

SECTION A

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18. C. Dharma
19. C. harmonious co-existence and reverence for nature.
20. B. Artha

SECTION B (80 marks)

Answer ALL the questions in this section in the spaces provided.

21. You are nearing the end of your junior secondary education and thinking about your future career and life path.
(a) Name the four Ashramas (stages of life) in the traditional Hindu system. (4 marks)

The four Ashramas (stages of life) in the traditional Hindu system are:

i. **Brahmacharya** (Student/Celibate student stage)

ii. **Grihastha** (Householder stage)

iii. **Vanaprastha** (Forest dweller/Retired stage)

iv. **Sannyasa** (Renunciate/Ascetic stage)

(b) Briefly explain the main focus or responsibilities associated with the first two Ashramas (Brahmacharya and Grihastha). (4 marks)

Brahmacharya (Student/Celibate Student Stage):

- ✓ **Focus:** This stage is dedicated to learning, spiritual education, and character development. The individual is expected to live a disciplined life, often under the guidance of a guru, focusing on acquiring knowledge (especially of the Vedas and scriptures), developing virtues, and maintaining celibacy. The primary responsibility is to study and prepare for adult life.
- ✓ **Responsibilities:** Diligent study, respecting teachers and elders, self-control, simplicity, and building a strong foundation for future stages.

Grihastha (Householder Stage):

- ✓ **Focus:** This stage is centered on family life, fulfilling social duties, and contributing to society. The individual is expected to marry, raise a family, pursue a livelihood (Artha), enjoy legitimate pleasures (Kama), and practice dharma (righteousness) in their daily life.
- ✓ **Responsibilities:** Earning an honest living, supporting one's family, raising children with good values, contributing to the community, performing religious rituals and hospitality, and fulfilling the five great sacrifices (Pancha Mahayajnas).

(c) How can understanding the concept of Ashramas help a young person like you plan for different phases of life? (2 marks)

Understanding the concept of Ashramas can help a young person like me plan for different phases of life by:

- i. **Providing a clear framework for life's progression:** It offers a roadmap, suggesting appropriate priorities and responsibilities for each phase, from education to family life, and eventually spiritual focus and detachment.
- ii. **Promoting balance and purpose:** It encourages a balanced approach to life, ensuring that different aspects like learning, family, social contribution, and spiritual growth are addressed at their appropriate times, preventing a sole focus on one area to the neglect of others, and providing a sense of purpose for each stage.

22. Your community is facing a challenge, such as increased pollution or disregard for public property.

(a) Explain the Hindu ethical principle of environmental care and reverence for nature. (3 marks)

The Hindu ethical principle of environmental care and reverence for nature is deeply rooted in the belief that the entire universe, including all living beings and natural elements, is interconnected and imbued with the divine. Nature is seen as a manifestation of Brahman, the Supreme Reality, and therefore worthy of respect and worship. This principle emphasizes harmonious co-existence, non-violence (Ahimsa) towards all forms of life, and the understanding that humans are custodians of the Earth, not its exploiters. Scriptures often deify natural elements like rivers (Ganga), mountains (Himalayas), trees (Tulasi, Banyan), and animals (cow), promoting a sense of sacredness and respect for the environment.

(b) State four reasons why Hindus believe it is important to protect the environment and natural resources. (4 marks) Hindus believe it is important to protect the environment and natural resources for the following reasons:

- i. **Divinity in Nature:** Nature is considered a manifestation of the divine (Prakriti, Devi, Vishnu in cosmic form). Harming nature is seen as harming God's creation.
- ii. **Interconnectedness (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam):** The belief that "the world is one family" extends to all living beings, including plants and animals, emphasizing interconnectedness and mutual dependence.
- iii. **Dharma and Duty:** Protecting the environment is considered a part of one's Dharma (righteous duty) towards future generations and the larger cosmic order. It's about maintaining cosmic balance (Rita).
- iv. **Karma:** Actions that harm the environment are considered negative karma, which will have consequences for the individual and society. Conversely, caring for nature generates positive karma.

v. **Sustenance for Life:** Natural resources provide sustenance for all life. Depleting them is seen as unsustainable and a violation of the principle of supporting all beings.

vi. **Spiritual Purity:** A clean and pure environment is essential for spiritual practices and overall well-being. Sacred texts and rituals often involve natural elements.

