



Comparative Study of Major Religions

CSS COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION 2023 — FULLY SOLVED

For Recruitment to Posts in BS-17

Under the Federal Government of Pakistan

(For Non-Muslim Candidates)

Part-II — All Seven Questions Solved with Model Answers

Note: This document only contains Part-II (subjective) questions, as no Part-I MCQs were present in the source paper supplied. All original question wording has been preserved exactly as printed in the official paper. Model answers below are written to CSS/PMS examination standard (20 marks each) and are intended as a study aid, not verbatim official answer keys.

Q. No. 2

Explain in detail the significance of the Buddhist Sangha Council as well as the Panja and Dasa Silas (Ethical Teachings). (20)

Introduction

Buddhism, founded by Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha) in the 6th century BCE, developed both an institutional structure for preserving the faith — the Sangha and its Councils — and a code of personal ethics expressed through the Panchasila (Five Precepts) and Dasasila (Ten Precepts). Together these two elements represent the communal and moral foundations of the religion.

The Buddhist Sangha Councils

The Sangha is the monastic community of monks (bhikkhus) and nuns (bhikkhunis) established by the Buddha to preserve and transmit his teachings (Dhamma) and discipline (Vinaya). After the Buddha's death (Parinirvana), the Sangha convened a series of Councils to prevent doctrinal disputes and ensure the accurate transmission of his teachings.

- **First Council (Rajagriha, c. 483 BCE):** Held shortly after the Buddha's death under the patronage of King Ajatashatru. Ananda recited the Buddha's discourses (Sutta Pitaka) from memory, while Upali recited the monastic rules (Vinaya Pitaka). This council established the earliest oral canon.
- **Second Council (Vaishali, c. 383 BCE):** Convened roughly a century later to resolve disputes over relaxation of monastic discipline by monks of Vaishali. This council is significant because the disagreements that arose here are seen as the seed of the later split between Theravada and Mahayana traditions.
- **Third Council (Pataliputra, c. 250 BCE):** Held under Emperor Ashoka to purify the Sangha of heretical and opportunistic monks, and to formally close the Abhidhamma Pitaka, completing the Tripitaka (the "Three Baskets" — the Buddhist canon). Ashoka also despatched missionaries abroad after this council, spreading Buddhism to Sri Lanka and Central Asia.
- **Fourth Council (Kashmir/Sri Lanka, dates vary by tradition):** Associated with the compilation of extensive commentaries and, in the Theravada tradition, the first committing of the Pali Canon to writing in Sri Lanka to prevent loss through oral transmission.

The significance of these councils lies in their role as safeguards of doctrinal unity: they preserved the authenticity of the Buddha's teaching, resolved internal disputes, standardised monastic discipline, and enabled Buddhism's transformation from a regional movement into a canonised world religion capable of missionary expansion.

Panchasila — The Five Precepts

The Panchasila constitute the minimum ethical code binding on every lay Buddhist. They are undertakings rather than commandments, voluntarily accepted as training rules:

1. Abstain from killing any living being (Ahimsa).
2. Abstain from taking what is not given (theft).
3. Abstain from sexual misconduct.
4. Abstain from false speech (lying).
5. Abstain from intoxicants that cloud the mind.

Dasasila — The Ten Precepts

The Dasasila extend the lay code into a stricter monastic discipline observed by novice monks and nuns, and by the laity on special observance days. In addition to the five precepts above (with the third reformulated as abstention from all sexual activity), they add:

1. Abstain from eating at forbidden times (after noon).
2. Abstain from dancing, singing, music, and unseemly entertainment.
3. Abstain from beautifying the body with garlands, perfumes, and ornaments.

4. Abstain from using high or luxurious seats and beds.
5. Abstain from accepting gold and silver (money).

Significance of the Ethical Code

The Silas operationalise the Buddha's Eightfold Path, translating the abstract goal of liberation from suffering (Nirvana) into concrete daily conduct. They cultivate restraint (sila), which the tradition holds as the necessary foundation for meditative concentration (samadhi) and wisdom (panna). The graduated structure — five precepts for laity, ten for renunciants — reflects Buddhism's practical accommodation of different levels of spiritual commitment while keeping the entire community oriented toward the same ethical and soteriological goal.

