

# Markscheme

May 2021

World religions

Standard level

Paper 2

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**Paper 2 markbands**

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–3	The response demonstrates minimal knowledge and understanding in relation to the demands of the question. There is little use of relevant terminology. The response is descriptive in nature. Any conclusions presented are superficial, anecdotal or common-sense.
4–6	The response demonstrates some relevant knowledge and understanding of the beliefs/ concepts/ practices/teachings of the specified religion in relation to the demands of the question. There is some use of relevant terminology. The argument is limited and the analysis is only partially consistent with the knowledge and understanding demonstrated. There is some use of examples, but these are generally vague and do not support the argument. There is a limited conclusion(s), but this is not supported by the evidence presented or examples.
7–9	The response demonstrates mostly relevant and appropriate knowledge and understanding of the beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings of the specified religion in relation to the demands of the question. There is use of relevant terminology, but this is not always consistent. There is an argument, which is generally supported by the analysis; connections between beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings are identified but not developed. The argument at times lacks clarity and coherence but this does not hinder understanding. There is a conclusion(s) but this is only partially supported by the evidence presented and the examples used.
10–12	The response demonstrates relevant and appropriate knowledge and understanding of the beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings of the specified religion, and this is demonstrated throughout the essay. There is consistent use of relevant terminology. The argument is structured and coherent and supported by the analysis; connections between beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings are identified and developed. There is a conclusion(s) supported by the evidence presented, with relevant examples. There is a partially developed evaluation.
13–15	The response demonstrates detailed, relevant and appropriate knowledge and understanding of the beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings of the specified religion, and this is demonstrated throughout the essay. There is consistent use of relevant terminology. A reasoned argument(s) is well-structured and coherent and supported by the analysis with connections between beliefs/concepts/practices/teachings clearly identified and effectively developed. There is a conclusion(s) supported by the evidence presented, and effective use of examples. There is a developed evaluation; any minor inconsistencies do not detract from the strength of the overall argument.

## Hinduism

1. Examine the various origins of doctrines in Hinduism.
  - Hinduism evolved over thousands of years and the origins of doctrines are not known in exact detail due to the nature of their origins.
  - Some traditions suggest there have been several cycles of development of Hinduism over millennia, with each age going through a period of development and realization of spiritual truth, then decline.
  - The Indus Valley civilizations of around 1500 BCE formed. Different peoples and civilizations merged. These included the Dravidian societies and Aryan migrants.
  - Some argue that the meeting of ideas brought about a common way of life and thought. Some refer to this as the time when the theology of Brahman developed.
  - The Vedic period emerged, during which practices and rituals became known and the Vedas were written. The Vedas became an authority used by saints and sages for doctrine.
  - The earliest Upanishads, which began to add meaning to rituals and form doctrine, were written.
  - There was an ascetic tradition during the Vedic period which helped to found the theories of samsara: the cycle of rebirth and reincarnation, and moksha: liberation from samsara.
  - Hinduism developed the doctrine that all creatures have a soul (in contrast to Buddhism).
  - The classical period of Hinduism followed when the worship of deities, especially Vishnu, Shiva and Devi, grew in importance. The Bhagavad Gita appeared which drew together many of the doctrines which had been emerging. The dharma of duty, truth and law appeared in epics and texts.
  - Samkya, Yoga and Vedanta are mentioned in some of these texts. Several schools of philosophy grew up, some emphasising monastic virtues.

Candidates are expected to refer to various origins of Hinduism.

*Accept any other relevant answer.*

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

2. “Samskara rituals are only important for men.” Discuss.

*Candidates should be credited when acknowledging different interpretations and changed practice over time.*

**Points in support of the statement**

- Traditionally, men have been given preference in some of the samskaras.
- In marriage ceremonies, women are handed over to the care of the groom and his family. A dowry is also paid. This might give the impression that the ceremony is for the benefit of men.
- The upanayana or sacred thread was traditionally for boys as they began formal education. It is considered to elevate the status of men.
- Some Hindus carry out a ceremony to bring the blessing of a male child (the pumsavana ceremony), reflecting the traditional social preference for boys.
- In adolescence, the approach of manhood is marked with the first shaving.
- Overall, the impression can be given that there are several samskaras exclusively for men and therefore these rituals are more important for men than for women.

