



GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES A 8062/14

Paper 1: Hinduism

Mark scheme

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Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject examiners. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all examiners participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each examiner analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

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Mark Schemes for GCSE Religious Studies

This paper requires expert markers who have wide knowledge and understanding of the particular subject content of the Specification. With the exception of the multiple-choice question, many of the questions asked have many different credible answers and students are able to bring to their answers their own knowledge, understanding and background. They will offer details, arguments and evidence which the examiner, with the help of the mark scheme, will need to judge as credible or not. It is therefore important that the examiner has a good understanding of the principles and spirit of the mark scheme in order to be fair and consistent when marking students' answers. The Content included is designed to be as helpful as possible but in many cases is not exhaustive. So Content sections are introduced by the sentence:

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

this is to remind examiners that there may well be additional correct answers which, with their expertise, they will be able to allow. With all questions if an examiner has any doubt about answers being credit worthy they should consult their team leader.

Structure

The mark scheme for each question shows:

- The question; Each question is printed in full before its target and mark scheme. It is always important that examiners remind themselves of the exact question being asked. In particular, they will need to do this in instances where the answer appears to be 'straying' from the question set or perhaps offers a valid alternative not included in the mark scheme
- Target; The target provides the specific assessment objective which the question is testing. It reminds examiners of the skills the question is designed to test, eg knowledge and understanding, evaluation
- The total marks available for the question and if Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar is assessed
- The typical answer(s) or content which are expected
- Generic instructions related to the question target of how to award marks (i.e. levels of response grid).

Themes papers guidance (Specification A & Short Course)

In questions where students may choose religions from which to illustrate their answer, there may be some general Content, ie credible comments which students will make which could be applied to any religion or perhaps to a secular viewpoint as well. Where these are appropriate they are usually given first. The Mark Scheme will also include, under separate headings, Content sections for each of the six religions allowed within the Specifications.

General Guidance

.../. means that these are acceptable alternative answers in the mark scheme, eg Guru Har Krishan / Guru Tegh Bahadur / Guru Gobind Singh.

Answers may include specialist terms, in Hebrew or Arabic for example. If this is the case, the mark scheme will usually indicate this by providing in brackets the English as well, eg 'Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement)'. In such questions, answers will be credited whether provided in the original language or in English.

Some mark schemes use bullet points to separate content. Each bullet point refers to a different possible 'belief' or 'teaching' or 'way', depending on the question. Obliques (.../. used within the bullet point indicate different ways in which the point may be expressed and points which may be made to give the further detail or development needed for the second mark.

Where a student has crossed out a complete answer, it should be marked if it remains legible, unless an alternative is provided in which case only the alternative should be marked. When part of an answer is crossed out, then only what remains should be considered.

In questions where credit can be given to the development of a point, those developments can take the form of:

- Example or evidence
- Reference to different views
- Detailed information.

1 mark multiple choice questions

Such questions have four alternatives and the one correct answer will be given together with the correct letter, eg 'Answer: D Trinity'.

2 mark short answer questions

The principle here is provided in the mark scheme: 'One mark for each of two correct points.' Students may give **more than** the two answers required by the question. In such instances,

- **Award for the first two answers only, wherever they appear.**
- If a student gives more than one answer on the first line and another answer / other answers on the second line, the 'first two answers' will be the **first two** on the first line and **only these two** should be considered for marks. Other answers must be ignored.
- If on the first line the first two answers given are correct, award two marks, regardless of what is written elsewhere in the answer.
- If the first two answers can only be awarded one mark yet there is a third answer that is correct, this correct third answer must be ignored and no mark given for it.
- However, if the student gives some **elaboration after the first answer**, which is clearly developing their first answer, (which they are not required to do), do not consider this elaboration to be their second answer (unless the elaboration happens to contain a second correct answer to the question asked), regardless of whether there are other answers provided. In this case, the second answer also, if correct, may be credited for the second mark

4 and 5 mark answer questions

Examiners should take care to note the target of the question. Clear information is provided for these types of question on how to award marking points. Examiners should carefully read the additional instructions provided for each type of question (eg for influence questions the final sentence in the general guidance box reminds the examiner that the second mark (detailed explanation) awarded in each case must show clear 'influence').

12 mark answer questions

The 12 mark questions test Evaluation skills (AO2). The mark scheme for these answers is based on Levels of Response marking in which the examiner is required to make a judgement on the completed answer taken as a whole.

