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# NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE

**GRADE 12**

**SEPTEMBER 2024**

## RELIGION STUDIES P2 MARKING GUIDELINE

**MARKS: 150**

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This marking guideline consists of 26 pages.

**INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION**

1. Mark the first THREE questions ONLY.
2. Note the maximum marks for each question.
3. TWO marks are credited for each point.
4. If more than the required points are given, mark the required number and draw a line, and write MAX. to indicate the maximum reached.
5. If the answers are not numbered, note the chronological sequence and mark.
6. The marking guideline is the basis of your marking.
7. Total according to the sub-questions to facilitate question-by-question analysis.

**QUESTION 1**

1.1 **Discuss THREE reasons why there is gender-based violence (GBV) in our society.**

**Mark first THREE responses only.**

- Alcohol abuse leads to one losing control of his or her anger and ability to reason properly
- Drug abuse changes the way the mind works, thus one's behaviour.
- Poverty forces women to tolerate abusive men because they are poor and unemployed
- When men are unemployed, they tend to displace with anger and violence because they feel insecure
- Abused childhood: People who grew up being abused or in the home where GBV existed, tend to grow up to do the same
- History of violence in society: South Africa has a deep history of violence, where people were beaten or killed when they experienced differences.
- Patriarchy or male dominancy in society gives the impression that women are of less value compared to men – the men think they own the women and are allowed to beat them if they want to

**NOTE: Other relevant answers must be credited.** (3 x 2) (6)

1.2 **Analyse the impact of gender-based violence (GBV) in society.**

- GBV perpetuates GBV because abused people abuse other people
- Women affected by GBV are sometimes injured or killed/murdered by their male partners
- Broken families: GBV can lead abused women to leave their marriages
- Mental illnesses like depression: A woman who is beaten lives a life of fear, which leads to stress and depression
- Children neglect: A woman living with GBV in her house is unable to properly look after her children
- School dropouts: Neglected children because of GBV tend to drop out of school

**NOTE: Other relevant answers must be credited.** (5 x 2) (10)

- 1.3 Choose ONE religion and discuss some of its teachings that offer solutions to gender-based violence (GBV).

**Example 1: Christianity**

- Crime and violence are addressed through the Ten Commandments:
  - For example; Thou shall not steal; Do not commit murder, Do not desire other people's possessions, etc.
  - Do unto others as you would like them to do unto you
  - Love your neighbour as you love yourself
- This command emphasises the importance of a caring community
- Christian values are love, care, trust, respect, empathy, tolerance, etc.
- Children are ordered to honour their parents and the elderly in general
- Parents are obliged to educate their children in God's way of living
- Jesus commanded Christians to love one another, as a law
- Christianity disapproves of violence

**Example 2: Islam**

- Love and peace form part of central teaching
- Adultery is prohibited
- Good family values are upheld
- Ill-treatment of vulnerable people is prohibited
- Use of drugs and alcohol abuse which lead to GBV is prohibited

**Example 3: ATR**

- 'Ubuntu' is an African philosophy of life that teaches respect for all human life and properties
- Discipline is instilled at the earliest age as family principles
- Ubuntu philosophy is generosity and love for one another
- Parents are expected to teach their children good morals
- Elders provide good role models for children
- Males are expected to protect females and children
- Violence is discouraged
- Every family has a leading elder who maintains order
- Everyone is held accountable by the community for his undesirable actions
- The principle of 'my child is your child and your child is my child' enables adults to discipline all children anywhere and anytime misbehaviour prevails.

**NOTE: Other relevant answers must be credited.**

(Max. 4 x 2)

(8)

1.4 **Gender-based violence (GBV) is regarded as evil. In the context of any ONE religion discuss the following:**

1.4.1 **How can humanity overcome evil?**

**Example 1: Islam**

- Muslims believe that evil is linked with Satan or the devil
- Allah created Adam and commanded all of creation to bow before him
- Satan refused to bow claiming that he was better than Adam because he was created from fire, whereas Adam was created with clay
- That pride led Satan to fall from grace with Allah
- Satan vowed that forever, he would use his power to mislead people and dissuade them from obeying God
- Human beings have a natural moral sense given to them by Allah, which enables them to distinguish between good and evil
- Every individual is obliged to avoid what is evil and do what is good