(c) Give three practical steps you and your community can take to address environmental issues based on Hindu teachings. (3 marks)

Based on Hindu teachings, three practical steps my community and I can take to address environmental issues are:

i. **Promote tree planting drives:** Emphasizing the sacredness of trees (e.g., as abodes of deities or sources of life) and their role in ecological balance.

ii. **Organize community clean-up initiatives (Seva):** Encouraging selfless service (Seva) to clean public spaces, rivers, and temples, reflecting the principle of Shaucha (purity) and caring for shared resources.

iii. **Reduce waste and promote sustainable living:** Adopting principles like Aparigraha (non-possessiveness) and reducing consumption, reusing, and recycling to minimize environmental impact.

iv. **Educate others on reverence for nature:** Sharing stories and teachings from Hindu scriptures that highlight the sanctity of natural elements and the importance of ecological balance.

23. A relative from another country visits and is curious about the Hindu concept of liberation. They ask what happens after death and how Hindus believe one can escape the cycle of rebirth. (a) Explain the Hindu concept of Moksha. (3 marks)

Moksha is the ultimate spiritual goal in Hinduism, signifying liberation from Samsara, the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. It is not merely going to heaven, but rather the attainment of profound self-realization, a state of perfect peace, everlasting joy, and ultimate union or realization of one's true self (Atman) as being identical with or in intimate communion with the Supreme Reality (Brahman). It is a state of absolute freedom, knowledge, and bliss, transcending all worldly suffering and limitations.

(b) How is Moksha related to the concepts of Karma and Samsara? (4 marks)

- ✓ **Moksha and Samsara:** Samsara is the continuous cycle of reincarnation, driven by desires and actions. Moksha is the **release** from this cycle. The soul (Atman) continues to be reborn into various forms of life (human, animal, etc.) until it achieves Moksha. Therefore, Moksha is the ultimate escape from the repetitive and often suffering-filled nature of Samsara.
- ✓ **Moksha and Karma:** Karma refers to the sum of a person's actions and their consequences in this and previous lives. Good actions (punya) lead to positive outcomes, and bad actions (papa) lead to negative outcomes. This accumulated karma determines one's future births in Samsara. To achieve Moksha, one must transcend the accumulation of both good and bad karma, often through selfless action (Karma Yoga), devotion (Bhakti Yoga), or knowledge (Jnana Yoga). The aim is to act without attachment to the fruits of action, thus stopping the creation of new karmic bonds that keep one tethered to Samsara.

(c) State three paths or practices that Hindus believe can lead to the attainment of Moksha. (3 marks)

Three paths or practices that Hindus believe can lead to the attainment of Moksha are:

i. **Jnana Yoga (Path of Knowledge):** This involves intense philosophical inquiry, self-analysis, meditation, and study of scriptures to gain spiritual wisdom and realize the true nature of Atman and Brahman.

ii. **Bhakti Yoga (Path of Devotion):** This involves cultivating intense love, devotion, and surrender to a personal form of God (Ishvara). Through prayer, worship, chanting, and selfless service, the devotee seeks to merge with or attain the grace of the divine.

iii. **Karma Yoga (Path of Action):** This involves performing one's duties and actions without attachment to the results or fruits of those actions. It is about selfless service and fulfilling one's Dharma without ego or desire for personal gain.

iv. **Raja Yoga (Path of Meditation/Yoga):** This systematic path involves physical postures (asanas), breathing control (pranayama), and meditation (dhyana) to control the mind and senses, leading to spiritual realization.