**Points for not supporting the statement**

- Hindus commonly refer to sixteen samskara rituals marking rites of passage at different stages in life, for men and women (there are varying numbers according to different traditions).
- The samskaras mark important occasions for individuals within their communities. They also help a person rise above their basic instincts to develop right conduct. As such, they are applicable to men and women alike.
- The emphasis on men was partly due to the attitudes of society in the past which is now changing.
- There are several samskaras for pregnancy, birth and in the early years of childhood. The parting of the hair (sitantam ceremony), is usually performed for women for safe childbirth.
- The first feeding ceremony for children is nowadays usually performed for boys and girls. The ear-piercing ceremony follows between the ages of 3 and 5 and may be performed on both genders although is now less fashionable amongst boys.
- In some areas a ceremony for girls is held, marking the beginning of menstruation which is comparable to the first shaving ceremony for men.
- Some Hindu families nowadays also practice the sacred thread ceremony for girls.
- Samskara not only means a ritual but also deeper thought and development, so in this sense applies equally to men and women.

*Accept any other relevant answer.*

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

## **Buddhism**

3. Examine the importance of the monastic life in Buddhism.
- The monastic life has been an important part of Buddhism since the time of Buddha.
  - The Buddha allowed a community of nuns to form and gave them additional rules to guide them.
  - The monastic life is regarded as the ideal for Buddhists. Many Buddhists regard this life as the best way to achieve good rebirth and nirvana.
  - The monastic community provides important teaching and guidance for lay Buddhists.
  - The monastic communities preserve and spread Buddhist teaching.
  - It is important for lay Buddhists to serve the monks and nuns as this provides a way for achieving good kamma/karma and rebirth.
  - The monastic life is a source of inspiration for most Buddhists. It encourages them to sustain their faith especially in difficult times.
  - Monastic communities provide important venues for venerating the Buddha and engaging in communal puja.
  - Monastic communities often provide educational, health and wellbeing services for the community.
  - In Theravada Buddhism boys are often required to spend some time in a monastery, experiencing the monastic life which is regarded as important for their general development.
  - Monasteries often function as retreat centres for lay Buddhists to refresh, strengthen and develop their faith.
  - In Vajrayana Buddhism, lamas can provide an important source of authority and leadership in the wider community.

*Accept any other relevant answer.*

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

4. Dhamma/dharma is the most important of the Three Jewels (Buddha, dhamma/dharma, sangha) of Buddhism. Discuss.

**Points in support of the statement**

- The dhamma/dharma is most important because it teaches about reality and the three characteristics of all existence: anicca/anitya (change), dukkha/dukha (suffering) and anatta/anatman (lack of permanent self).
- It is through following the dhamma/dharma that Buddhists seek to remove suffering, attain a good re-birth and enlightenment.
- There are different views regarding each of the Three Jewels depending upon specific schools of Buddhism.
- The Buddha focused his teaching on the practical importance of understanding and removing suffering, rather than devotion to himself.

**Points for not supporting the statement**

- Although the teachings of the Buddha are important, it is the life and examples of the Buddha that are considered the ideal example for all Buddhists to aim for.
- For many Buddhists the dhamma/dharma and the Buddha have related importance as the Buddha is a living example of the dhamma/dharma.
- Many Buddhists would consider that the Buddha is most important as devotion to the Buddha is often considered to be practically important for sustaining hope that enlightenment is possible.
- Some Buddhists may argue that the monastic sangha is most important as it is seen as vital for upholding the dhamma/dharma.
- The monastic sangha is often considered as having a day to day importance as it provides a source of inspiration for the lay community. Traditionally it would have provided invaluable educational, health and well-being support for Buddhist communities.
- The Three Jewels are all equally important as Buddhists can make a vow to take refuge in all Three Jewels, not just one.
- Selecting one of the Three Jewels as most important upsets the whole understanding of Buddhism, as the Three Jewels are inseparable and interdependent in both theory and practice.