**Example 2: Judaism**

- The members of the Jewish religion believe that people are born good
- Each person has a holy spark,
- a divine soul with unlimited potential for good
- God gives everyone free will to choose whether to retain this goodness or not
- It is of the utmost importance to do what God wants you to do

**NOTE: Other relevant answers must be credited. (Max. 5 x 2) (10)**

**1.4.2 What is the responsibility of humanity in the world?****Example 1: Taoism**

- Humans are a tiny, microscopic by-product of the Tao's creation
- The Tao is infinitely more powerful than humans
- Humans are not a special creation, and they are not in charge of the world
- The universe will continue its path, as determined by the Tao
- Whatever humans do, is exactly according to the whims of the Tao
- Humans should look after the earth, because polluting it is harmful to them
- Humans can destroy only a small part of creation
- Despite this, the bountiful creative activity of the Tao will continue

**NOTE: Other relevant answers must be credited. (Max. 5 x 2) (10)**

**1.5 As a Grade 12 learner, you are asked to talk to your fellow learners to discourage GBV. Write down THREE main points of your speech.**

**[Mark first THREE responses ONLY.]**

- When you cause harm to any woman, you cause harm to your own mother or sister.
- GBV offenders are registered as serious criminals.
- A criminal record is a black mark on you and makes you unemployable.
- Women look to (us) men for their protection.
- Real men do not abuse women.

**NOTE: Other relevant answers must be credited. (Max. 3 x 2) (6)**  
**[50]**

**QUESTION 2**

2.1 **Discuss the internal differences of ONE religion under the following headings:**

2.1.1 **Governance** (10)

**Example 1: Islam****Sunni**

- There is no clergy in Sunni Islam
- Any Muslim can serve on the community boards
- Governance is community based
- Scholars of Islam and community members serve on the governing boards of mosques, madrassas and schools
- In governance, the Sunnah of the Prophet is observed

**Shi'a**

- Shi'a Muslims revere the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, and believe that they have a divine right to lead Muslims
- Such a leader is referred to as 'imam'
- The final word in any uncertainty about any religious or political issues lies with the representative of the imam
- Governance is in the hands of mullahs (priests), who rule by religious decree

**Example 2: Christianity****Catholicism**

- The head of Catholicism is the Pope
- The centre of **Catholicism's** power of this branch is in Rome.
- The Catholic branch has many orders, namely monks, nuns, priests and friars.
- The Catholic branch is governed at the parish level by priests, deaneries by deans, dioceses by bishops and archdioceses by archbishops
- A cardinal can govern an entire country or a geographical region

**Eastern Orthodox**

- This branch is controlled by priests and bishops.
- Authority within the church is in the hands of a group of bishops.
- A diocese is a group of parishes under the leadership of a bishop.

**Protestantism**

- The churches are ruled by ordained ministers and bishops or elected elders
- Overall rule is by a higher authority such as a synod or general assembly chaired by the presiding bishop
- Some Protestant churches are independent, and not responsible to any higher authority than the congregation

**Example 3: Buddhism**

- The head of Tibetan (Mahayana) Buddhism is the Dalai Lama
- The Dalai Lama is the title that has been used in Tibet since 1301
- He is an example of Bodhisattva, followed in Mahayana Buddhism
- Mahayana Buddhism has organised outreach programmes to aid the needy
- Mahayana Buddhism believes that ordinary people can achieve Nirvana, and therefore do not advocate monkhood to the extent of Theravada Buddhism
- Theravada Buddhism believes that monks are closest to Nirvana
- Therefore, the monastery is central to governance in Theravada Buddhism
- The community of monks and nuns are known as Sangha who leads the Theravada Buddhists
- They proclaim, 'No Buddhism without Sangha', showing the governing role of the Sangha

**Example 4: Hinduism**

- Every temple was independent in terms of governance
- Rituals were also not prescribed but determined by local priests from communities
- Today, countries with a major Hindu presence have a governing body that represents both traditional and neo-Hindu movements
- In South Africa, such a body is the S.A. Hindu Maha Sab
- There are also regional organisations with a linguistic and cultural focus (e.g. Gujarati, Hindi, Telegu)

**Example 5: Judaism**

- Judaism does not have a leader or a single body that is in charge of the community
- The different branches usually have their leadership in their specific regions
- Each synagogue is usually led by a rabbi
- Both Orthodox and Reform synagogues are run by the members of the congregation
- The rabbis are employees mandated to run the religious life
- In the Orthodox tradition, only men can become rabbis

**NOTE: Other relevant answers must be credited.** (10)

2.1.2 **Teachings****Example 1: Islam**

Islam is divided into two major branches, namely the Sunni and the Shi'a.