24. You hear someone saying that Hindu philosophy is very complex and difficult to understand. You want to explain a basic concept from the Upanishads in simple terms.

a) Explain the concept of Atman and Brahman. (4 marks)

- ✓ **Atman:** Atman refers to the individual soul, the true self, or the essence of a person. It is the eternal, unchanging, pure consciousness that resides within every living being. It is not the body, mind, or ego, but the spiritual core that gives life and awareness. In simple terms, it's "my soul" or "my true inner self."
- ✓ **Brahman:** Brahman is the ultimate reality, the Supreme Being, the absolute truth, and the universal spirit. It is the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe, and is considered infinite, eternal, transcendent, and immanent. In simple terms, it's "the Universal Soul" or "God" in His unmanifest, all-pervading form, the fundamental substratum of all existence.

(b) Describe the relationship between Atman and Brahman as taught in the Advaita Vedanta philosophy (the idea of non-duality). (4 marks)

In Advaita Vedanta, the most fundamental teaching is the **non-duality (Advaita)** of Atman and Brahman. This means that the individual soul (Atman) is not separate from the Universal Soul (Brahman); rather, they are **identical**. The famous Upanishadic dictum "Tat Tvam Asi" (That Thou Art) succinctly expresses this idea. The apparent distinction between the individual self and the Supreme Reality is considered an illusion (Maya) created by ignorance. The goal of spiritual practice in Advaita is to realize this inherent oneness – to understand that 'my soul' (Atman) is, in essence, the same as 'the Universal Soul' (Brahman), and that all perceived differences are not ultimately real.

(c) Give two reasons why understanding the Atman-Brahman relationship is considered important in Hindu philosophy. (2 marks)

i. **Achieving Moksha/Liberation:** Realizing the oneness of Atman and Brahman is considered the key to attaining Moksha, liberation from the cycle of rebirth (Samsara), and ending all suffering.

ii. **Understanding Ultimate Reality:** It provides a profound understanding of the ultimate nature of existence, revealing that divinity is not external but inherent within oneself and all of creation.

iii. **Promoting Universal Love and Empathy:** If all Atmans are ultimately Brahman, then all beings are fundamentally one. This understanding fosters compassion, empathy, and the idea of universal brotherhood/sisterhood, as harming another is seen as harming oneself or the divine within them.

iv. **Basis for Ethical Conduct:** This interconnectedness provides a strong foundation for ethical living, emphasizing selfless action and non-harm, knowing that the divine resides in everyone.

25. Your family is planning a spiritual journey to visit a famous temple in India. You are learning about the importance of pilgrimages.

(a) Explain the significance of undertaking a pilgrimage (Tirtha Yatra) in Hindu Dharma. (3 marks)

Undertaking a pilgrimage (Tirtha Yatra) in Hindu Dharma holds profound significance. It is considered a spiritual journey to sacred places (tirthas) like temples, rivers, mountains, or ancient sites, believed to have divine presence or to be charged with spiritual energy due to the austerities or enlightenment of sages and deities. The significance lies in:

- i. **Spiritual purification:** Washing away sins and accumulating positive karma through immersion in holy waters or visiting sacred shrines.
- ii. **Connecting with the divine:** Experiencing a closer proximity to deities, receiving their blessings (darshan), and deepening one's faith and devotion (bhakti).
- iii. **Self-transformation:** The journey itself, often arduous, encourages self-discipline, introspection, detachment from worldly comforts, and spiritual growth. It allows devotees to rejuvenate their spiritual lives and gain new perspectives.
- iv. **Cultural and community bonding:** Pilgrimages often involve meeting other devotees, fostering a sense of community, and experiencing the rich diversity of Hindu culture and traditions.

(b) Outline four preparations a Hindu might make before going on a pilgrimage. (4 marks)

Before going on a pilgrimage, a Hindu might make the following preparations:

- i. **Spiritual preparation:** This involves prayer, meditation, fasting (vrat), studying scriptures related to the pilgrimage site, and mentally preparing for the spiritual experience.
- ii. **Physical preparation:** Ensuring good health, building stamina if the pilgrimage involves trekking or long journeys, and arranging appropriate clothing (often simple and modest).
- iii. **Financial preparation:** Saving money for travel, accommodation, offerings (donations for temples and sadhus), and other expenses, often with the understanding that one should not incur debt for the pilgrimage.
- iv. **Logistical arrangements:** Booking travel, arranging accommodation, understanding the local customs and traditions of the pilgrimage site, and gathering necessary documents.
- v. **Mental preparation:** Cultivating a detached mindset, leaving behind worldly worries, and focusing on the spiritual purpose of the journey. Some might also seek blessings from elders or gurus.