*Accept any other relevant answer.*

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

## Sikhism

5. Discuss the importance of sharing karah parshad (food given through God's grace) in Sikhism.
- Karah parshad literally means food given through God's grace. It is an important part of a visit to a Gurdwara and is offered to worshippers and visitors alike, including all in the ritual.
  - It should be accepted as a blessing from the Guru.
  - It reminds Sikhs that everything in life comes from the Guru.
  - It is a sweet food made of flour, ghee and sugar in equal proportions. This symbolizes equality between people, men and women.
  - The ingredients are donated by members of the sangat community often to remember special events in family life.
  - The cooks perform ritual washing beforehand and recite Sikh hymns as they prepare it. It is then wrapped in a clean white cloth, sprinkled with water, to symbolise cleanliness.
  - The karah parshad is placed by the holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib, and stirred with a small kirpan (sword) during the ardas prayer at the end of worship. This underlines the connection with the Guru's grace.
  - A volunteer known as a Sedawar serves the food, which is an act of sewa/seva (altruistic service). It is served in equal amounts, again symbolising equality. Worshippers and visitors sit with hands cupped and raised up to receive the karah parshad, showing their humility and respect towards what the Guru has provided.
  - At the end of the Sikh initiation ceremony, the Amrit sanskar, karah parshad food is given out as a symbol of equality between everyone.
  - Sikhs who visit the main hall in the gurdwara (Darbar Sahib), and the Golden Temple in Amritsar, which is the most important site of pilgrimage for Sikhs, must receive the karah parshad as part of their visit.

*Accept any other relevant answer.*

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



6. Compare and contrast the experience of worship in the gurdwara and in the home.
- Sikhs are recommended to worship both in the gurdwara and at home to develop their faith in all aspects of their life.
  - Worship in the home is an important part of life for Sikhs. Committed Sikhs start the day before dawn, bathe, then begin thinking about God and reciting God's name.
  - To Sikhs, every moment is sacred, so worship in the home is important to increase God consciousness and self-realisation in all parts of their life.
  - There are three daily prayers in Sikhism – before sunrise, evening and night time (Nitnem, Raihraas and Sohela). For practical reasons and to balance the duty of service to one's family, for many Sikhs these will take place in the home.
  - Ardas prayers of request may be said standing after the daily prayers, often at home; the kirtan meditative singing of God's word usually takes place morning and night in the gurdwara.
  - The reading of the Guru Granth Sahib is an important part of Sikh worship. The book is given its own room and bed and respected with set rituals. For this reason, few Sikh families have a copy in their own homes so go to the gurdwara to attend services of reading, such as the Akhand Path, in which the book is read all the way through.
  - For many Sikhs, worship in the gurdwara is a focus for the week where they meet and develop fellowship with other members of the sangat (Sikh community at a local gurdwara).
  - A sense of equality is promoted by sitting on the floor and eating the langar meal together. Worship in the gurdwara may inspire Sikhs to develop sewa/seva (altruistic service) such as by serving langar.
  - At the gurdwara Sikhs can gain additional guidance about their faith. Singing the hymns together can be uplifting and help to inspire Sikhs to keep up their daily worship at home.

*Accept any other relevant answer.*

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

### Open-ended question

7. With reference to **one** religion, to what extent can the use of violence be justified in Hinduism **or** Buddhism **or** Sikhism?

#### Hinduism

- Ahimsa (non-violence) is an important principle in Hinduism. This involves avoiding causing suffering (physical or mental) to any sentient (feeling) being.
- Ahimsa is intimately linked to generating good karma and avoiding bad karma and hence an individual's progress on the path to liberation from samsara (the cycle of life, death and reincarnation).
- Killing and acts of war could be part of fulfilling one's duty as determined by varna (social category). This is explained in the Bhagavad Gita by the narrative of Arjuna and the argument presented by Krishna. Warfare can be seen as an obligation and fulfilling the dharma of individuals belonging to the kshatriya (warrior) varna (social category).
- Hindu societies throughout history have engaged in warfare, though often justified as self-defence and/or upholding dharma in the sense of the natural order of society and the universe.
- Hindu stories and pictures about the gods often include use of violence and violent weapons.
- In more recent times non-violent action as a means of bringing political and social change was popularized by Mahatma Gandhi. However, Hinduism is an eclectic religion and it has been claimed that ahimsa was an ideal that Hinduism absorbed at a late stage in its development due to the influence of Buddhism and Jainism.
- Recent examples of the use of violence in Hindu society include the rise of Hindu nationalism and associated violent clashes with Muslim communities and the violent persecution of religious minorities in India.
- With respect to violence and diet, vegetarianism is upheld as an ideal. Meat eating Hindus prefer the use of the ancient instant and quick method of slaughter (Vedic Jhatka or Chatka) which cuts right through all nerves as well as arteries, causing instant death.