**(a) Sunni Muslims**

- Sunni refers to 'following' the Sunnah (example) of the Prophet Muhammad
- The Hadith narrated by the companions of the Prophet have equal status to those narrated by his family members
- The Sunni sect believes that all the teachings contained in the Books of Hadith are equally important
- Sunnis follow the teachings of scholars from the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries
- Sunnis do not accept that a caliph can come exclusively from the Prophet's family

**(b) Shi'a Muslims**

- Shia means partisan or separate party.
- The Hadith narrated by the companions of the Prophet have less significance than that narrated by his family members
- The Shi'a follow the teachings and opinions only of a living scholar
- They believe that the last caliph from the Prophet's family was hidden in a cave and will one day reappear as leader
- He is referred to as 'Imam'

**Example 2: Christianity**

Christianity has three main branches – Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant (also African Initiated Churches)

### Catholicism

- The Catholic Church believes that they are the original church
- They believe that everyone is born in sin because of Adam and Eve's disobedience to God
- God is made up of three persons: Father, Son and the Holy Spirit
- The Holy Spirit comes from God the Father and the Son

### Eastern Orthodox

- The Holy Spirit comes only from God the Father
- They believe that they are the rightly guided church

### Protestantism

- The Bible has more authority than the Pope
- They teach that faith is the way to salvation.
- They teach that salvation is a gift given freely through the work of Jesus Christ

### Example 3: Buddhism

- The disciples were in disagreement with each other regarding the meanings of the Buddha's teachings
- When the disciples held the second Council, a hundred years later, where they concluded that the differences have become huge
- Owing to these differences; they decided to split into branches or schools
- Buddhism was then subdivided into **Mahasanghika** and **Sthaviravada**
- Those who followed the Mahasanghika school believed that Buddhism needed to be more open to change if it was to grow and spread out of India to other parts of the world
- The Sthaviravada school was seen as more orthodox and believed that the teachings of the Buddha had to be followed strictly and remain unchanged
- Due to great growth and increasingly different schools of thought within it, Buddhism split into two distinct **doctrines** which resulted in two **systems or schools**, namely **Mahayana** and **Theravada**
- The Theravada school believes that the most important text is the Tripitaka and that its teachings must be followed strictly as the original teachings of the Buddha
- Mahayana Buddhists base their teachings on the Mahayana sutras (texts) which are teachings that, they claim, come directly from the Buddha, who passed them on to only a few of his most advanced disciples

**Example 4: Hinduism**

- Due to the expansive geographical region, different cultural and ethnic groups spread from India to different parts of the world. All these groups are treated as equal Hindus
- Although there are differences, there is a great deal of respect and tolerance for different interpretations of Hindu beliefs and practices.
- Some Hindu schools do not agree that there is one God; they worship all the deities equally, while others believe that Bhagwan is the one
- The British broke the intellectual isolation of the Indians and brought them into contact with Western science, literature, and history
- Hindus in India suffered from racist treatment when they were ruled by the British Empire. This treatment has led Hindu leaders to work for racial harmony and justice

**Example 5: Judaism**

- The two main groups found in Judaism, are the Sephardim and Ashkenazim
- The differences between the two groups came as a result of cultural practices and customs
- The reasons for the differences include food, choice of songs, dress code, prayer, and pronunciation of Hebrew
- The differences were mainly a result of interpretations of the holy texts, i.e. whether it should be interpreted literally or figuratively
- The differences were also based on the interpretation of the Torah and the ritual practices
- Over time, Judaism has gone through many changes because of this
- The two main movements based on religious differences are Reform Judaism and Orthodox Judaism

(10)

**2.2 Evaluate the possible consequences of internal differences for religions.****Positive consequences**

- Internal differences allow for differences in the interpretation of sacred texts.
- There is potential for religious growth, arising from the interaction of subdivisions.
- It is also more accommodating, as human beings are not all the same
- Internal differences encourage tolerance, as different views are also accepted within the same religion
- They force the adherents to focus on what is common, rather than the differences.
- Major beliefs remain unchanged, but practices may differ among subdivisions of the same religion
- E.g. In Islam, the shahadah (testimony that Allah alone is worthy of worship and that Muhammad is His Messenger) is non-negotiable, but differences in jurisprudence and rituals do exist
- In African Traditional Religion, ancestral worship is non-negotiable, but rituals are very different across the various branches