(c) Name three famous Hindu pilgrimage sites. (3 marks) Three famous Hindu pilgrimage sites are:

- i. **Varanasi (Kashi):** One of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, considered a sacred city, especially for devotees of Lord Shiva, known for the holy River Ganga.
- ii. **Ayodhya:** The birthplace of Lord Rama.
- iii. **Rameshwaram:** A significant pilgrimage site in South India, one of the Char Dham pilgrimage sites, associated with Lord Rama.
- iv. **Haridwar/Rishikesh:** Sacred cities on the banks of the River Ganga, important for spiritual practices and bathing in the holy river.
- v. **Mathura/Vrindavan:** Associated with the birthplace and childhood of Lord Krishna.
- vi. **Badrinath/Kedarnath/Gangotri/Yamunotri (Char Dham in Himalayas):** Four significant pilgrimage sites in the Himalayas.
- vii. **Tirupati (Tirumala Venkateswara Temple):** A major Vaishnava temple in Andhra Pradesh.

viii. **Puri (Jagannath Temple):** Known for its annual Rath Yatra festival.

26. There is discussion in your class about how religion can guide people's behaviour. You decide to talk about Hindu ethics.

(a) Explain the importance of practicing Yamas (restraints) and Niyamas (observances) in Hindu ethical living. (4 marks)

Practicing Yamas and Niyamas are foundational to Hindu ethical living, particularly in the Yoga tradition but also broadly applicable across all paths. They are considered the first two limbs of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga and are crucial for mental, moral, and spiritual purification.

- ✓ **Yamas (Restraints):** These are universal moral commandments that guide how one interacts with the world and others. They are about abstaining from actions that cause harm or disturbance. Their importance lies in **purifying one's external conduct**, fostering harmonious relationships, and creating a stable, non-harming environment conducive to inner peace and spiritual growth. By practicing Yamas, one reduces negative karma and cultivates compassion and truthfulness.
- ✓ **Niyamas (Observances):** These are positive duties or observances that guide one's personal discipline and internal conduct. They are about self-purification and developing inner virtues. Their importance lies in **purifying one's internal self**, cultivating positive habits, and building a strong character, self-discipline, and spiritual awareness. They help an individual to align their thoughts, words, and actions with righteous principles, leading to inner contentment and progress on the spiritual path. Together, Yamas and Niyamas form a moral compass, ensuring that one's external actions and internal state are aligned with Dharma, leading to a balanced and fulfilling life.

(b) State four examples of Yamas and four examples of Niyamas. (4 marks)

Yamas (Restraints):

i. **Ahimsa** (Non-violence/Non-harming): Abstinance from harming any living being through thought, word, or deed.

ii. **Satya** (Truthfulness): Adherence to truth in thought, word, and deed, ensuring it does not cause harm.

iii. **Asteya** (Non-stealing): Abstinance from taking anything that does not belong to oneself.

iv. **Brahmacharya** (Continenence/Right use of energy): Often interpreted as celibacy for monastics, but for householders, it means responsible sexual conduct and moderation in all sensual pleasures.

v. **Aparigraha** (Non-possessiveness/Non-attachment): Abstinance from greed, covetousness, and accumulating more than necessary.

Niyamas (Observances):

i. **Shaucha** (Purity/Cleanliness): Purity of body (hygiene) and mind (freedom from negative thoughts).

ii. **Santosha** (Contentment): Cultivating a state of inner peace and acceptance with what one has.

iii. **Tapas** (Austerity/Discipline): Self-discipline, perseverance, and control over senses, often involving moderate fasting or enduring discomfort for spiritual growth.

iv. **Svadhya** (Self-study/Study of scriptures): Study of sacred texts, self-reflection, and introspection to gain self-knowledge.

v. **Ishvara Pranidhana** (Surrender to God/Devotion): Surrendering to a higher power, cultivating faith, and dedicating one's actions to the divine.