#### Buddhism

- Ahimsa (non-violence) is an important principle in Buddhism. This involves avoiding causing suffering (physical or mental) to any sentient (feeling) being.
- Ahimsa is the first of the Five Precepts of Buddhist practice. The use of violence is directly linked to generating negative kamma/karma and rebirth. One of the six realms of being, the hell realm, is closely associated with violence.
- In Buddhism, ahimsa can also be linked to diet. Some Buddhists uphold vegetarianism as an ideal because it does not involve use of violence against higher orders of sentient beings (animals).
- Violent action can be justified as a means of self-defence in both Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions. Buddhist societies in South East Asia, India, Tibet, China and Japan have all engaged in the use of violence in warfare.
- Recent examples include the violence used by the Buddhist majority government in Sri Lanka against Hindus and Christian minorities, and also violence exercised by Buddhist monks and communities in Myanmar/Burma against Muslim and Christian communities.
- Chan Buddhism spread from Indian into China and Japan, martial arts were developed such as Kung Fu which aimed to minimize the use of violence in self-defence (eg at the now famous Shaolin temple in China).
- Credit should also be given to answers that recognize that the use of violence in Buddhism is highly contested as many Buddhists today would argue that warfare can never be considered just.

### **Sikhism**

- Candidates might refer to the concept/theory of dharam yudh (a righteous/just war) which was particularly developed by Guru Gobind Singh (10th Guru).
- The earlier gurus developed the concept of Sant – warrior saints (Sipari) who engaged in violence for self-defence.
- Guru Gobind Singh set out specific criteria for deciding whether a war can be justifiable. These include the following: that war, as an option, is only undertaken as the last resort; that the motives are pure and not selfish or for territorial or other gain; that soldiers are Sikh and behave honourably; that the use of force is kept to a minimum. Therefore, if all these criteria are met, war, especially war against aggression and tyranny, can be considered “just”. These are theoretical guidelines and principles based on the authority of the Guru.
- In practice it will be for the Khalsa to provide moral guidance and assessment of cases of “just war”.
- Sikhs can only draw the kirpan for reasons of self-defence or to protect the weak and vulnerable.
- Credit should be given for mention of the Sikh duty to defend justice and fight oppression in any context or situation and hence the track record of Sikhs taking part in wars across the world, including their key role in the Second World War.
- Other valid points include the development of the Sikh martial arts (eg Gatka), nihang Sikh warriors and the recent revival of the tradition of Sikhs training children in self-defence techniques.

*Accept any other relevant answer.*

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

## Judaism

8. “The Torah will *always* be the most important source of authority for Jews.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?

### Points in support of the statement

- Many Jews believe the Torah was revealed by God to Moses and therefore should *always* be followed as the main source of authority.
- As a divine revelation the Torah will always be the most important authority and will never change.
- The Oral Torah, containing the Mishnah and Talmud, explained the written Torah, and is important in Judaism in explaining matters of theological, philosophical and ethical debate.
- The Torah forms an important part of services and rites of passage *eg* the reading of the portion at Bar Mitzvah.
- Central ethical and theological principles come from the Torah *eg* The Ten Commandments and the Shema.