(8)

2.3 **Discuss contemporary inspiration in the context of religion.**

- The term 'contemporary inspiration' refers to the inspiration that still takes place today
- Inspiration refers to the power or force of an extraordinary being, 'taking over' a chosen being
- There are several types of inspiration, namely:
  - Divine inspiration, which is direct and immediate and inspired the founders of religions,
  - Contemporary inspiration, which is ongoing and serves to unite worshippers with their Creator
- Inspiration is an important normative source in many religions.
- It is the true origin of all religions.
- The founding figures of many religions were inspired by a higher power or wisdom.
- Such people felt that they received 'revelation' from an extraordinary being.
- Examples are Moses, Jesus Christ, Abraham, Prophet Muhammad, Buddha, and Baha'u'llah
- In ATR, mediums or diviners receive inspiration while they are in a trance.
- This inspiration is ongoing, while that of the Abrahamic faiths did not go beyond their founders
- Inspiration is a powerful motivation for the followers of a religion (5 x 2) (10)

2.4 **Discuss THREE hermeneutical principles that are relevant to the interpretation of sacred text.**

**NOTE: Mark the first THREE responses only.**

**Grammar and historical context**

- This means that the writings must be understood within the context of the time and circumstances
- Rules of grammar mean the use of exact and ordinary meaning of words

**Clearest meaning**

- The meaning that is most obvious to the reader must be considered when interpreting normative sources

**Plan, purpose and context**

- The plan or structure of the whole document must be taken into account
- An extract must be seen as part of the whole within the context
- For example, is the writing of poetry or prose

**Meaning of words**

- The meaning of words changes over time, context and in different places
- E.g. 'Adam knew Eve' meant he had sexual intercourse with her
- For correct interpretation, the original meaning must be used

**Figurative language**

- This implies using certain words to represent something in the sacred text, like the 'seed' and 'soil' in the parable of the sower, in Christianity
- It must be identified to avoid literal interpretation
- Examples include parables in Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism
- Require considering other hermeneutical principles to interpret correctly

**The consideration of other sacred texts**

- For example, Bible commentary/dictionary, and tafsir in Islam
- They must be of the same religion and teaching as the source to be interpreted
- A parallel passage/text can be used to interpret another text/passage

(12)  
**[50]**

**QUESTION 3****3.1 Discuss the role played by rituals under the following headings:****3.1.1 Social role**

- Rituals have an important social function
- It brings together people with common beliefs and interests
- These people celebrate and remember their history (3 x 2) (6)

**3.1.2 Spiritual role**

- Such rituals are performed to strengthen the ties between people and the divine
- Religious rituals intend to bring together this world and the divine
- When a priest in the Roman Catholic tradition performs Mass, the body and the blood of Jesus Christ is said to be one within the water and the wine (3 x 2) (6)

**3.1.3 Psychological role**

- Rituals satisfy a part of being human that cannot be explained logically
- Some put flowers on a grave
- This is not done for the person who has died or for others to see,
- but it satisfies a deep personal need
- The need for rituals seems to have its origins in the right-hand side of the brain (5 x 2) (10)

**3.2 3.2.1 Name ONE secular worldview and discuss its origin.****Example 1: Humanism**

- Refers to the teaching that human matters take priority over supernatural or divine matters.
- The term generally applied to the overreaching social and intellectual philosophies of the **Renaissance** era.
- Enlightenment philosophers like Hobbes and Hume's helped the spread of humanism throughout Europe and America
- During the Age of enlightenment, science, reason, and intellectualism advanced. God was no longer the starting point to understand the world, but the mind.
- It was first used as a concept in the 1950s. The term 'humanism' was originally a religious term.
- In the 19th century the meaning of 'humanism' shifted to mean 'atheism' to most English speakers.
- It originated because philosophers needed to put forth their own theories, which would replace religion.

