



## **Cambridge International AS & A Level**

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**HINDUISM**

**9487/03**

Paper 3 Written Paper

**October/November 2022**

**MARK SCHEME**

Maximum Mark: 60

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**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.

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This document consists of **17** printed pages.

**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.

**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

- (a) 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.
- (b) 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.
- (c) 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**

<b>Level</b>	<b>AO1 Knowledge and Understanding</b>	<b>Marks</b>
Level 4	<p><b>Explorative with detailed significant knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a range of detailed and relevant knowledge.</li> <li>• Confident understanding demonstrated through making connections between ideas and development of discussion.</li> <li>• Addresses all aspects of the question.</li> <li>• Exploration of the wider context if relevant.</li> </ul>	10–12
Level 3	<p><b>Explains significance of knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a range of accurate and relevant knowledge.</li> <li>• Good understanding demonstrated through explanation of significance of knowledge used in developing the discussion.</li> <li>• Addresses most aspects of the question.</li> <li>• Good understanding of the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	7–9
Level 2	<p><b>Range of knowledge partly addressing the question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a range of knowledge with some accuracy.</li> <li>• Demonstrates understanding through use of appropriate knowledge, may be less well developed.</li> <li>• Partially addresses the question.</li> <li>• Uneven engagement with the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	4–6
Level 1	<p><b>Limited answer to question with limited knowledge/understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies a limited range of knowledge some of which may not be accurate.</li> <li>• Demonstrates basic understanding.</li> <li>• Response is relevant to the topic but does not directly address the question.</li> <li>• Limited reference to the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	1–3
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

<b>Level</b>	<b>AO2 Analysis and Evaluation</b>	<b>Marks</b>
Level 5	<p><b>Assesses alternative conclusions with analysis of points view</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyses the importance and/or strength of different points of view.</li> <li>Uses accurate evidence to support a coherent and well-structured discussion.</li> <li>Coherent conclusion which evaluates knowledge and points of view and assesses alternative conclusions.</li> </ul>	16–18
Level 4	<p><b>Coherent conclusion supported by evidenced points of view</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discusses different points of view in some detail.</li> <li>Uses accurate evidence to support a well-structured discussion.</li> <li>Coherent conclusion which evaluates knowledge and points of view.</li> </ul>	12–15
Level 3	<p><b>Clear conclusion with different points of view</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognises different points of view and discusses at least one in some detail.</li> <li>Uses accurate evidence to support discussion.</li> <li>Clear conclusion to the question which is linked to a range of knowledge and points of view.</li> </ul>	8–11
Level 2	<p><b>Attempts conclusion with a supported point of view</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discusses one point of view.</li> <li>Uses supporting evidence for one or more relevant point. The support may not be wholly relevant or accurate.</li> <li>Attempts a conclusion to the question which is linked to knowledge and/or a point of view.</li> </ul>	4–7
Level 1	<p><b>Basic conclusion with a point of view</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States a point of view.</li> <li>Little or no supporting evidence.</li> <li>Attempts a basic conclusion.</li> </ul>	1–3
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)	<p><b>Describe the main teachings of Dvaita Vedanta.</b></p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Responses will be marked according to the 12 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Dvaita Vedanta is one of the Vedanta darshanas in Hindu philosophical and theological thought. ‘Vedanta’ means ‘the end of knowledge’ in the sense of the completion and purpose of the quest for knowledge. The Vedantic schools are concerned with the nature of Brahman and its relationship with the natural, material world; and with the individual atman/jiva. It takes the Upanishads as a starting point, with each school interpreting their teachings differently. It is also concerned with personal wisdom or jnana gained through reflection and meditation.</p> <p>The Dvaita tradition was established by the scholar and philosopher Madhva, who was responding to the Advaita tradition, which had become dominant by his time. Madhva taught that grace had to be earned from Krishna and that without it there was eternal damnation. For this reason the primary practice and route to liberation in the Dvaita tradition is bhakti. Murti puja and devotional practices such as chanting and singing bhajans are of great significance.</p> <p>Dvaita means ‘two’ or ‘dual’. It is the only one of the Vedantic schools to teach that Brahman is a totally different substance to the world and to the atman. This is the most distinct teaching of Dvaita. Brahman is the Creator, usually conceived of as personal and as saguna (with attributes). This means that it is possible to have a personal devotional relationship with Brahman understood as ishvara or personal lord/god. In the case of Dvaita adherents this is most often understood to be Vishnu. While ‘dvaita’ means ‘two’, it is applied to a philosophy that speaks of three things that can be described as ‘real’. These are Brahman, the individual self or jiva and the material world or jagat. The term here is used to imply that there is a real and non-illusory division rather than reality being ‘one’. The primary duality referred to is between Brahman and the jiva.</p> <p>The material world is therefore not seen as maya or delusion, but as having actual reality and as being the creation of Brahman, totally and eternally distinct and separate from it, Brahman being the efficient cause of the universe. This is also true of the atman. Each individual atman is ontologically and eternally distinct from Brahman, and from other atman/jivas. Each individual remains eternally unique and separate from others and from Brahman. Moksha does not, therefore, consist of realising one’s identity with Brahman and so dissolving the sense of self; but rather of being eternally and joyfully with one’s ishvara in a situation that could be seen as ‘heaven’.</p>	12