Conclusion

The Sangha Councils and the Panchasila/Dasasila together illustrate how Buddhism institutionalised both doctrine and ethics. The Councils secured textual and communal continuity, while the precepts gave ordinary believers and monastics alike a practical path of moral discipline central to the Buddhist worldview.

Q. No. 3

Describe the Christian doctrines in detail with the reforming services of St. Paul in these doctrines.

(20)

Introduction

Christianity centres on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, understood by believers as the Son of God and the Messiah. Its doctrinal core developed rapidly in the first century CE, and no figure shaped its theological expansion beyond its Jewish origins more decisively than St. Paul (Saul of Tarsus).

Core Christian Doctrines

- **The Trinity:** God exists as three persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — united in one divine essence.
- **Incarnation:** Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, born of the Virgin Mary.
- **Original Sin:** All humanity inherits a sinful nature through the fall of Adam and Eve.
- **Atonement and Redemption:** Christ's crucifixion atones for human sin, reconciling humanity with God.
- **Resurrection:** Christ's rising from the dead on the third day, promising eternal life to believers.
- **Salvation by Faith and Grace:** Justification before God comes through faith in Christ rather than through the works of the Mosaic Law alone.
- **The Church as the Body of Christ:** The community of believers united under Christ's headship.
- **Second Coming and Final Judgement:** Christ will return to judge the living and the dead.

St. Paul's Reforming Contribution

Paul, originally a persecutor of the early Church, converted after a vision of Christ on the road to Damascus and became Christianity's most influential missionary and theologian. His reforming services can be summarised as follows:

- **Universalising the Gospel:** Paul argued that faith in Christ, not adherence to Jewish ritual law (circumcision, dietary laws), was the basis of salvation. This opened Christianity to Gentile (non-Jewish) converts and transformed it from a Jewish sect into a universal religion.
- **Doctrine of Justification by Faith:** In his epistles, especially Romans and Galatians, Paul systematised the idea that righteousness before God is granted through faith in Christ's atoning death, not through observance of the Law — a doctrine that became foundational to later Christian theology, including the Protestant Reformation centuries later.
- **Christology:** Paul articulated a high theology of Christ's pre-existence, divine sonship, and cosmic significance, contributing directly to the doctrine of the Incarnation and Trinity as later formalised in Church councils.
- **Ecclesiology:** He described the Church as the "Body of Christ," giving the scattered early Christian communities a unifying theological identity and organisational vision.
- **Missionary Expansion:** Through his journeys across Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome, and his correspondence (the Pauline Epistles, forming a large portion of the New Testament), Paul institutionalised Christian communities, established church governance, and left the doctrinal letters that became core scripture.
- **Ethical Reformulation:** Paul reoriented Christian ethics around love, grace, and the inner transformation of the believer ("new creation in Christ") rather than external legal observance.

Conclusion

Christian doctrine as it exists today — Trinitarian, Christ-centred, and salvation-by-grace — owes its systematic articulation substantially to St. Paul. His reforms detached the new faith from exclusive Jewish ethnic identity and gave it the theological and organisational scaffolding necessary to grow into a world religion.

Q. No. 4

Describe in detail the sacred literature of Hinduism.

(20)

Introduction

Hindu sacred literature is vast and layered, spanning roughly three millennia. It is traditionally divided into two broad categories: Shruti ("that which is heard" — considered divinely revealed) and Smriti ("that which is remembered" — traditionally composed but authoritative).

Shruti Literature

Text	Content / Significance
The Four Vedas (Rig, Sama, Yajur, Atharva)	Oldest scriptures; hymns, rituals, and sacrificial formulas. The Rigveda is the oldest, containing hymns to deities like Agni and Indra.
Brahmanas	Prose commentaries explaining ritual and sacrificial procedure attached to each Veda.
Aranyakas	"Forest texts" bridging ritual and philosophy, meant for ascetics and hermits.
Upanishads	Philosophical treatises (over 200, with about 13 principal ones) exploring Brahman (ultimate reality), Atman (self), karma, and moksha (liberation). They form the basis of Vedanta philosophy.