Level of response marking instructions

In GCSE Religious Studies, differentiation is largely achieved by outcome on the basis of students' responses. To facilitate this, level of response marking has been devised for many questions.

Level of response marking requires a quite different approach from the examiner than the traditional 'point for point' marking. It is essential that the **whole response is read** and then **allocated to the level** it best fits.

If a student demonstrates knowledge, understanding and/or evaluation at a certain level, he/she must be credited at that level. **Length** of response or **literary ability** should **not be confused with genuine religious studies skills**. For example, a short answer which shows a high level of conceptual ability must be credited at that level. (If there is a band of marks allocated to a level, discrimination should be made with reference to the development of the answer.)

Examiners should **refer to the stated assessment target** objective of a question (see mark scheme) when there is any doubt as to the relevance of a student's response.

Level of response mark schemes include either **examples** of possible students' responses or **material** which they might use. These are intended as a **guide** only. It is anticipated that students will produce a wide range of responses to each question.

It is a feature of levels of response mark schemes that examiners are prepared to reward fully responses which are obviously valid and of high ability but do not conform exactly to the requirements of a particular level. If examiners have any doubt about what level to award a response, they should consult their team leader.

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before examiners apply the mark scheme to a student's answer they should read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. They should then apply the mark scheme. It may be necessary to read the answer more than once to be sure of assigning the correct Level.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG)

Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be assessed in 12-mark questions.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) will be assessed against the following criteria:

Level	Performance descriptor	Marks awarded
High performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall • Learners use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate 	3
Intermediate performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with general control of meaning overall • Learners use a good range of specialist terms as appropriate 	2
Threshold performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy • Learners use rules of grammar with some control of meaning and any errors do not significantly hinder meaning overall • Learners use a limited range of specialist terms as appropriate 	1
No marks awarded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learner writes nothing • The learner's response does not relate to the question • The learner's achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning 	0

0 1

Hinduism: Beliefs

0 1 . 1

Which one of the following does not affect a person's karma?

[1 mark]

- A Their words**
- B Their actions**
- C Their thoughts**
- D Their appearance**

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority

Answer: **D** Their appearance

0 1 . 2

Give two forms of the Dharma in Hinduism.

[2 marks]

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority

One mark for each of two correct points.

If students provide more than two responses only the first two responses should be considered for marking.

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

Sanatanadharma (eternal dharma); following absolute duties which cover everyone, regardless of caste/class/sect etc / Varnashramadharma (responsibilities a Hindu should follow based on caste and stage of life; natural classifications that appear in all human societies based on innate skills aptitudes, and attitudes), etc.

0 1 . 3 Explain two ways in which believing that Brahman can be shown in form (Saguna) influences Hindus today.

[4 marks]

Target: AO1:2 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including influence on individuals, communities and societies

First way

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 1 mark
Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 2 marks

Second way

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 1 mark
Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 2 marks

To be a ‘detailed explanation’ the ‘influence’ of the way must be included.

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

- Being able to visualise Brahman, allows them to make murtis / which facilitate worship / this is what anyone can see in every temple or shrine.
- Gives a physical representation of Brahman / which is easier for most people to comprehend than abstract ideas (as Nirguna Brahman) / so strengthening faith.
- Seeing a physical form encourages belief that Brahman is real / so their faith has solid foundations / giving comfort and confidence in its teachings and ways.
- Allows them to simplify Brahman by focusing on an attribute / only Saguna Brahman can have attributes.
- Gives understanding of the Ultimate Reality through the personification of God / so by understanding Saguna Brahman they can come to understand Nirguna Brahman.
- Makes Brahman immanent / as humans can understand something of God in their own terms.
- Makes a person see the world as an extension of Brahman / Brahman is the ‘artist of the world’ / so they look after it / ‘Brahman is all’ (Upanishads).
- Allows a person to see that they themselves can be Brahman / that Brahman is within them or part of them / also Brahman is within others / so Hindus will be compassionate to others.
- Makes them feel ‘loved’ / as they can build a relationship with Saguna Brahman / eg Vaishnavites showing devotion to Vishnu / who has sent aid to them in the form of avatars, etc.

0 1 . 4 Explain two Hindu teachings about samsara.