**Example 2: Materialism**

- Materialism originated in various areas within Europe and Asia.
- It originated during the Axial Age from 800–200 BCE
- Materialism expresses itself in ancient Indian philosophy, in Buddhism and Confucianism
- Baron d’Holbach (1723–1789) claimed that initially nothing existed except nature
- In the West, materialism was first developed by Greek philosophers, the Atomists, and was revived in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- An elaboration of the concept of ‘materialism’ was made by Karl Marx during the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Karl Marx used the term ‘*dialectical materialism*’, which is a teaching that matter is the fundamental cause of everything
- He also used the term ‘*historical materialism*’, which is a teaching that economics and relationships between workers and owners are the fundamental structure in the society.
- Marx included human history and economic activity into materialism

**Example 3: Atheism**

- Atheists reject the belief that divine or supernatural powers exist
- There are different degrees of atheism
- Soft (or neutral) atheists do not actively reject the existence of a supernatural being
- Strong (or positive) atheists believe there is evidence to support their atheistic views
- In some cases, soft atheists reject both theism and strong atheism.
- This is because they feel both world views depend on proof to support their claims
- Atheists often turn to science to explain the nature of the universe, rather than relying on faith

**Example 4: Agnosticism**

- This term was first used by philosopher T.H. Huxley in 1869
- Agnosticism comes from Greek – ‘a’ meaning without and ‘gnosis’ meaning ‘knowledge’
- It means ‘not having knowledge’ to confirm or deny that God exists
- Agnostics teach that it is impossible to prove that a god exists or does not exist
- They reject religious doctrine – especially religions that claim they have spiritual knowledge
- Agnostics are sceptical of religious teachings
- Darwin’s theory of human evolution challenged the idea of a supreme creator

(8)

3.2.2 **Critically evaluate the impact of secularism on the religious community.**

Religious influence has declined in many spheres of society:

- It promotes religious freedom
- It promotes religious tolerance
- As a result of the secular influence, no religion is officially favoured by the state
- There is peaceful coexistence, because all religions are recognised as being equal
- In a secular constitution, all religions may practice and worship in their own ways, but must not infringe on the religious rights of others
- In state functions, such as the inauguration of the president, all religions participate
- Religion cannot dictate terms on the laws of the state
- Secularism has led to re-evaluation/re-interpretation of scriptures (12)

3.3 **What is the role of inspiration in the African Traditional Religion?**

- In ATR, people communicate with their ancestors through inspiration
- Mediums and diviners specialise in communicating with the ancestors and spirits
- Mediums often go through a process of death and rebirth during their training. This happens because of inspiration
- In this process, they believe that personality is terminated, and the medium receives a new personality, dedicated to the supernatural forces.
- Such mediums have an intermediary function
- African Traditional Religion includes contemporary and divine inspiration

**NOTE: Other relevant answers must be credited.**

(8)  
[50]

**QUESTION 4****4.1 Compare the state of religious co-operation in South Africa before and after 1994.**

- In pre-1994 apartheid South Africa all aspects of society, including religion, were dominated by the policy of apartheid
- Only Christianity was recognised in public and taught in schools
- Other religions were simply ignored, or misrepresented
- Thus, religions were 'apart' from each other, and even within a religion, there was separation along racial lines
- During the height of the struggle years, however, religion proved to be a powerful force of resistance and unity among different religions
- Leaders from different religions stood together and often led the protests in a strong show of interreligious cooperation
- The country changed from being a Christian state to a secular state.
- The Bill of Rights in the Constitution guarantees the freedom of association
- President Nelson Mandela called on religious communities to work together
- The National Religious Leaders Forum was formed in 1997
- Religion Studies, which incorporates all religions and encourages co-operation between religions, was introduced
- There is a fair allocation of time in the state media for different religions
- The opening of parliament and government ceremonies are shared by different religious leaders

(16)

**4.2 4.2.1 Evaluate the impact of the NRLF / NICSA.**

- They are succeeding with HIV/Aids as the number of new infections has decreased, and free treatment is available
- They have also succeeded in promoting all religions in education because different religions are given fair opportunities in schools
- They are succeeding in preventing inter-religious conflict in South Africa
- because there is religious cooperation among different religions in South Africa
- They are not succeeding in addressing child abuse and GBV, because the numbers of cases are increasing
- They are not succeeding in promoting ethical and moral values,
- because the rate of fraud and corruption is increasing daily

(12)

**4.2.2 Explain the difference between the WCC and ACRL.**

- ACRL is a religious organisation that is made up of many different religions, that is inter-religious,
- while the WCC is made up of one religion, that is intra-religious.
- The ACRL's main purpose is to bring about peace among different religions in Africa,
- while the WCC's main purpose is to promote the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world

(8)