Smriti Literature

- **The Two Great Epics (Itihasas):** The Ramayana (attributed to Valmiki), narrating Prince Rama's life and moral struggles; and the Mahabharata (attributed to Vyasa), the world's longest epic poem, containing the Bhagavad Gita — Krishna's philosophical dialogue with Arjuna on duty (dharma), action, and devotion.
- **The Puranas:** Eighteen major texts narrating cosmology, mythology, genealogies of gods and kings, and devotional theology centred on deities such as Vishnu, Shiva, and Devi.
- **Dharmashastras:** Legal and ethical codes, the most famous being the Manusmriti, prescribing social duties, caste obligations, and personal conduct.
- **Vedangas:** Six auxiliary disciplines (phonetics, grammar, meter, etymology, astronomy, ritual) that support correct recitation and interpretation of the Vedas.
- **Darshanas (Philosophical Schools):** Systematic treatises of the six orthodox schools — Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, and Vedanta.
- **Agamas and Tantras:** Sectarian scriptures guiding temple worship, ritual, and yogic practice within Shaiva, Vaishnava, and Shakta traditions.

Significance

This layered literature moves from ritual hymn (Vedas) to philosophical inquiry (Upanishads) to narrative and devotional theology (Epics, Puranas) to law and practice (Dharmashastras, Agamas). It allows Hinduism to accommodate diverse paths — ritual, philosophical, devotional, and ethical — under a single, though highly pluralistic, religious tradition.

Conclusion

The sacred literature of Hinduism is not a single closed canon but an evolving corpus, reflecting the religion's characteristic diversity and its capacity to integrate ritual, metaphysics, mythology, and law into one continuous tradition.

Q. No. 5

Explain the caste system of Hinduism and the different stages of life (ashram).

(20)

Introduction

Traditional Hindu social organisation rests on two interlocking frameworks: the Varna (caste) system, which structures society horizontally by occupation and duty, and the Ashrama system, which structures an individual's life vertically through four successive stages.

The Varna (Caste) System

According to the Purusha Sukta hymn of the Rigveda, society emerged from the body of the cosmic being Purusha, giving rise to four varnas:

- **Brahmins:** Priests, teachers, and scholars, responsible for ritual and the transmission of sacred knowledge.
- **Kshatriyas:** Rulers, warriors, and administrators, responsible for governance and protection.
- **Vaishyas:** Merchants, traders, farmers, and artisans, responsible for commerce and production.
- **Shudras:** Labourers and service providers, responsible for supporting the other three varnas.

Below or outside this fourfold structure historically stood groups later termed "untouchables" (now widely known as Dalits), who performed occupations considered ritually impure. Over centuries the varna framework hardened into thousands of hereditary sub-castes (jatis), determining marriage, occupation, and social interaction. The system was rationalised through the doctrines of karma and dharma — one's caste position reflecting past-life conduct and one's present caste duty. Modern India constitutionally abolishes caste-based discrimination and untouchability, and caste today functions very differently from its classical scriptural description, though its social legacy persists.

The Ashrama System — Four Stages of Life

The Ashrama system prescribes an ideal life course for (traditionally) upper-caste males, structured around dharma (duty), artha (livelihood), kama (pleasure), and moksha (liberation):

1. **Brahmacharya (Student stage):** From childhood after initiation (upanayana) to roughly age 25, devoted to celibate study under a guru, learning the Vedas and disciplined living.
2. **Grihastha (Householder stage):** Marriage, raising a family, pursuing a livelihood, and fulfilling social and religious obligations. This stage is considered the economic and social backbone that sustains the other three ashramas.
3. **Vanaprastha (Forest-dweller/Retirement stage):** Gradual withdrawal from worldly responsibility once one's children are grown, often accompanied by one's spouse, spent in simpler living and increasing spiritual focus.
4. **Sannyasa (Renunciation stage):** Complete renunciation of worldly ties and possessions, wandering asceticism, and single-minded pursuit of moksha (liberation from the cycle of rebirth).