Refer to sacred writings or another source of Hindu belief and teaching in your answer.

[5 marks]

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority

First teaching

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate teaching – 1 mark
Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate teaching – 2 marks

Second teaching

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate teaching – 1 mark
Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate teaching – 2 marks

Relevant and accurate reference to sacred writing or another source of Hindu belief and teaching – 1 mark

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

- Sanskrit word meaning ‘to flow through’ or ‘to wander’.
- Samsara is worldly existence, or being tied to it.
- That this cycle is inevitable / ‘As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A sober person is not bewildered by such a change’ – Bhagavad Gita.
- That this is a continuous cycle / ‘After death, the soul goes to the next world, bearing in mind the subtle impressions of its deeds, and after reaping their harvest returns again to this world of action. Thus, he who has desires continues subject to rebirth’ – Yajur Veda.
- Once the physical body dies, the atman is released as a ‘subtle body’ / this subtle body goes to a heaven (world) until the merit of its good deeds is used up / or a hell (world) to atone for (some of) its bad deeds / then is reborn in a physical body.
- That moksha is liberation from samsara / ‘he having been mortal, becomes immortal, and attains Brahman in this very body’ – Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.7.
- That births and deaths are affected by karma / good (punya) and bad (papa).
- Samsara is a creation of maya (illusion) / and knowing the Truth ends samsara / hence ignorance of true self and Brahman lead to samsara / ‘The man of self-realization knows the radiant supreme Brahman to be He on whom the world is based. And those men of discrimination who, without any worldly desire, are devoted to such go beyond the cycle of birth and death’ – Mundaka Upanishad.
- Analogy of physical body being clothes which the jiva (soul) wears in one lifetime, removed and replaced for the next lifetime / ‘As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, the soul similarly accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones’ – Bhagavad Gita 2:22, etc.

Sources of authority might include –

Bhagavad Gita 2:22 - 'As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, the soul similarly accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones.'

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad - 'He having been mortal, becomes immortal, and attains Brahman in this very body.'

Bhagavad Gita - 'As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A sober person is not bewildered by such a change.'

Yajur Veda - 'After death, the soul goes to the next world, bearing in mind the subtle impressions of its deeds, and after reaping their harvest returns again to this world of action. Thus, he who has desires continues subject to rebirth.'

Upanishads - 'The wise man chooses the path of joy; the fool chooses the path of pleasure.'

0 1 . 5 'For Hindus, love is the most important of the personal virtues.'

Evaluate this statement.

In your answer you should:

- refer to Hindu teaching
- give reasoned arguments to support this statement
- give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

[12 marks]
[Plus SPaG 3 marks]

Target: AO2 Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including significance and influence

Level	Criteria	Marks
4	A well-argued response, reasoned consideration of different points of view. Logical chains of reasoning leading to judgement(s) supported by knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information. References to religion applied to the issue.	10–12
3	Reasoned consideration of different points of view. Logical chains of reasoning that draw on knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information. Clear reference to religion.	7–9
2	Reasoned consideration of a point of view. A logical chain of reasoning drawing on knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information. OR Recognition of different points of view, each supported by relevant reasons/evidence. Maximum of Level 2 if there is no reference to religion.	4–6
1	Point of view with reason(s) stated in support.	1–3
0	Nothing worthy of credit.	0

Students may include some of the following evidence and arguments, but all relevant evidence and arguments must be credited:

Arguments in support

- Bhakti yoga is about showing love (devotion) to the deities, and is a way to achieve moksha which is the main aim for Hindus.
- Through love, Hindus show concern for others and help them, thus building good karma / 'That is the whole purpose of human existence here on earth: to benefit other people through one's life, one's possessions, one's thoughts and one's words' – Bhagavata Purana.
- Love can motivate a person to do all of the other virtues because it encourages ahimsa, respect etc – so it underpins all.
- As a general societal attitude, love is the most important – all you need is love, love is everything, etc / hence non-Hindus can relate positively to this statement, etc.