**4.3 Describe the practical steps taken by religious organisations to promote interreligious harmony.**

- People of various faiths come together to help others, and to debate issues of importance, and to find a common stand
- Unity is seen across religions
- Religious organisations offer services that are 'open', to set an example of to all
- Aids patients are cared for and supported often in prayer, by members representing different faiths
- Representatives from South African religions and other followers marched to Parliament to deliver a memorandum on issues affecting the communities.
- Lifeline was established to provide counselling to those in need
- Trainers commit their shifts to their 'Supreme Being'
- Multi-faith services are organised where services are held to celebrate an aspect of human rights
- When Parliament is opened, various political and religious leaders 'commit' themselves to a 'Greater Deity'
- Public holiday celebration e.g. a rally on Freedom Day might be addressed by an Imam, a rabbi, a guru and a priest

(14)

**[50]**

**QUESTION 5**5.1 5.1.1 **Explain the *theory of evolution*.**

- The theory proposes that all life evolved from primitive forms and continues to adapt and evolve
- All humans evolved from a common ancestor that is apes.
- Species contain a great variety of minor differences
- In the fight for survival, better-adapted variations will survive, while those who are not fit will struggle to survive
- This applies to change in human beings as well
- In the fight for survival, humans adapted and gradually changed from apes to human beings
- The process of change and adaptation occurs over a very long period
- Science offers no explanation of creation as part of a divine plan (10)

5.1.2 **Discuss the response of ONE Middle Eastern religion to Darwin's theory.****Example 1: Islam / Christianity / Judaism**

- Islam teaches that Allah is the creator of all that is in heaven and on earth
- The first human was Adam, whom God made from clay
- Allah breathed his spirit into Adam, and he came to life
- Eve (Hawwa) was then created from Adam's rib
- Humans were given the highest status of all Allah's creation
- They originally lived in Paradise/Garden of Eden
- Humans were created so that they may worship Allah
- According to the theory of evolution, humans were not created perfect
- Like all other species, humans gradually evolved (changed their form) and became more complex by developing along the path of successful variation
- Darwin believed that humans have no higher status but, in the fight for survival, they adapted better and were favoured, while those that did not, became extinct
- Both the world and its species change over time
- It is thus clear that Islam rejects the notion that Man is just another animal that evolved from apes (12)

5.2 Choose ONE religion and discuss its central teachings under the following headings:

5.2.1 The nature of divinity

**Example 1: African Traditional Religion**

- God created humans to live as a community Humans were given principles and values so that they would always live in harmony
- Most of the teachings and practices that make up the ATR are concerned with harmony and good relationship with family/clan, community, ancestors, natural world and God
- The individual cannot grow/develop without the community
- The individual derives the meaning of life from the community which is the source
- Individual security is attained through the construction of the community

**Example 2: Islam**

- Islam believes in a universal God called Allah
- Belief in the oneness of Allah is the foundation of Islam
- Allah has other titles, which reflect His attributes
- He is the Creator (Khaliq) and Originator (Badi) of the universe, continuing to create new forms of life and sustaining all of creation
- Human beings must affirm and acknowledge the existence of Allah and live by His divine will
- The Muslim understanding of divinity is shaped essentially by the Qur'an

**Example 3: Judaism**

- They believe in the existence of a Supreme Being called Yahweh.
- God is the Creator of the universe.
- God revealed Himself to the forefathers and prophets.
- God is a spiritual being, but has the attributes of man.
- He is eternally present, through history and beyond.
- God continuously creates, judges, redeems, and has a personal involvement in human life.

**Example 4: Buddhism**

- Most forms of Buddhism accept that there are beings who are more powerful and who live longer than humans
- They may be referred to as 'gods'
- The core Buddhist teaching that everything is impermanent implies that even the gods in Buddhism are not immortal
- They may live for millions of years, but eventually will die and be reborn
- They did not create the universe, for they themselves are part of it
- Buddhists may pray to a local god, but they do not believe that the god can help them become enlightened

**Example 5: Hinduism**

- Vedas teach that although there are many different gods and goddesses in the universe, they are all manifestations of the same divine power.
- This power is referred to as Brahman – Brahman is not a supreme being or deity
- Brahman is the divine power that makes up the entire universe
- It is the 'World Soul' that exists everywhere, and everything is part of it
- Brahman is an impersonal power that cannot be described or known by humans unless, until they attain spiritual liberation (moksha)