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)	<p>Thus, three distinct and eternally different things exist, Brahman, the world, and the individual atman/jiva, with Brahman as creator and the world and the atman as created.</p> <p>Dvaita emphasises the Five Differences, which exist between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the individual atman/jiva and ishvara or personal god</li> <li>• matter and ishvara</li> <li>• different individual atman/jivas</li> <li>• matter and atman/jiva</li> <li>• different types of matter.</li> </ul> <p>Since moksha is gained through a personal loving devotion to Vishnu, bhakti is emphasised in Dvaita above meditation or the pursuit of jnana.</p>	

Question	Answer	Marks
1(b)	<p><b>‘Bhakti is the only path to moksha.’ Evaluate this claim with reference to the Vedanta philosophies.</b></p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation. Responses will be marked according to the 18 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Moksha is the end of samsara, the cycle of rebirths into the material world. The word literally means ‘liberation’. All of the Vedantic traditions, and indeed, all of the dharmic religions, accept the idea of moksha in some form as the ultimate aim. However, there is no such agreement about what exactly moksha is or how to achieve it, and so Hindus will have very different opinions about this question.</p> <p>In the Advaita tradition, there is, at an ultimate level, no difference between the individual atman/jiva and Brahman. The perception of oneself as a separate individual or ego is maya (delusion) that has to be overcome in order to attain moksha. Moksha, essentially, is the realisation that the self and Brahman are ‘not different’. This can only be done through jnana or spiritual knowledge. This is gained through study of the scriptures under the guidance of a guru and through meditation, which allows one to ‘experience’ the truth of this, rather than merely understand it on an intellectual level. Since nirguna</p> <p>Brahman is the only ultimate reality, bhakti, or devotion to saguna Brahman in the form of an ishvara is, ultimately, pointless. Having said this, even within the Advaita tradition there is some place for bhakti. Shankara, the founder of the Advaita School, claimed that devotion to Shiva (Shankara came from a Shaivite background that equated Shiva with Brahman) was a reasonable and useful first step on the path to moksha as it encouraged good spiritual practices and attitudes that would help a devotee to realise that on an ultimate level, he or she was Shiva. However, whilst it might be a useful starting point or the spiritually immature, the Advaita tradition would not accept it as the only way to moksha, or even, on its own, as a way to moksha at all. Its only value lies in pointing the way to jnana. Shankara, the most significant philosopher in</p>	18