Arguments in support of other views

- Any of the personal virtues can be argued to be the most important / ahimsa, respect, empathy, mind/sense control, humility / Hindu scriptures also mention many other virtues / clearly any can have primary importance at any one time in a person's life.
- Ahimsa is most important as it is about helping not hurting others, so brings peace to the world.
- Mind/sense control is most important because with this is self-discipline / where a person focuses on their spiritual journey, and on reining in their own flaws / by showing self-discipline / so other virtues are expressed as a result.
- It depends on the context of a person's life as to which virtue is best, for example there are occasions when full truthfulness brings difficulty (eg when asked about one's religion in an environment hostile to it, or when ahimsa is not possible, eg when defending oneself against violence).
- All the virtues are important as they are all mentioned in scripture – 'Abstention from injury, truthfulness, justice, compassion, self-restraint, monogamy, amiability, modesty and patience, the practice of these virtues is the best of all spiritual paths, thus declared Manu the Great Lawgiver' – Mahabharata, etc.

0 2 **Hinduism: Practices**

0 2 . 1 **At a Hindu home shrine, which one of the following is the murti?**

[1 mark]

- A Flowers**
- B Image of the deity**
- C Incense**
- D Offerings to the deity**

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority

Answer: **B** – Image of the deity

0 2 . 2 **Give two of the four paths towards yoga (union with the divine).**

[2 marks]

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority

One mark for each of two correct points.

If students provide more than two responses only the first two responses should be considered for marking.

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited.

Jnana yoga (knowledge / study) / Bhakti yoga (devotion) / Astanga yoga (meditation) / also known as raja yoga / Karma yoga (action).

0 2 . 3 Explain two contrasting ways in which Holi is celebrated by Hindus.

[4 marks]

Target: AO1:3 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including similarities and differences within and/or between religions and beliefs

First way

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate contrast – 1 mark
 Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate contrast – 2 marks

Second way

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate contrast – 1 mark
 Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate contrast – 2 marks

Contrasting may mean opposing or may mean different views.

If similar ways are given, only **one** of them may be credited up to 2 marks max.

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

Contrasting ways to come from different bullets

- Worship at home shrines and temples / worship of Vishnu or Krishna / as Vishnu the saviour of stories linked to Holi / Krishna focus of second day of Holi.
- Story of Holika and Prahlad is told (Holika burnt in flames when Prahlad refused to worship his own father) / Vishnu saved Holika because of Holika's devotion to Vishnu.
- Bonfire and fireworks and Holika effigy / taking ash from the bonfire as good luck.
- Throwing of coloured powder to recall Krishna's playfulness / Krishna's childlike nature / Krishna painting Radha's face blue like his own / to reduce his self-consciousness about his own colouring.
- Eating of special foods, eg sweet gujia (nut, fruit, coconut filled dumplings).
- Family get-togethers / to celebrate family / celebrate festival together.
- Community celebrates together / bonfire / worship / public festival or mela now common in UK / Hindus and non-Hindus together for food, stalls, music and so on.
- Drinking of bhang / cannabis-infused drink or foods, eg pakora / particularly common in N. India / used to prepare for meditational trance / said to originate with Krishna and followers.
- Idea of a new start for the new year / release of powders is like moving on / link to forgiveness.
- Coloured powders are released by all / everyone gets covered in colour / so unable to distinguish rich from poor and so on / brings equity, etc.

0 2 . 4 Explain two reasons why Hindus use different places for worship.

Refer to sacred writings or another source of Hindu belief and teaching in your answer.

[5 marks]

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority

First reason

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate reason – 1 mark
Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate reason – 2 marks

Second reason

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate reason – 1 mark
Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate reason – 2 marks

Relevant and accurate reference to sacred writing or another source of Hindu belief and teaching – 1 mark

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

Generic responses might include – their personal preference / what is available at the time / what they need at the time (personal context) / how they have been brought up, a specific place for a specific deity, and so on.