(c) Give two benefits of incorporating these ethical principles into one's life. (2 marks)

i. **Inner Peace and Well-being:** Practicing Yamas and Niyamas leads to a clear conscience, reduced anxiety, and a greater sense of inner peace and contentment.

ii. **Improved Relationships:** Adhering to principles like Ahimsa and Satya fosters trust, harmony, and respect in one's interactions with others.

iii. **Spiritual Growth:** These principles purify the mind and body, making one more receptive to spiritual insights and progress on the path to self-realization or Moksha.

iv. **Strong Character and Discipline:** They help in building strong moral character, self-control, and resilience in facing life's challenges.

27. You are helping to organize a Hindu community event. You need to explain the importance of different community institutions.

(a) Name four types of Hindu community institutions or organizations (e.g., Mandir, Ashram, Samaj, educational institutions). (4 marks) Four types of Hindu community institutions or organizations are:

i. **Mandir (Temple):** Places of worship, spiritual gathering, and cultural activities.

ii. **Ashram:** Spiritual retreats or hermitages often led by a guru, focused on spiritual learning, meditation, and simple living.

iii. **Hindu Samaj/Associations/Cultural Centers:** Community organizations that bring Hindus together for social, cultural, and religious events, language classes, and youth activities.

iv. **Pathshalas/Gurukuls/Educational Institutions:** Schools or centers dedicated to teaching Hindu scriptures, Sanskrit, values, music, dance, and traditional arts.

v. **Dharamshalas/Chatrams:** Rest houses or lodges for pilgrims and travelers.

vi. **Seva Organizations:** Charitable and service-oriented organizations dedicated to humanitarian aid, social welfare, and community development.

(b) Outline four roles that Hindu community institutions play in supporting individuals and preserving culture. (4 marks) Hindu community institutions play various crucial roles:

i. **Spiritual Nurturing and Worship:** They provide spaces (Mandirs, Ashrams) for individuals to connect with the divine through prayers, rituals, satsangs (spiritual discourses), and festivals, fostering spiritual growth and devotion.

ii. **Preservation and Transmission of Culture and Knowledge:** They serve as centers for teaching Sanskrit, Vedic chants, Hindu scriptures, traditional arts (music, dance), and cultural values, ensuring that knowledge and traditions are passed down to new generations.

iii. **Community Building and Social Support:** They act as social hubs where individuals can connect with like-minded people, celebrate festivals together, offer mutual support during times of need, and strengthen community bonds.

iv. **Charitable and Social Service (Seva):** Many institutions engage in philanthropic activities, such as providing food, education, healthcare, and disaster relief, embodying the principle of selfless service (Seva) and contributing to the wider society.

v. **Moral and Ethical Guidance:** Through discourses, classes, and the example of spiritual leaders, these institutions provide guidance on ethical living, Dharma, and moral values, helping individuals navigate life's challenges.

(c) Give two ways young people can get involved in their Hindu community institutions. (2 marks) Two ways young people can get involved in their Hindu community institutions are:

i. **Volunteering for Seva (selfless service):** Participating in temple clean-ups, preparing food for community meals (langar), assisting with festival preparations, or helping with charitable initiatives.

ii. **Attending youth programs and classes:** Joining Bal Vikas (children's cultural and spiritual classes), youth groups, religious instruction classes, or learning traditional music, dance, or languages.

iii. **Participating in religious ceremonies and festivals:** Actively attending and assisting with prayers, pujas, and celebrations, understanding their significance.

iv. **Learning from elders and spiritual teachers:** Engaging in discussions, listening to discourses, and seeking guidance on spiritual and ethical matters.

