

Studies of Religion (SOR) External Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

This is a sample study guide. To access the full version with hundreds of questions,

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Don't worry about getting everything right, your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations, and take breaks to retain information better.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning.

7. Use Other Tools

Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly — adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

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Questions

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- 1. Which of the following is a key practice in Buddhism?**
 - A. Meditation**
 - B. Pilgrimage**
 - C. Animal sacrifice**
 - D. Confession**

- 2. How does the Jewish covenant relate to the concept of nationhood?**
 - A. It restricts citizenship to only those of Jewish descent**
 - B. It promotes the establishment of a Jewish national identity**
 - C. It eliminates the need for a government**
 - D. It suggests that all nations have equal standing**

- 3. What is the significance of washing and shrouding the body in Jewish customs?**
 - A. To prepare the body for resurrection**
 - B. To maintain dignity and respect for the deceased**
 - C. To cleanse the body of sin**
 - D. To embody love for the deceased**

- 4. What stage of life is represented by Brahmacharya in Hinduism?**
 - A. Householder**
 - B. Student**
 - C. Retirement**
 - D. Renunciation**

- 5. What term is associated with a set of rigid social categories in Hinduism?**
 - A. Karma**
 - B. Varnas**
 - C. Samsara**
 - D. Caste system**

6. Who is considered the creative force of the universe in Hinduism?

- A. Brahma**
- B. Vishnu**
- C. Shiva**
- D. Ganesh**

7. Which of the following describes Jewish death rites?

- A. Celebrating the life of the deceased with feasts**
- B. Burials should occur within 48 hours and maintain dignity**
- C. Grieving is a formal and public affair lasting for months**
- D. A memorial service is held only once a year**

8. Why is Salah considered a pillar of Islam?

- A. It is solely for individual spiritual life**
- B. It emphasizes a report card of deeds**
- C. It fosters community participation and connects believers to God**
- D. It allows flexibility in prayers based on convenience**

9. Which of the following is NOT one of the four ends of life in Hinduism?

- A. Moksha**
- B. Dharma**
- C. Reincarnation**
- D. Karma**

10. In Buddhism, the path to Nirvana involves overcoming which of the following?

- A. Selflessness**
- B. Desire and attachment**
- C. Ignorance of the world**
- D. Natural instincts**

Answers

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1. A
2. B
3. B
4. B
5. D
6. A
7. B
8. C
9. C
10. B

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Explanations

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1. Which of the following is a key practice in Buddhism?

- A. Meditation**
- B. Pilgrimage**
- C. Animal sacrifice**
- D. Confession**

Meditation is a cornerstone of Buddhist practice, serving as a crucial method for cultivating mindfulness, concentration, and insight. Within Buddhism, meditation takes various forms, including practices like mindfulness meditation, loving-kindness meditation, and insight meditation. These practices aim to help individuals develop a deeper understanding of the nature of reality, reduce suffering, and ultimately achieve enlightenment. In contrast, while pilgrimage is significant in some Buddhist traditions, it is not universally regarded as a key practice across all sects. Animal sacrifice is not a practice found within Buddhism; in fact, Buddhism generally promotes non-harming and compassion towards all living beings. Confession, while present in some forms of Buddhism as a way of acknowledging wrongdoing and seeking forgiveness, is not emphasized to the same extent as meditation, which is central to the path toward enlightenment. Thus, meditation stands out as a fundamental and widely recognized practice in Buddhism.

2. How does the Jewish covenant relate to the concept of nationhood?

- A. It restricts citizenship to only those of Jewish descent**
- B. It promotes the establishment of a Jewish national identity**
- C. It eliminates the need for a government**
- D. It suggests that all nations have equal standing**

The Jewish covenant plays a fundamental role in shaping the concept of nationhood for the Jewish people, as it provides a theological and historical foundation for Jewish identity and national consciousness. The covenant, established between God and the Israelites, outlines specific obligations, rights, and a sense of purpose that binds the Jewish people together. This relationship fosters a cooperative bond that extends beyond religious observance; it instills a shared identity and collective memory among Jews, reinforcing the idea of nationhood. This covenantal relationship encourages the establishment and continuity of a distinct Jewish national identity, rooted in shared beliefs, practices, and cultural heritage. It emphasizes the importance of a communal and national life, as the covenant not only indicates a spiritual agreement but also serves as a cornerstone for Jewish self-understanding as a people chosen to fulfill a unique mission. In contrast, the other options do not accurately reflect the relationship between the Jewish covenant and nationhood. Restricting citizenship based solely on descent (which would imply a narrow interpretation of Jewish identity) does not encompass the broader implications of the covenant. Suggesting the elimination of government overlooks the importance of structured community governance for the fulfillment of covenantal responsibilities. Finally, the idea that all nations have equal standing does not capture the exclusivity that the