**Example 6: Christianity**

- Christians believe in the existence of the supreme and divine being known as God
- God manifests himself in three persons:
  - God the Father, creator of the universe
  - God the Son, the Saviour and Liberator of humanity
  - God the Holy Spirit, the Counsellor and advocate of Christians
- Christians believe in the existence of the supreme and divine being known as God

**Example 7: Baha'i faith**

- God is the creator of the universe and is infinitely exalted above his creation
- Human beings do not have the capacity to fully understand God's unknowable essence
- They can see the signs of God's power and qualities in creation
- God is not limited to or defined solely by his or her creation
- Neither is God limited in any way by the qualities of his creation
- Both the spiritual and the physical creations are creations of the same God

**Example 8: Taoism**

- In Taoism all there is, is the universe and so all there is, is divine
- The workings of the universe are divine
- Taoists suggest that the Tao cannot be described
- The things that are seen and touched are 'being'
- Unlimited divine is described as 'non-being'
- The non-being is the starting point of everything
- According to the Taoists everything in creation consists of two kinds of forces: the yang is active, light, forceful, and male, and the yin is passive, dark, and female

(10)

### 5.2.2 Nature of the world

#### Example 1: African Traditional Religion

- For the Indigenous traditional African the idea of the world includes all that exists
- The world is understood as the cosmos
- All that exists is looked upon as one living wholeness manifesting itself in a variety of faces and phases.
- Life is understood as a perpetual exchange of interconnected forces among and between all beings.
- Life is regarded as a force that is forever in motion
- The principle of motion underlies the African understanding of life as a perpetual exchange of forces
- According to this understanding the cosmos or the universe does not have a centre hence some philosophers speak to the African understanding of life as **Vitalogy**
- If the understanding of life follows this notion, there is a consequence which says that it is difficult to be sure what life is
- The second consequence is that the future is understood as containing an element of secrecy which makes it impossible to predict it with precision and certainty
- The uncertainty compels human beings and other living beings to seek certainty, which simply means seeking for security

#### Example 2: Islam

- According to the Qur'an Allah created the universe in six phases/stages for the benefit of humanity
- Allah provides the energy and everything the universe needs for survival and growth
- According to Islam the existence of the universe is not accidental, and life is not purposeless, but planned and purposeful.
- Plant and animal species in the world have a role in the ecosystem
- New forms of life are continuously created and function according to the established laws
- The universe is not eternal but has a fixed timespan
- Allah alone is eternal
- There is also a belief of the Day of Judgement, Day of Resurrection, Day of Recompense which is when the world will cease to exist

**Example 3: Judaism**

- According to Judaism there is only one God who is powerful and all-knowing
- The Jews believe that because they are God's chosen people – they have a personal relationship with him
- God is a fatherlike figure who is both their creator and protector
- God is seen as so great that humans will never be able to completely know and understand him.
- God is so holy that it is forbidden even to speak his name, that is why the Hebrew name of God is never said or written.

**Example 4: Buddhism**

- This world is one of millions of worlds. In each, a Buddha will rediscover the true nature of reality
- Buddhism flourishes for thousands of years, and eventually dies out
- Near its demise, a young man will try to understand the reasons for human suffering and how to eliminate it
- His discovery makes him the new Buddha
- The cycle then repeats itself
- Buddhism flourishes and declines, and then the next Buddha arises

**Example 5: Christianity**

- According to Christianity, the world was created for the pleasure of humanity
- God created the earth and allowed humans to use the resources of the Garden of Eden
- Humans, marine, animal and plant lives all belong to God
- It is God who oversees the weather, climate, time, and seasons of the year.
- God the Father sent his Son, Jesus, into the world
- After ascending into heaven, the Son then sent the Holy Spirit
- The Holy Spirit in turn sent the Church into the world to continue God's missionary work

(10)

**Example 6: Baha'i faith**

- According to the Baha'i faith, God created the universe and humanity is supreme among its creatures
- Also, according to the Baha'i faith, the world originally had no national boundaries instead people divided the world into different territories and countries. In reality, the world is one place, the home of all humankind
- Human beings with their rational powers can conquer the world.
- The world is a transitory place. The world and what is in it is not worthy of attachment, and humans have been continually reminded that they must detach themselves from things of this world
- Living in this world people are given a chance to develop virtues, build character, and advance spiritually