Interrelation of the Two Systems

While the varna system defines one's social and occupational role, the ashrama system defines one's personal spiritual trajectory through time. Together they formed what classical Hindu texts call varnashrama dharma — the integrated social-religious order meant to balance worldly duty with the ultimate goal of liberation.

Conclusion

The caste and ashrama systems represent Hinduism's attempt to organise both society and the individual life-cycle around dharma. While caste has been a source of significant social inequality and reform movements (from the Bhakti saints to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar) have long challenged it, the ashrama framework continues to inform ideals of life-stage responsibility within Hindu tradition.

Q. No. 6

Give an explanation of the doctrine of atonement, giving a brief explanation of the doctrines of Christianity.

(20)

Introduction

The doctrine of Atonement stands at the theological centre of Christianity, explaining how humanity, separated from God by sin, is reconciled to Him through Jesus Christ.

The Doctrine of Atonement

"Atonement" (at-one-ment) refers to the reconciliation between God and humanity accomplished through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ. Christian theology explains this reconciliation through several interpretive models:

- **Sacrificial/Substitutionary model:** Christ's death on the cross is understood as a sacrifice that substitutes for the punishment human sin deserves, satisfying divine justice.
- **Ransom model:** Christ's death is seen as a ransom paid to free humanity from bondage to sin and death.
- **Moral Influence model:** Christ's sacrificial love is seen as transforming believers morally and spiritually, inspiring repentance and love in return.
- **Christus Victor model:** Christ's death and resurrection are viewed as a cosmic victory over sin, death, and evil.

Central to all models is the belief that, since Adam's Fall introduced Original Sin into human nature, humanity could not reconcile itself to God through its own effort; only Christ's voluntary self-sacrifice — as both fully divine and fully human — could bridge this gap. His resurrection is understood as God's vindication of this sacrifice and the guarantee of eternal life for believers.

Brief Overview of Christian Doctrines

- **Monotheism/Trinity:** One God existing eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- **Incarnation:** God became man in the person of Jesus Christ.
- **Original Sin:** Humanity's inherited sinful condition from Adam's disobedience.
- **Grace and Faith:** Salvation is a gift of God's grace, received through faith rather than earned by works alone.
- **Sacraments:** Rites such as Baptism and the Eucharist (Holy Communion) that mediate God's grace to believers.
- **Resurrection and Eternal Life:** Belief in bodily resurrection and everlasting life for the faithful.
- **Second Coming:** Christ's promised return to judge and renew creation.

Conclusion

The doctrine of Atonement is the theological hinge connecting Christianity's account of human sinfulness with its promise of salvation. It gives coherence to the wider doctrinal system — Trinity, Incarnation, grace, and resurrection — all of which explain why and how reconciliation between God and humanity became possible through Christ.

Q. No. 7

Introduce Judaism and discuss their Doctrine (Thirteen Principles of Moses Bin Mammon).

(20)

Note on the source text: the name is rendered in the original paper as "Moses Bin Mammon." The scholar being referred to is **Moses ben Maimon**, universally known as **Maimonides** (also called "Rambam"), the 12th-century Jewish philosopher who formulated the Thirteen Principles of Faith. The answer below uses his correct name while keeping the question exactly as printed.

Introduction to Judaism

Judaism is the monotheistic religion of the Jewish people, tracing its origin to the covenant between God (YHWH) and Abraham, later renewed with Moses at Mount Sinai. Its foundational scripture is the Tanakh (comprising the Torah, Nevi'im/Prophets, and Ketuvim/Writings), supplemented by the Talmud, the vast rabbinic commentary on Jewish law (Halakha) and ethics. Judaism emphasises strict monotheism, covenantal relationship with God, adherence to the Torah's commandments (mitzvot), and the historical narrative of the Jewish people as a chosen people bound to serve as a moral example.