Question	Answer	Marks
1(b)	<p>the Advaita Vedanta tradition, is also credited as a major reformer and innovator within the Smarta tradition, which advocates puja at the shrines of five deities (Ganesha, Shiva, Shakti, Vishnu and Surya). Each is treated as equal and as a way to conceptualise Brahman as it really is as impersonal and nirguna.</p> <p>In the Vishistadvaita tradition there is more of a place for bhakti. Whilst the atman/jiva is of the same substance as Brahman and is contingent upon it for its existence, it does maintain a difference to it that goes beyond delusion (maya). For this reason, there is real value in bhakti as a path to moksha as it is possible for the atman to develop a relationship with saguna Brahman through puja and devotion. It is unlikely, however, to be seen as the only way to moksha, since fully understanding the Vishistadvaita position that the atman and Brahman both are, and are not the same, requires jnana. A follower of Ramanuja might say, therefore, that there are different possible paths to moksha, dependent on the capacity and temperament of the individual. Bhakti is one possible way, but not necessarily the best, and certainly not the only one.</p> <p>In the Dvaita School, this statement might well be accepted. If the relationship of atman to Brahman is that of created being to Creator, then a devotional and loving attitude is appropriate. To followers of this tradition Brahman is saguna and can be experienced as ishvara, usually in the form of Vishnu or Krishna. Many of the texts dealing with Vishnu and Krishna, such as the Bhagavata Purana, take this theological stance, advocating complete loving devotion as the best, if not the only route to moksha.</p> <p>Ultimately, the answer to this question will depend on the Hindu tradition from which an individual comes, their position in society, and their personal opinion and experiences. Within Hinduism there are many possible paths to moksha, of which bhakti is only one; but there is no agreement within Hinduism as to whether these paths are equally valid, or to which is the best.</p>	

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)	<p><b>Explain how Swami Vivekananda presented Hinduism as a world religion.</b></p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 12 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Swami Vivekananda was a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who taught that all religions lead to the same ultimate truth. In 1893, Vivekananda attended the first Parliament of the World’s Religions in Chicago, which was devised with the aim of showing the commonality of all religions. Hinduism was represented largely by the Brahma Samaj and the Theosophical Movement. Vivekananda gave the opening address for the Hindu delegation, calling Hinduism the ‘Mother of Religions’ and representing it as seeing all religions as a path to God. He gave the example of many streams converging in a single ocean. Having been heavily influenced by the Brahma Samaj, as</p>	12

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)	<p>well as by Western esotericism, Vivekananda believed that God was essentially One. His teachings have been described as 'Neo Vedanta'. He believed every soul had the potential for divinity and that it was the responsibility of the individual to realise this potential through work, worship or yoga. He presented Hinduism to the world as essentially monotheistic and ethical, broadly in line with the other religious traditions represented at the Parliament and he suggested that Hinduism was the oldest and to some extent the source of them all.</p> <p>It could be argued that the modern concept of 'world religions' has its origins in the Parliament of the World's Religions, although there have been other important points in the development of the idea. 'World religions' are often categorised by scholars as those that have a global following and influence and, usually, are understood to have a creator God, a set of revealed scriptures and a strong ethical basis. They are sometimes contrasted with indigenous religions. Vivekananda was keen to present Hinduism within the world religions paradigm, countering perceptions that had widely existed that Hinduism was polytheistic, and therefore 'primitive' and 'superstitious'. He was keen to show Hinduism as a single, though diverse religious tradition that was broadly monotheistic or monist and had strong ethical roots based in the principle of ahimsa. He suggested that ahimsa had a universal standing in Hindu thinking.</p> <p>Vivekananda's skill as a speaker made him hugely popular in the West, allowing him to undertake lecture tours. He also taught 'Raja Yoga', his interpretation of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, and largely introduced this idea to the West. He established Vedanta Centres throughout Europe and the United States, teaching his interpretation of Vedanta and Yoga throughout the world. It has been argued that the current understanding of Hinduism both within and without India can be directly traced to Vivekananda. He taught that the highest form of religion was found in service to others. He emphasised the tolerance and universalism to be found in Hinduism, and the brotherhood of all mankind. He presented Hinduism as being very much in line with the other 'world' religions as essentially monotheistic, with a body of divinely revealed scripture and a strong ethical core based on the equality of all humans and service to humanity. He presented ahimsa as a fundamental element of Hinduism. One of the delegates at the Parliament remarked that his speech gave proof of the pointlessness of sending missionaries to India, as Hinduism was of the same standing as Christianity. In all these ways, Vivekananda showed Hinduism as being similar in most regards to the more global religions represented at the Parliament, and as being a single religion, rather than a collection of similar religious traditions. His emphasis on its age and universal inclusivity, as well as emphasising a belief in a single Divine truth gave it a legitimacy among the delegates that was responsible for the acceptance of Hinduism as a world religion. His teachings and writings have influenced the way in which Hinduism is understood and represented around the world today.</p>	