- Temple – sacred place / contains blessed murtis which ‘house’ the essence of the deities because of how they were made / priests are based at temples, so can help with worship, give blessings, explain religion etc. / atmosphere at temple is one of worship as that is what everyone is doing / going to temple represents positive effort, so is better than just worshipping at home / can join in communal worship at temple / helps with understanding God – ‘if a temple, or a symbol, or an image helps you to realise the Divinity within, you are welcome to it. Have 200 if you like’ – Swami Vivekananda / ‘One who builds or helps to build a beautiful temple for the Lord will be freed from all sinful reactions and will enter the Vaikuntha planets’ – Narasimha Purana.
- Home – personal worship, so can say what you want / can create own form of worship, showing greater devotion / ensures worship every day as there is a shrine for the purpose / allows teaching of faith to children.
- Natural areas – eg Vrindavan forests (Krishna’s youth home), Mt Kailash (Shiva’s place of meditation), Ganges (Mother Ganga) – places where the deities were/are, so can connect more closely / communing with nature, which is imbued with the essence of Brahman / ‘The gods always play where groves are near, rivers, mountains and springs, and in towns with pleasure gardens’ – Brihat Samhita.
- Ganges – bathing in its waters is supposed to wash away sin / chance to achieve moksha through entry into the waters / traditional to throw ashes of the dead into its waters / believed to be the hair of Shiva / ‘the best of rivers, born of all sacred waters’ – Mahabharatra.
- Self – some Hindu scholars have said the self itself is a temple / Brahman is within each person so can be reached / ‘the human body is the temple of God’ (Rig Veda) / whilst not every person can get to any of the other places / this is within everyone’s grasp already, etc.

Sources of authority might include –

Rig Veda - 'The human body is the temple of God.'

Mahabharatra - 'The best of rivers, born of all sacred waters.'

Brihat Samhita - 'The gods always play where groves are near, rivers, mountains and springs, and in towns with pleasure gardens.'

Swami Vivekananda - 'If a temple, or a symbol, or an image helps you to realise the Divinity within, you are welcome to it. Have 200 if you like.'

Narasimha Purana - 'One who builds or helps to build a beautiful temple for the Lord will be freed from all sinful reactions and will enter the Vaikuntha planets.'

Maitri Upanisad - 'There are two ways of contemplation: in sound and in silence.'

0 2 . 5 'For Hindus, pilgrimage is the best way to show devotion to God.'

Evaluate this statement.

In your answer you should:

- refer to Hindu teaching
- give reasoned arguments to support this statement
- give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

[12 marks]

Target: AO2 Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including significance and influence

Level	Criteria	Marks
4	A well-argued response, reasoned consideration of different points of view. Logical chains of reasoning leading to judgement(s) supported by knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information. References to religion applied to the issue.	10–12
3	Reasoned consideration of different points of view. Logical chains of reasoning that draw on knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information. Clear reference to religion.	7–9
2	Reasoned consideration of a point of view. A logical chain of reasoning drawing on knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information. OR Recognition of different points of view, each supported by relevant reasons/evidence. Maximum of Level 2 if there is no reference to religion.	4–6
1	Point of view with reason(s) stated in support.	1–3
0	Nothing worthy of credit.	0

Students may include some of the following evidence and arguments, but all relevant evidence and arguments must be credited.

Arguments in support

- Costs a lot of money and takes time / which is devoted to the deity or deities / thus showing devotion / many people can only afford to do this once in their lifetime / so it is the culmination of all their religious efforts.
- Allows a person to get to the origins of their faith / eg going to Mt Kailash as a Shaivite, or Varanasi as a Shaivite, or Vrindavan as a Vaishnavite.
- Pilgrimage can be a great hardship / eg some pilgrims will prostrate the whole way from their home to the place of pilgrimage (eg Jaffna to Kataragama in Sri Lanka – some 472 km) / so to do that shows great devotion / bringing great karmic benefit.
- Pilgrimage is a form of bhakti yoga / so fulfils the attempt to gain union with the divine.
- Devotion is the only appropriate reason for pilgrimage / so without it there is no point, hence pilgrimage can claim to be the best way to show devotion / 'A pilgrim must go with total surrender,

with a total faith in God, that it is only by God's grace that he can finish the pilgrimage' – Ma Yoga Shakti, etc.

Arguments in support of other views

- Daily worship is better / as that would be a constant show of devotion.
- Studying the scriptures is better / as that would mean gaining a greater understanding of God / understanding better means becoming closer to / or showing love for through wanting to learn.
- Doing good deeds (punya karma) is better / as it is living out the correct behaviours, and copying the actions of the deities / eg Vishnu's avatars albeit in a simple human way / they are role models to be followed.
- Bhakti yoga better / is as bhakti means devotion / and is unconditional and unquestioning surrender to the will of the deity.
- Might be doing the pilgrimage for reasons other than devotion / eg to impress someone, because it is expected, or to ask the deities for something / 'Pilgrimages may be undertaken for many personal reasons, such as penance for sin or spiritual regeneration.' – Swami Chidananda Saraswati, etc