### Points for not supporting the statement

- Some Jews believe the Torah does not include teachings for contemporary life *eg* issues of medical ethics, so other sources of authority must be consulted.
- The writings and prophets that form the other part of the Tenakh are also important sources of authority for Jews.
- Many Orthodox Jews consider that the oral law is equally important to the written law as both are believed to have been given to Moses on Mount Sinai.
- Differences in approach between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews towards the Torah raise questions about its position and whether it can always be regarded as the most important authority by all Jews.
- Although the Torah sets down the ideals that Jews should live by, it has always been the task of Rabbis and other religious thinkers to interpret these for contemporary living *eg* Maimonides.
- As God gave free will, many Jews believe that the conscience is an important source of authority. Jews believe that people were born with an inclination to do good (*yetzer ha-tov*) and bad (*yetzer ha-ra*) and that the conscience guides morality of actions.

*Accept any other relevant answer.*

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

9. Examine the importance of the Talmud.

- The construction of the Talmud consists of the results of over 300 years of students at yeshivot discussing the laws of the Mishnah.
- There are two Talmuds – the Palestinian and the Babylonian. The Babylonian is the larger and most comprehensive.
- Abraham ibn Ezra (1092–1167) claimed that if the discussions contained in the Talmud had not taken place then the Torah would have been lost and forgotten.
- The Talmud contains a comprehensive range of discussions including personal observations, stories and philosophical and theological debates.
- The 63 volumes have become the core of Judaism and laws and debates for Jewish students today.
- It deals with moral issues and many other topics. Volume 1 of the Babylonian Talmud (Sanhedrin) deals with the matters of criminal justice and civil law.
- There are study programmes such as ‘a page a day’ which is followed by tens of thousands of people such as rabbis, doctors, *etc* to inform their ethical decisions.
- It provides a commentary on the Mishnah and enters into dialogue regarding the teachings of the Torah.
- The Babylonian Talmud is the basis on which subsequent Jewish law was developed and is considered as second most important to the Tenakh.

*Accept any other relevant answer.*

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

## Christianity

10. “Christmas is the *most* important festival for Christians.” Discuss.

*Credit should be given to candidates who discuss what is meant by the ‘important’.*  
*Considerations might include theologically important or ritually important. Credit should be given if candidates give reasons as to why other Christian festivals might be more important.*  
*Candidates might refer to a range of festivals or occasions eg Advent, Lent, Thanksgiving in their arguments.*

### Points in support of the statement

- Christmas is a festival to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the founder of Christianity and the incarnation of God.
- For Christians the liturgical calendar begins with Advent.
- Christmas is celebrated as a time of peace and goodwill – reflecting the teachings of Jesus.
- There are many important acts of corporate worship eg Midnight Mass and Christingle Ceremonies.
- It is a time of giving and receiving from loved ones and therefore is a symbol of love.
- The birth of Jesus reflects the prophecies of Isaiah regarding the birth of the Messiah.
- Christmas is a time when others living in difficult circumstances are remembered – so reflecting the birth and teachings of Jesus.
- Christmas has become an important cultural and commercial festival making it feel like the most important festival in many communities.

### Points for not supporting the statement

- Christmas might be considered as an important festival but not the ‘most’ important festival.
- Some Christians consider that the birth stories in the Bible aren’t accurate and that other festivals have a greater historical importance.
- Repentance and forgiveness are key aspects of Christianity and they are an important feature of other festivals but not of Christmas.
- Christmas has become commercialized some Christians argue that it has lost religious and theological meaning.
- Most Christians would argue that Easter Day is the most important festival as they believe it is the day that Jesus arose, so showing victory over death and the possibility of eternal life.
- Many Christians consider Easter the most important festival as Jesus’s resurrection proves Jesus to be the son of God.
- For many Christians, Good Friday is the most solemn day of Christianity as they believe this was the day that Jesus was crucified and redeems through his death.
- Easter is a time when Christians remember the suffering of Jesus.
- Many Christians consider Easter as the most important festival as it is a time for a new start and many converts to Christianity are baptized.
- There are many important acts of corporate worship at Easter eg Easter vigil.

*Accept any other relevant answer.*

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

11. Examine different ways in which Christians interpret the Bible.

The question requires that candidates show awareness of *different ways*.