Question	Answer	Marks
2(b)	<p><b>Discuss the claim that Swami Vivekananda fully represented the diversity within Hinduism.</b></p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation. Responses will be marked according to the 18 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Swami Vivekananda’s representation of Hinduism as a single, monotheistic and ethically based religion has been hugely influential both within India and in the wider world. Certainly, it has shaped the way in which Hinduism has been perceived and understood by non-Hindus globally, as well as the way in which governments and other religious institutions have responded to it. However, it has been suggested that Vivekananda’s view of Hinduism was heavily influenced by Ramakrishna’s view of all religions as equally valid paths to God, which was, in turn, influenced by his own personal mystical experiences; and that this is not an accurate representation of mainstream Hindu belief.</p> <p>It is true that this view of Hinduism can be related quite successfully to the Advaita Vedanta tradition, from which Vivekananda came. This sees Brahman as the only absolute reality. Engaging with saguna Brahman, whether from within Hinduism, or from without (as Ramakrishna engaged with Christ and Mohammad) can lead to an experience of nirguna Brahman, then as such all religious paths are useful. As no form of saguna Brahman is absolutely true, then neither is any absolutely false, either, but has contingent value in so far as it leads an individual to the realisation or nirguna Brahman.</p> <p>Furthermore, Vivekananda’s engagement with the Yoga Sutras is representative of this tradition within Hinduism, and is, indeed, responsible for the wide popularity and knowledge of yoga throughout the Western world. However, it could be argued that it is Vivekananda’s own ideas of Yoga, were different from the Samkhya philosophy, that he popularised. For him, yoga was a way of realising the potential for divinity within oneself. His view of Vedanta allowed for a variety of paths to Moksha and in this context, he did represent a wide variety of Hindu traditions that understood different ways of achieving moksha.</p> <p>Vivekananda himself taught that all Hindu paths and ‘sects’ were equally valid as ways of realising the divine, so while his own view was essentially a personal form of Advaita Vedanta, he did, nonetheless acknowledge other Hindu understandings far more than some traditions or reformers had done. His own background, encompassing both the teachings of the Brahmo Samaj, which rejected murti puja as idol worship and superstition, and the mystical experiences of Ramakrishna, encouraged him to be tolerant of different interpretations of divinity. He did not say that one was right and another wrong, but rather that they were different ways of understanding the same thing.</p> <p>However, against this it could be argued that the version of Hinduism that Vivekananda presented was informed by his own background as an educated man with an understanding of Western philosophy, and as a member of the</p>	18

Question	Answer	Marks
2(b)	<p>upper castes. Outside of these factors, values such as vegetarianism and ahimsa, which he presented as universal Hindu values, were far less prevalent. The version of Hinduism that became representative of the religion as a whole in the West, was one that in India was generally restricted to educated brahmins. Furthermore, his underlying assumption that all gods and goddesses are, correctly understood, as one, is not one that all Hindus would agree with. Many Hindus, particularly, but not exclusively, in rural areas believed that there are, in reality, many different gods and goddesses who are separate from each other and can be called upon to help in different situations. Furthermore, the universalism and tolerance of other religions that he emphasised is not always to be found in Hinduism, or among its key shapers. Swami Dayananda would not have shared his opinions on the equality and value of Christianity and Islam with Hinduism. Vivekananda undertook lecture tours promoting Hinduism which is not generally an important idea within Hinduism and represented a significant innovation.</p> <p>Hinduism is a hugely diverse religion, or, arguably, set of religious traditions with very little universal agreement about anything beyond samsara, dharma, karma and the need for moksha in some form. It could be argued that the version of Hinduism that Vivekananda presented to the world, and which gained wide acceptance as a true reflection of all Hindus, was a highly philosophised and even idealised version which took no account of the real importance of the caste system to many Hindus or of the polytheism that many Hindus held. It could, however, be argued, that this idealised version has had a huge influence not only on how Hindus are perceived by others, but also on how they perceive themselves. Vivekananda was a huge influence on Gandhi and has, to an extent, influenced the ways in which Hinduism has changed and developed into the modern day. It is possible that Vivekananda's vision of Hinduism is more genuinely representative now than it was in his own day. Hinduism is a living tradition and will have changed in many ways since it was represented by Vivekananda to the world.</p>	