28. You witness an act of injustice in society. You wonder how Hindu teachings guide believers to respond. (a) How does the concept of Dharma guide a Hindu's response to injustice? (3 marks)

The concept of **Dharma** is central to a Hindu's response to injustice. Dharma refers to one's righteous conduct, moral duty, cosmic order, and ethical principles that sustain the universe. When faced with injustice, Dharma guides a Hindu to:

i. **Uphold Righteousness:** A Hindu is encouraged to act in accordance with Dharma, which inherently means upholding truth, justice, and moral order. Injustice is a violation of Dharma, and therefore, it is one's duty to resist it.

ii. **Take Action (Karma Yoga):** Dharma encourages active participation in maintaining balance and order. This might mean speaking out against injustice, taking constructive action to correct it, or engaging in selfless service (Seva) to help those who are wronged, all while acting without attachment to the outcome.

iii. **Consider the Greater Good:** Dharma often requires considering the broader consequences of actions. While addressing injustice, one should strive for solutions that promote overall well-being and restore harmony, rather than perpetuating further discord or violence (unless absolutely necessary as a last resort, as seen in some historical contexts like the Mahabharata). It emphasizes finding a righteous path to resolution.

(b) State four ways Hindus are encouraged to work towards justice and righteousness in society, based on teachings like Karma Yoga or Seva. (4 marks) Based on teachings like Karma Yoga and Seva, Hindus are encouraged to work towards justice and righteousness in society in the following ways:

i. **Engaging in Selfless Service (Seva):** Actively participating in social welfare programs, charitable acts, and community initiatives that alleviate suffering and uplift the marginalized, without expecting personal reward.

ii. **Performing Righteous Actions (Karma Yoga):** Fulfilling one's professional and social duties with integrity, honesty, and a sense of responsibility towards the welfare of others, seeing work as an offering. This includes working honestly in one's profession and using one's position to promote fairness.

iii. **Standing for Truth (Satya) and Non-violence (Ahimsa):** Speaking out against falsehoods and injustice (Satya) while ideally striving for peaceful and non-violent means (Ahimsa) to resolve conflicts and promote fairness.

iv. **Advocating for Dharma (Righteousness):** Educating others about ethical principles, moral duties, and the importance of justice as outlined in Hindu scriptures, encouraging ethical conduct in society.

v. **Leading by Example:** Living a life of integrity, compassion, and justice personally, thereby inspiring others to follow righteous paths and contribute to a just society.

vi. **Seeking Justice through Lawful Means:** Upholding established legal frameworks and seeking legal recourse where injustice occurs, rather than resorting to chaos or unlawful actions.

(c) Give three examples from Hindu scriptures (epics, Puranas) that illustrate the importance of upholding justice. (3 marks) Three examples from Hindu scriptures that illustrate the importance of upholding justice are:

i. **The Mahabharata and the Kurukshetra War:** The entire epic culminates in the Kurukshetra War, which is essentially a righteous war (Dharma Yuddha) fought by the Pandavas to restore justice and Dharma against the unrighteous actions and deceit of the Kauravas, led by Duryodhana. Lord Krishna himself advises Arjuna to fight for Dharma.

ii. **Lord Rama's reign in the Ramayana (Rama Rajya):** Lord Rama, the ideal king, established a "Rama Rajya," a kingdom characterized by perfect justice, righteousness, peace, and prosperity for all its citizens. His unwavering adherence to Dharma, even at personal cost, serves as a supreme example of upholding justice.

iii. **The Story of Prahlada and Narasimha:** In the Bhagavata Purana, the story of Prahlada, a devotee of Vishnu, being persecuted by his demon father Hiranyakashipu (who believed himself immortal and demanded worship) demonstrates divine intervention to restore justice and protect the righteous when all other avenues fail. Lord Narasimha emerges to slay the unjust demon.

iv. **The episode of Draupadi's disrobing in the Mahabharata:** This act of gross injustice and disrespect towards Draupadi in the court of Dhritarashtra highlights the violation of Dharma and ultimately becomes a major catalyst for the great war, emphasizing the severe consequences of unrighteousness.