- Candidates may take different approaches to interpreting the question. As long as their interpretation is a logical and reasoned understanding of the question it should be accepted as valid. For example, candidates might interpret the question in terms of biblical criticism; or in terms of relationships between biblical interpretation and the historical development of Christianity and its denominational divisions. Other reasoned and logical interpretations of the question should be accepted.
- Some Christians believe that the Bible is the directly inspired ‘word of God’ – a divine revelation.
- For some Christians, this means that the whole of the Bible is taken literally *eg* that God did create the world in six days.
- If science suggests other evidence, then Literalists will believe the biblical evidence over any scientific evidence.
- As a divine revelation, the Bible is the most important source of authority.
- As a divine revelation, the teachings of the Bible are interpreted to guide actions and decisions regarding contemporary ethical considerations. The teachings from the Bible should not be adapted to correspond to contemporary thought or practices. It is a consistent message for all times.
- Some Christians believe that the Bible requires interpretation as it was written for a specific time and culture.
- Some Christians believe that the message and teachings of Jesus should be literally interpreted but that certain events *eg* the creation of the world should be interpreted as symbolic. They would argue that interpreting such events as symbolic does not lessen the theological teachings contained in the Bible.
- Some Christians believe that the Bible must be studied and interpreted according to individual beliefs.
- Some Christians are guided by their churches, for instance Roman Catholics by Papal encyclicals.
- Some Christians will take into account rational and scientific evidence to inform a theological interpretation.
- Christians will often seek advice or support from other sources of authority *eg* priests or pray for guidance on how to interpret the Bible.
- Some Christians may interpret the Bible with guidance from a Bible study group, Evangelist preachers, books of exegesis or online materials.

*Accept any other relevant answer.*

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

## Islam

12. Examine sawm (fasting) as an individual and group experience.

### **As an individual experience**

- Sawm (fasting) is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. An individual Muslim may feel they are personally fulfilling one of the commandments of their faith.
- When giving up food during daylight hours, an individual Muslim may gain a sense of empathy for those who do not have enough to eat, through personally experiencing hunger.
- Individual Muslims may strive to fast, even when it is difficult to do so. Their personal struggle may be considered a form of 'greater jihad', an individual endeavour which increases their personal faith.
- Muslims are judged individually for their deeds, based on their intentions. A Muslim fasting may feel they are gaining reward in the afterlife, giving them confidence to face the future.
- Fasting is not just about giving up food but also about considering Allah, Prophet Muhammad and the time when the Qur'an was revealed. An individual Muslim may spend extra time whilst fasting to read the Qur'an and learn more about the origins of their faith.

### **As a group experience**

- Sawm (fasting) is a time when families eat together at the start and end of the day. Mosques organise community meals at the end of the day, strengthening the bonds of fellowship between Muslims and giving support to those in need.
- Muslims may support charities or organize collections for those in need whilst they are fasting. This helps both those who are fasting, and those who benefit from the donations, build up a sense of fellowship.
- Sawm (fasting) involves refraining from backbiting as well as abstaining from food. Relations with others may improve as Muslims put aside their differences during the month of Ramadan when sawm (fasting) takes place.
- Mosques are focal places for reading the Qur'an in special evening prayers during the month of fasting. Muslims may be inspired by beautiful recitation and supported in their reading of the Arabic text.
- The group experience may support and build a sense of fellowship amongst the ummah (worldwide community of Muslims), inspiring individual Muslims to become more committed to their faith.

*Accept any other relevant answer.*

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



13. “Sunni and Shi'ah imams perform identical roles.” Discuss.

**Points in support of the statement**

- Imams are commonly referred to by all Muslims as leaders of prayers. The imam stands at the front, facing Makkah, and recites the Qur'an out loud with worshippers following behind them.
- Imams in both Sunni and Shi'ah traditions provide services at mosques, give a sermon (khutbah) on Fridays and help Muslims with enquiries.
- Imams in both traditions provide services of marriage and organise Madrassah (mosque school classes) for children to learn the Qur'an.