Question	Answer	Marks
3	<p><b>‘Hinduism is a pluralistic religion.’ Discuss this statement with reference to ideas of diversity and tolerance.</b></p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 12 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation Responses will be marked according to the 18 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>In terms of religion, pluralism means that a religion is not only tolerant of other religions and belief systems, but that it believes that they provide valid ways to ‘salvation’ or ‘transcendence’, however that is understood within the particular religion. For example, if Hinduism is a pluralistic religion, this would mean that it accepts that Christians, Muslims, and members of other religions can achieve moksha through following their own religious tradition with no need to convert to Hinduism. Hinduism is very widely understood and presented as a pluralistic religion and therefore as one that does not seek to convert others through missionary or proselytising behaviour. This perception of Hinduism is due, in part, to the diversity that exists within Hinduism itself, as so many different and diverse beliefs and ways of practice are accepted.</p> <p>There are several arguments that could be made in favour of the statement. Firstly, the claim to pluralism has been made by a number of very influential figures within Hinduism itself. These include M K Gandhi, who believed that the New Testament, and particularly the Sermon on the Mount was a scriptural work of comparable importance to the Bhagavad Gita; Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his disciple Vivekananda, and Ram Mohan Roy, who saw Christianity, Islam and Vedic Hinduism as iterations of the same monotheism. Vivekananda, in particular, spread the idea into the West of Hinduism as a monotheistic, pluralistic religion that is tolerant of other religious traditions.</p> <p>One problem with this view, is that it comes from one particular understanding of Hinduism, that emphasises a monotheistic or at least monist view, and (for the most part) rejects murti puja and many other ritual activities as superstition. While Ramakrishna encouraged murti puja as a part of his mysticism, at the heart of his message is that there is no difference on an ontological level between Christ, Kali, Mary or Allah. All of these figures take an approach to deity that could be broadly described as Advaita Vedanta, believing that the ultimate aim of religion is to realise one’s absolute identity with the divine. This does represent one tradition of thought within Hinduism, and it could be said with some certainty that Hinduism is a pluralistic religion for some, even many, Hindus. However, this is not the only attitude to be found within Hinduism. This ‘Advaita based’ form of Hinduism is most often encountered in diaspora Hindu communities and as such is often seen, to outsiders, as the true face of Hinduism. Having said this, murti puja is often what is seen from the outside when people think of or teach about Hinduism. Where many deities are worshiped in murti puja, there is often an expectation from both within and without Hinduism, that other deities can be included in worship with no intrinsic contradiction. Some Hindus, for example, include Jesus and/or the Buddha in their devotions.</p>	30

Question	Answer	Marks
3	<p>Other approaches to the Divine may take different views of other religions, believing that if, for example, Krishna or Vishnu is the ultimate God, then devotion (bhakti) should be towards him alone in order to be effective. Others might criticise a pluralistic approach on the grounds that different religions contain differences of belief that are mutually exclusive to those of Hinduism. For example, Christianity teaches only one life, which is then judged leading to heaven or hell. Hinduism believes that the ultimate destiny of humans is moksha, or liberation from the cycle of lives and deaths that is samsara. Both of these beliefs cannot be true and so many Hindus would argue that if Christianity is right, then Hinduism is wrong and therefore Hinduism cannot be a pluralistic religion. For Hindus who are genuinely polytheistic or who believe in a particular form of saguna Brahman as an ishvara, then there may be fewer obvious points of agreement with other religions, lessening the impression that they all lead to the same place.</p> <p>While some significant figures in Hinduism have advocated pluralism, others have rejected it. For example, Swami Dayananda attacked Christianity and Islam, and advocated conversion to his Vedic form of Hinduism. He denounced Trinitarian Christianity in particular as superstitious in the same way as he denounced murti puja as idol worship. For him, as for many others since, Hinduism is a cultural identity that is central to the Indian nation. This has led to the Hindutva movement, which has sought to encourage a specifically Hindu identity which rejects and excludes other forms of religiosity.</p> <p>It could be argued that the sheer diversity of belief and practice within Hinduism means that it is within itself, and without reference to other religions already pluralistic, seeing moksha as available through jnana, bhakti, karma, meditation, murti-puja and a variety of ritual activities; and allowing the worship of a multiplicity of gods and goddesses, understood in very different ways. In fact, the question has been raised as to whether it is accurate to describe Hinduism as a single religion at all; for some it is more accurate to see it as a closely related family of religions, united by the ideas of karma, dharma, moksha, samsara and the importance of the Vedas. From this point of view, Hinduism, if acknowledged as a single religion, is certainly pluralistic. However, it should be remembered that these different approaches to Hinduism do not always sit comfortably alongside each other, and many Hindus believe that their approach is right while others are wrong, or at least not as good.</p> <p>Hinduism can certainly be described as a pluralistic religion and many in the contemporary world, both inside and outside of Hinduism, perceive it as such, however this is not the full story. Whether Hinduism is seen as a pluralistic religion or not depends on the point of view of a particular Hindu.</p>	