Maimonides and the Thirteen Principles of Faith

Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides, 1138–1204), a Spanish-born Jewish philosopher and legal scholar, formulated the Thirteen Principles (Ikkarim) in his commentary on the Mishnah as a systematic creed for Judaism, which had not previously possessed a formal, codified statement of belief. The principles are:

1. God exists and is the Creator of all things.
2. God is absolutely One, indivisible.
3. God is incorporeal, without physical form.
4. God is eternal, without beginning or end.
5. Prayer and worship are to be directed to God alone, with no intermediary.
6. The words of the Prophets are true.
7. Moses was the greatest of the prophets, and his prophecy is uniquely authoritative.
8. The Torah, both Written and Oral, was given to Moses by God.
9. The Torah is immutable and will not be replaced or altered.
10. God knows the deeds and thoughts of every human being.
11. God rewards those who observe His commandments and punishes those who transgress them.
12. The Messiah will come, though his arrival may be delayed.
13. The dead will be resurrected.

Significance of the Principles

These principles gave Judaism, for the first time, a systematic and portable statement of core belief comparable to creeds in other Abrahamic religions. They affirmed strict monotheism against philosophical and theological challenges of the medieval period, established the authority and finality of Mosaic revelation, and articulated eschatological hope through belief in the Messiah and resurrection. Though not universally binding in the same way a church creed might be, the Thirteen Principles became deeply influential and are recited liturgically in a poetic form (Yigdal) in traditional Jewish worship.

Conclusion

Judaism's doctrinal core — as distilled by Maimonides — centres on the absolute unity and incorporeality of God, the authority of Mosaic revelation and the Torah, divine justice, and messianic hope. These Thirteen Principles remain the most widely recognised systematic expression of Jewish belief.

Q. No. 8

Explain in detail any one of the following:

(i) Zionism: History and Creeds.

(ii) Belief in the end of Prophethood.

(20)

As per the exam instructions, only **one** part is to be attempted. The model answer below addresses option **(i) Zionism: History and Creeds**.

Introduction

Zionism is the Jewish national movement advocating the establishment, and later the support, of a Jewish state in the historic land of Israel (Zion). It arose in the late 19th century as a response to European antisemitism and as an expression of Jewish national self-determination.

Historical Development

- **Ideological Roots:** Longstanding Jewish religious longing for return to Zion (expressed in prayer and liturgy for centuries) provided the spiritual backdrop, but modern political Zionism emerged as a secular nationalist movement.
- **Theodor Herzl and Political Zionism:** Herzl, an Austro-Hungarian Jewish journalist, is regarded as the founder of modern political Zionism. His 1896 pamphlet "Der Judenstaat" ("The Jewish State") argued that antisemitism made Jewish assimilation in Europe impossible and that Jews required their own sovereign state.
- **First Zionist Congress (1897, Basel):** Herzl convened this congress, which founded the World Zionist Organization and adopted the Basel Program, formally calling for "a home for the Jewish people in Palestine secured by public law."
- **Balfour Declaration (1917):** The British government declared support for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people," significantly advancing the movement's political standing during British Mandate rule over Palestine.
- **Jewish Immigration (Aliyah):** Successive waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine through the early 20th century, accelerated by European antisemitism and, decisively, the Holocaust, built the demographic and institutional base for statehood.
- **Establishment of Israel (1948):** The State of Israel was declared following the United Nations Partition Plan of 1947, achieving the movement's central political objective. This is one of the most contested and consequential events of 20th-century history, and remains central to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Creeds and Ideological Strands within Zionism

- **Political Zionism (Herzl):** Focused on diplomatic and legal means to secure an internationally recognised Jewish state.
- **Cultural/Spiritual Zionism (Ahad Ha'am):** Emphasised the revival of Hebrew language and Jewish culture as a "spiritual centre," with less emphasis on immediate statehood.
- **Labour/Socialist Zionism:** Combined Jewish nationalism with socialist principles, promoting collective agricultural settlement (the kibbutz movement) as the means of building the homeland.
- **Religious Zionism:** Integrated traditional religious belief in the land's sanctity with the political project of statehood, viewing the return to Zion as having theological significance.
- **Revisionist Zionism (Jabotinsky):** Advocated a more assertive, militarily-oriented nationalism and maximalist territorial claims.

Conclusion

Zionism evolved from a 19th-century response to European antisemitism into the dominant political ideology behind the founding of the State of Israel in 1948. Its various ideological strands — political, cultural, socialist, and religious — reflect the movement's internal diversity, even as they converged on the shared goal of Jewish national self-determination in the land of Israel.