**5.2.3 Life after death****Example 1: Hinduism**

- The soul is more important than the physical self
- The body will die, but he who dwells within the body is said to be deathless. (Bhagavad Gita)
- The soul goes through a series of births and deaths. This process is fuelled by desires
- The quest for worldly desires gives rise to rebirth
- Just as the person casts off worn-out garments and puts on others that are new, so does the soul cast off worn-out bodies and enter others that are new
- The soul is driven from birth to death and from death to birth in a continuous cycle called *samsara*
- The soul never perishes. Eventually, the soul reaches knowledge of Brahman, the Supreme Being and so destroys its karmas.
- The soul then does not need to be re-born into another body, because it realises its eternal nature
- This is encapsulated in the Law of Karma
- Living a good life will result in better rebirths, eventually becoming one with God
- Each person's life is divided into four stages, or *ashrams*
- A person progresses to the final stage of renouncing life

**Example 2: Christianity**

- According to Christians evil cannot be completely overcome if sin prevails
- After sin entered the world there is a constant struggle between evil and good, darkness and light, and Satan and God
- Christians believe that eventually, God will triumph over Satan
- The books of Daniel and Revelation tell us about the catastrophic end of this world and the beginning of a new one
- They believe that the overcoming of evil and the certainty of good triumph over evil have been made possible by the birth, death, and resurrection from the death of Jesus
- Jesus teaches that evil cannot be overcome by evil but by good

**Example 3: Taoism**

- According to the Taoists, death is simply a process of transformation in which you go from one form to another
- In this religion, the faithful are encouraged not to fear death and that they should make fun of it
- The Taoists do not mind death, they are taught to appreciate it
- Death is also understood as a stage in the ongoing process of transformation that characterises the universe
- The belief is that one does not need life after death or the kind of heaven

**Example 4: Buddhism**

- For unenlightened beings, many rebirths occur
- Enlightened beings like Buddhas can see the futility of the process and step out of the cycle
- This is referred to as 'nirvana'
- Most Buddhists put off the search for nirvana for numerous lifetimes as they are engaged in worldly matters
- Buddhists do not strive for life after death. They desire nirvana
- Life after death is seen as the normal course of events
- On attaining enlightenment, a Buddhist sees that individuality is an illusion, and life after death is unworthy of serious attention

**Example 5: Islam**

- Those who believed in Allah and fulfilled their obligations to the Creator and creation, will enter Paradise
- They will dwell forever in this place, and this will be their destination
- Those who denied Allah will be sent to Hell, to be tormented forever
- According to Islam, life does not end with death
- The dead enter a state of being called *barzakh*, which lasts until Judgement Day
- On Judgement Day, all people will be resurrected and called to account for their deeds before Allah

**Example 6: African Traditional Religion**

- When a human being dies, he/she departs to the land of the spirits
- This world after death is understood as a place; a space that is occupied by the living dead
- From this world they keep watch over the deeds of the living and protect or punish them and sometimes appear to them
- Death takes them away from planet earth but does not take away life from them

**Example 7: Judaism**

- The thirteen articles of faith say that in the time of the Mashiach, there will be a resurrection of the dead
- Judaism maintains that when people die, their souls move on to another existence
- The Torah does not discuss this world but just hints at it
- The oral tradition expands on the understanding of this world yet a number of mysteries as to the exact details remain
- It is also stated in their belief that a person attains a place or portion in the world by performing good deeds
- The belief in the world to come is based on the belief that the soul returns to a place of spiritual closeness to its source i.e., from God (8)

**Example 8: Baha'i faith**

- According to this religion the human soul is created by God and becomes associated with the body at the time of conception and continues to live beyond physical death
- It is the same process that the child in a womb prepares for life after birth by developing hands, legs, and other physical elements – people develop spiritual qualities in this life in preparation for the life beyond their passing
- Heaven and hell are symbolic of the soul's relationship to God
- Nearness to God results in good deeds and gives infinite joy (heaven), while remoteness from God leads to evil and suffering (hell)
- The condition of the soul after death depends on the spiritual qualities or attributes a person attains during this earthly life
- A faithful soul will attain a sublime position and eternal happiness, but unfaithful soul will recognise his/her loss and be consumed in remorse
- None of us know our own end therefore we should forgive others and not feel superior towards them
- Prayers and devotions by the loved ones in this world can affect the state of departed souls and help their progress

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TOTAL: 150