Question	Answer	Marks
4	<p><b>‘The world is not real.’ Discuss this statement with reference to the Vedanta philosophies.</b></p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 12 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation Responses will be marked according to the 18 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>The status of the material/apparent world, and more specifically its relationship both to Brahman and to the individual atman or jiva is one of the fundamental concerns of the Upanishads, and so of the various Vedanta traditions that seek to understand and interpret them. The world is understood in a variety of ways that understand it as being more or less real.</p> <p>One common misunderstanding is that the Advaita Vedanta understands the world to be an illusion, a bit like a mirage. This is not entirely correct. The world is seen as ‘maya’, but maya is better translated as delusion than illusion. There is no question that the world has some sort of reality, we experience it through our senses, and we live in it. The Advaita tradition, however, makes a distinction between contingent and absolute reality. On a contingent level, the world is real. We experience it and interact with it. If we do not eat, we will die; if we do not get out of the way of a speeding car, we will die. We cannot, therefore, in the usual course of things, ignore the world. However, the existence of the world is contingent because it is not sui generis or self-existent, it is dependent on conditions in order to be, and at the ultimate level, it is dependent upon Brahman. In this definition of real, only something that is not dependent on anything else is ‘real’ in an absolute or ultimate sense. Thus, Brahman is real in an absolute sense but nothing else is. Moksha is gained when one realises and knows, in an experiential sense that the only reality is Brahman and that, therefore, the individual atman is identical or non-different to Brahman. Once this state is achieved, a person does not cease to live in the apparent world but is no longer affected by it on an absolute level. Richness or poorness, good and ill fortune, illness and health can be experienced in exactly the same way, without causing any disturbance of the self because they have no ultimate reality. This does not, however, imply that one should cease to interact with or to act in the world, as teachings on nishkama karma make clear. One can ‘do the right thing’ without being attached to the outcome or ‘reward’ of the action, since that reward is not ‘real’. Thus, Advaita does not claim that the world is not really there, but rather that humans are deluded by misunderstanding the true nature of the world.</p> <p>In the Vishistadvaita Vedanta the understanding is more complex. In Ramanuja’s teachings there are three things in existence that can be said to be ‘real’. These are Brahman, the material world (jagat) and atman/jiva. These are individual and distinct, and each is real. In one sense, this philosophy is monist in that ultimately the world and the atman proceed from Brahman, they are of the same substance, but different. The example is sometimes given of the web that proceeds from the spider. They are both different and the same.</p>	30

Question	Answer	Marks
4	<p>By contrast, in the Advaita the example of a snake is given. In the darkness of ignorance, the snake (representing the world) is seen, when in reality there is only a rope. The mistake is one of false categorisation. Ramanuja, though, would argue that both the rope and the snake are real.</p> <p>In the Dvaita tradition, the world is absolutely real. Maya here is understood as the creative power or energy of God or Brahman through which the world is manifested. Since Brahman is real it must follow that the world is real, since it is his creation. The real cannot create the unreal. For this reason, it is possible to learn about the nature of Brahman through studying the world.</p> <p>These different beliefs about the reality of the world have implications for the ways in which Hindus may seek to interact with it, with those who see it as a delusion that can be an obstacle to moksha seeking to withdraw from it through intensive meditation or through renunciation. Those who see the world as being fully real are more likely to seek to interact with it through a householder lifestyle and often through devotion (bhakti) to a personal, saguna God who created the world.</p>	