**Points for not supporting the statement**

- The role of the Sunni imam is to be the most pious person in the congregation. There is no particular qualification required.
- The role of the Shi'ah imam is to represent the authority descended from the Prophet and his family line. Permission to act as a Shi'ah imam is passed down and traceable all the way back to Muhammad through Ali, who they regard as his legitimate successor.
- Imams in the Shi'ah tradition are regarded as having the power to interpret the Qur'an as appropriate for the needs of their congregations today, and to do so without error.
- By contrast, Sunni imams make opinions (fatwahs) but these are not binding on people.
- Twelver Shi'ahs believe there was a line of 12 imams, the last of whom became occluded or disappeared. The role of today's Shi'ah imams is to stand in temporarily, awaiting the return of the twelfth imam to bring peace to the world before the Day of Judgement. Sunni imams do not perform this role.
- There are some differences within the two traditions. Sufi leaders from within the Sunni tradition may also claim authority to practice passed down from Muhammad.

*A good response might include reference to diversity within the traditions.*

*Accept any other relevant answer.*

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

### Open-ended question

14. With reference to **one** religion, Judaism **or** Christianity **or** Islam, examine attitudes to conversion/reversion.

#### Judaism

- Judaism is not a missionary religion and it is not a mitzvah to convert others to become Jews.
- Conversion is accepted although not promoted.
- Stories in the Tenakh tell of conversion *eg* Ruth.
- In ancient times conversion was practiced to assimilate people as well as those who came to live in the Israelite community.
- For many Jews identity is based on maternal descent. Therefore, an individual is considered as Jewish irrespective of practice.
- The Talmud lays down a complicated procedure for conversion including observing the Law; being immersed in a pool (mikvah) and men being circumcised.
- Prospective converts must undergo a lengthy training and study programme to show they have full knowledge of the religion and its practices.
- Reform Judaism does not require circumcision of males or immersion in a mikvah.
- Those who convert to Reform Judaism are not considered by Orthodox Jews to be Jewish, resulting in converts being considered Jewish by some Jews and not by others. Only Orthodox authority is accepted in Israel.
- Some argue that it is important to stay Jewish as a witness to the Gentile world.
- It is not considered appropriate to convert because you want to marry someone Jewish.
- Orthodox Jews believe even if a Jew converts to another religious tradition they still remain a Jew as part of their identity. According to halakhah (Jewish law) it is technically impossible for a person born to a Jewish mother to change their identity.

#### Christianity

- Christianity is a missionary religion. Many Christians consider it a duty to evangelise.
- Christians are considered as evangelists as they are 'preachers of the Gospel'
- Christianity has a long history of conversion activities. The New Testament describes how early Christians had a mission to convert Jews.
- Throughout history there have been many worldwide Christian missionary activities which aimed to preach the Gospel and convert those of other and no faith to become Christians.
- As the earliest converts to Christianity were adults, baptism was established as a way of showing conversion.
- Belief in Jesus is a fundamental requirement for conversion.
- Even if baptised, people may leave Christianity to convert to other religious traditions.
- Conversion can be a result of:
  - personal revelation through experience of God in the Bible and history
  - personal revelation through nature, people and the Church
  - personal revelation through Jesus
  - the conversion of a community following the example of a community leader
- It is a mission of Christianity to help Christians develop their faith.
- Converts are often sponsored by members of the Church community to support their entrance into Christianity.

### **Islam**

- Islam is a proselytising religion that welcomes new members and encourages Muslims to call others to faith.
- The term ‘reverts’ is usually used as it’s considered they have rediscovered their original faith.
- For a person to convert/revert to Islam a person needs to make a profession of faith stating the shahadah – first Pillar of Islam.
- Many converts/reverts take on a new name in order to explicitly show their new faith.
- Some convert/revert males choose to be circumcised as part of the process.
- Some jurists have punished those who have become apostates by converting to another religion and left Islam.
- Da’wa or mission in Islam is of two kinds. One kind is aimed at inviting non-Muslims to Islam and the other is encouraging Muslims to be more devout.
- There are many da’wa missions and organizations.
- As Christians and Jews are considered ‘people of the book’ converts/reverts from these traditions are especially welcomed.
- In many parts of the world there has been an increase of reverts/converts to Islam.
- Issues of mixed marriages and of ethnic identity (Nature of Islam/Chinese Hui).

*Accept any other relevant answer.*

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

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