3. What is the significance of washing and shrouding the body in Jewish customs?

- A. To prepare the body for resurrection
- B. To maintain dignity and respect for the deceased**
- C. To cleanse the body of sin
- D. To embody love for the deceased

The significance of washing and shrouding the body in Jewish customs primarily stems from the need to maintain dignity and respect for the deceased. This practice, known as "Taharah," involves ritual purification of the body and dressing it in a simple white shroud called a "Tachrichim." The act of washing symbolizes the purification of the soul and reflects a deep reverence for the life that has ended. This process is conducted by a group called the "Chevra Kaddisha," or the holy society, emphasizing the community's role in honoring the deceased. The simplicity of the shroud and the care taken in preparing the body align with Jewish values surrounding death, which prioritize respect, humility, and the sanctity of life. While it is true that some might connect the washing and shrouding to ideas of resurrection or love for the deceased, the primary focus is on honoring the individual's dignity in death and following the prescribed rituals that demonstrate respect and communal responsibility. Therefore, the custom serves as a profound expression of caring for the dead, emphasizing the importance of treating the body with the utmost respect as a final act of love and honor.

4. What stage of life is represented by Brahmacharya in Hinduism?

- A. Householder
- B. Student**
- C. Retirement
- D. Renunciation

Brahmacharya represents the stage of life associated with the student phase in Hinduism. This stage emphasizes education, learning, and the acquisition of knowledge, particularly in spiritual matters. During Brahmacharya, individuals are expected to focus on their studies, often residing in a guru's ashram and living a life of discipline and celibacy. This period is seen as foundational, where students cultivate values, self-discipline, and intellectual skills before moving on to the responsibilities of adulthood and family life. In contrast, the other stages, such as the Householder stage, involve fulfilling familial and societal duties, focusing on career and family. The Retirement stage refers to a period of withdrawal from worldly life to reflect and prepare for the end of life, while the Renunciation stage embodies a complete withdrawal from material life to pursue spiritual enlightenment. These stages come after Brahmacharya and highlight the continuum of life's progression in Hindu teachings.

5. What term is associated with a set of rigid social categories in Hinduism?

- A. Karma**
- B. Varnas**
- C. Samsara**
- D. Caste system**

The term "caste system" is associated with a set of rigid social categories in Hinduism because it refers to the hierarchical structure that divides society into different groups, each with its own duties, roles, and social status. The caste system is traditionally classified into four primary categories known as varnas: Brahmins (priests and teachers), Kshatriyas (warriors and rulers), Vaishyas (merchants and landowners), and Shudras (laborers and service providers). However, the term "caste system" encompasses not only these four varnas but also the numerous sub-castes (jati) that exist within each category, making it a complex and significant aspect of social organization in Hindu society. This system has been deeply ingrained in Indian culture and history, influencing various aspects of life, including marriage, occupation, and social interactions. While "varnas" refers to these four broad categories, the term "caste system" captures the full extent of the social stratification that has been prevalent in Hindu society. The rigid nature of this system has led to significant social implications, including discrimination and social mobility challenges, thus making it distinctly recognized as the overarching term for these rigid social categories in Hinduism.

6. Who is considered the creative force of the universe in Hinduism?

- A. Brahma**
- B. Vishnu**
- C. Shiva**
- D. Ganesh**

In Hinduism, Brahma is recognized as the creative force of the universe. He is part of the Trimurti, which consists of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva the destroyer. Brahma's role involves the initiation of creation and the establishment of order in the cosmos. According to Hindu beliefs, Brahma is responsible for creating all living beings and everything in the material world, which positions him as the foundational creative principle in the universe. Brahma is often depicted with four heads, symbolizing the four Vedas (the foundational texts of Hindu philosophy and practice), indicating his comprehensive knowledge and power in the act of creation. This understanding of Brahma as the creative force sets him apart from other deities in Hinduism, each of whom has distinct functions and attributes related to preservation, destruction, or specific aspects of life and the universe.

