of God and reality that is so different from the concepts captured by Western understandings of theism that none of the terms conceived in Western philosophy can fit properly.</p> | [10] | |
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| 3 | a | <p>Explain the significance of puja for Hinduism today.</p> <p>Puja can be literally translated as ‘worship’, and in its broadest sense can include any formal act of worship. Murti puja is probably the most common form of Hindu worship, during which offerings are made to deities. Candidates are likely to be aware that many Hindus perform daily puja at home and that it is also performed at mandirs. Through worship blessings are sought and supplications can be made. Candidates might explain that puja is most associated with bhakti (devotion) and that its purpose is not only to offer respect but also to experience a relationship with the deity.</p> <p>Some candidates might consider the symbolism of puja, and the powers associated with different deities, to explain why venerating those deities is important. For example, Ganesh is the deity who removes (or creates) obstacles, so it could be important to have his blessing on a regular basis. Festivals associated with worshipping particular deities bring the Hindu community together to express collective devotion, seek collective blessings and remember significant events.</p> <p>Daily performance speaks to the importance of puja in Hindu life. Puja might be considered as a requirement of dharma. Candidates might consider its connection with karma or the specific relevance of puja in relation to ashrama and so to the smooth and proper functioning of society. Because puja takes place in the home it is free of caste restrictions and purity rules so candidates might point out that it is therefore a form of worship that is universally available.</p> <p>Another approach might be to consider puja as an element of bhakti. This is not the only path to liberation, and following a different path could make devotion to deities seem less important. Some candidates might suggest that the modern world is less interested in deity and traditional forms of religion, but others might take the view that Hinduism today is very different from the original Vedic religion and puja, especially performed in the home, is one expression of that difference as it replaces the animal sacrifices and other rituals described in the Vedas.</p> | [25] | <p>Descriptions of a puja tray and its contents are creditable if explicitly linked to the significance of puja as an act of worship for Hindus.</p> |
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| 3 | b | <p>'Hindu worship is impossible without Murti'. Discuss</p> <p>Candidates are likely to be aware that murti are usually present on shrines at home and in temples when puja is performed. Candidates might point out that a murti is more than just an image but is the living presence of that deity, so without a murti the relational aspect of puja would not be achievable. However, they might also argue that the divine is present in all things, so although a murti is especially conducive to worship it is not absolutely essential.</p> <p>Other religious practices such as pilgrimage, yoga and studying the Vedas might be considered, with candidates reflecting on whether these activities are forms of worship or not. They might also consider the idea of darshan (seeing/being seen) which can take the form of meeting the eyes of the murti, but which can also occur in the presence of a sadhu or other holy person or in a sacred place demonstrating that a murti is not required for all forms of worship or all encounters with the divine.</p> <p>Other forms of ritual worship such as homa or havan (sacred fire) and yajna (sacrifice) might be explored. These rituals do not require murti, but can only be performed by certain people and/or in certain places or at particular times. This means that the yajamana (Hindu seeking/paying for the ritual) needs access to a temple and the appropriate priests in order to worship in these ways.</p> <p>Candidates might also choose to discuss the question of idolatry and superstition in relation to the worship of murti. They might make reference to Hindu philosophies and/or movements that sought to promote the veneration of nirguna Brahman in support of this.</p> | [10] | |
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| 4 | a | <p>Explain the relationship of dharma and karma.</p> <p>Candidates are likely to begin by explaining the concepts of dharma and karma. Although dharma can be translated in different ways depending on context in relation to karma candidates are most likely to frame it in terms of personal duty of the path a person should take through their life. It is one of the four purusharthas (aims of life) and it is the means by which pursuit of other purusharthas should be judged. They might link it to other concepts such as varna or ashrama (varnashramadhharma) or consider it as universal quality (Sanatana Dharma). Karma is likely to be understood as consequences, created by ones actions, which can be either positive or negative. It is the accumulation of karma that affects individual rebirths within samsara.</p> <p>Another way to understand dharma is as the inherent nature of something, for example the nature of fire is to burn. Karma literally means action, and it is only in human rebirth that karma gains the ethical quality commonly associated with it. Candidates might present karma as a form of cosmic justice that determines both the current state of any given individual and their future births, based on their current actions.</p> <p>Candidates might explicitly connect dharma and karma in terms of concepts of karma as positive or good and negative or bad, since acting according to ones dharma should result in positive karma and so a positive rebirth. Some candidates might elaborate on this further, noting that it is the nature of the rebirth that determines dharma for this lifetime, at least in part, so the relationship between the two is multi-directional. Dharma can also be understood as Sadharana dharma, or universal moral principles which should be respected regardless of the nature of one's birth and which result in ethical behaviour and positive karma.</p> | [25] | |
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| 4 | b | <p>To what extent is it true to say that good karma leads to liberation?</p> <p>Candidates are likely to be aware of popular understandings of karma as a means of climbing a ladder of lives to achieve moksha as the top rung and they might therefore argue that good karma does lead to liberation. However different understandings of karma are possible and many (if not most) Hindus would connect liberation more with a cessation or removal of karma than with an accumulation of it, even if that accumulation is positive.</p> <p>Candidates might argue that a focus on karma as the fruits of ones actions means that the individual is still very much attached to samsara and deluded by maya into believing that the world is as it appears to be, They cannot become liberated until they realise maya and karma cannot help them to achieve this. This is sakam (attached) karma. It is better to strive for nishkam (desireless) karma where one is unattached to the fruits of action. Candidates might draw on concepts of karma yoga from the Bhagavad Gita or on monist understandings of Hinduism to develop these ideas.</p> <p>Alternatively, candidates might consider the bhakti path and its relationship to karma, arguing that for Hindus committed to a personal deity the grace (prasada) of that deity is required to make the final step to liberation.</p> <p>However, it could also be argued that a positive rebirth within samsara makes it easier to spend time studying, or focussing on a personal deity so that regardless of which path to liberation is ultimately followed achieving good karma has been an important step on the way.</p> | [10] | |
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APPENDIX 1 – AS Levels of Response

| Level | Mark/25 | AO1 | Mark/10 | AO2 |
|---|---------|--|---------|--|
| 0 | 0 | absent/no relevant material | 0 | absent/no argument |
| 1 | 1-5 | almost completely ignores the question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little relevant material • some concepts inaccurate • shows little knowledge of technical terms <p style="text-align: right;">L1</p> | 1-2 | very little argument or justification of viewpoint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little or no successful analysis • views asserted with no justification <p style="text-align: right;">L1</p> |
| Communication: often unclear or disorganised; can be difficult to understand; spelling, punctuation and grammar may be inadequate | | | | |
| 2 | 6-10 | a basic attempt to address the question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge limited and partially accurate • limited understanding • selection often inappropriate • might address the general topic rather than the question directly • limited use of technical terms <p style="text-align: right;">L2</p> | 3-4 | a basic attempt to sustain an argument and justify a viewpoint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some analysis, but not successful • views asserted with little justification <p style="text-align: right;">L2</p> |
| Communication: some clarity and organisation; easy to follow in parts; spelling, punctuation and grammar may be inadequate | | | | |
| 3 | 11-15 | satisfactory attempt to address the question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some accurate knowledge • appropriate understanding • some successful selection of material • some accurate use of technical terms <p style="text-align: right;">L3</p> | 5-6 | the argument is sustained and justified <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some successful analysis which may be implicit • views asserted but not fully justified <p style="text-align: right;">L3</p> |
| Communication: some clarity and organisation; easy to follow in parts; spelling, punctuation and grammar may be inadequate | | | | |
| 4 | 16-20 | a good attempt to address the question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurate knowledge • good understanding • good selection of material • technical terms mostly accurate <p style="text-align: right;">L4</p> | 7-8 | a good attempt to sustain an argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some effective use of evidence • some successful and clear analysis • considers more than one viewpoint <p style="text-align: right;">L4</p> |
| Communication: generally clear and organised; can be understood as a whole; spelling, punctuation and grammar good | | | | |
| 5 | 21-25 | a very good/excellent attempt to address the question showing understanding and engagement with the material <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very high level of ability to select and deploy relevant information • accurate use of technical terms <p style="text-align: right;">L5</p> | 9-10 | a very good/excellent attempt to sustain an argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comprehends the demands of the question • uses a range of evidence • shows understanding and critical analysis of different viewpoints <p style="text-align: right;">L5</p> |
| Communication: answer is well constructed and organised; easily understood; spelling, punctuation and grammar very good | | | | |

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

Education and Learning

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

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