7. Which of the following describes Jewish death rites?

- A. Celebrating the life of the deceased with feasts**
- B. Burials should occur within 48 hours and maintain dignity**
- C. Grieving is a formal and public affair lasting for months**
- D. A memorial service is held only once a year**

The description of Jewish death rites that includes burials occurring within 48 hours and maintaining dignity accurately reflects traditional Jewish customs surrounding death. In Judaism, there is a strong emphasis on the prompt burial of the deceased, ideally taking place as soon as possible, often within a day or two. This practice stems from the belief in the sanctity of the body and the importance of treating the deceased with utmost respect. Maintaining dignity throughout the burial process includes careful handling of the body, using simple wooden coffins, and ensuring that the burial site is treated with reverence. While other elements of Jewish mourning rituals are important, like formal and public grieving or the observance of memorials, the specific guideline regarding prompt burial and dignity is a fundamental tenet of Jewish law and custom.

8. Why is Salah considered a pillar of Islam?

- A. It is solely for individual spiritual life**
- B. It emphasizes a report card of deeds**
- C. It fosters community participation and connects believers to God**
- D. It allows flexibility in prayers based on convenience**

Salah, or the practice of ritual prayer in Islam, is considered a pillar of Islam primarily because it fosters community participation and establishes a direct connection between believers and God. This practice is one of the five core obligations of a Muslim, known as the Five Pillars of Islam, which are fundamental to the faith and identity of Muslims. Salah is performed five times a day, serving as a constant reminder of faith and an opportunity for Muslims to reflect on their relationship with God. The communal aspect of Salah is especially emphasized during the Friday congregational prayer, where believers gather to worship together, strengthening their community bonds and reinforcing their collective identity as Muslims. This shared experience of prayer not only enhances personal spirituality but also builds a sense of unity and mutual support among members of the community. In contrast, other options do not capture the essence of Salah's significance as a pillar. For instance, while individual spirituality is a component of Salah, it is not solely focused on personal development. The notion of a "report card of deeds" relates to accountability in Islam but is not the primary function of Salah. Furthermore, Salah is structured with specific times and formats, allowing little flexibility in terms of convenience, as the prescribed times are meant to maintain discipline and regularity.

9. Which of the following is NOT one of the four ends of life in Hinduism?

- A. Moksha**
- B. Dharma**
- C. Reincarnation**
- D. Karma**

In Hinduism, the four ends of life, known as the Purusharthas, comprise Dharma (duty/righteousness), Artha (prosperity/wealth), Kama (pleasure/love), and Moksha (liberation from the cycle of birth and death). Moksha represents the ultimate goal of life, where one seeks liberation from the cycles of reincarnation. Dharma is associated with moral and ethical responsibilities, while Artha relates to the pursuit of material success, and Kama pertains to the enjoyment of love and sensory experiences.

Reincarnation, however, is a concept that describes the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth in Hindu belief and is not classified as one of the four ends of life. While it is an important aspect of Hindu philosophy, it does not serve as a goal or purpose in the same way that Moksha, Dharma, Artha, and Kama do. Karma, though closely related to the cycle of reincarnation, particularly in terms of how actions influence future lives, is also not one of the four ends. Instead, karma refers to the principle of cause and effect in human actions. Thus, among the choices provided, reincarnation stands alone as the concept that is not one of

10. In Buddhism, the path to Nirvana involves overcoming which of the following?

- A. Selflessness**
- B. Desire and attachment**
- C. Ignorance of the world**
- D. Natural instincts**

In Buddhism, the path to Nirvana is fundamentally about overcoming desire and attachment. These are considered the root causes of suffering, known as **“dukkha”**. The teachings of the Buddha emphasize that attachment to worldly pleasures, relationships, and material possessions can lead to a cycle of rebirth and suffering known as **“samsara”**. The Four Noble Truths outline this understanding, identifying that suffering arises from craving and attachment. Buddhism teaches that to attain Nirvana, which is the state of liberation and ultimate peace, one must let go of these desires and attachments. This is reflected in the practice of the **“Noble Eightfold Path”**, which guides followers on ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom, all aimed at reducing and eventually overcoming desires that bind them to suffering. The other options, while relevant to various aspects of Buddhist philosophy, do not specifically encapsulate the primary struggle on the path to Nirvana. Selflessness, for instance, can be a trait cultivated through the overcoming of desire, but it is not an obstacle in itself. Ignorance of the world is addressed in the context of seeking wisdom, which aids in overcoming desire, but it is not the central concern of limiting one’s suffering. Natural instincts

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://sorexternal.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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