



# **2007 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies**

## **Advanced Higher**

### **Finalised Marking Instructions**

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## Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

Advanced Higher 2007

### Philosophy of Religion Section A

It should be emphasised that the following outlines indicate possible good answers rather than ideal answers which should be imitated to the exclusion of other possible good approaches. (What is required is a clear grasp of the question and its implications, and some careful relevant reasoning about it.)

#### 1 Can the arguments for the First Cause establish the existence of God?

How the First Cause has variously been conceived of: (a) as the cause of the first event in the Universe's history, and/or (b) as the sustaining explanatory cause of the infinite, beginningless universe;

Arguments offered for the First Cause as in (a) above, such as the *Kalam* argument or (on one interpretation) that of Aquinas;

Critical issues for these arguments: eg whether there can be an infinite regress of causes, and the various reasons given by *Kalam* supporters and by those of Aquinas for answering 'no'; whether anything which exists must have had a cause;

Arguments offered for the First Cause as in (b) above, most notably that of Aquinas on the other interpretation of him more closely following Aristotle.

Critical issues for these arguments: eg (again) whether an infinite and beginningless universe is possible; whether an infinite universe calls (as in Hume's view) for no explanation of its existence;

Whether current scientific undertaking supports any version of a First Cause argument;

Whether, if a First Cause argument is reckoned to be sound, what is thereby established is the existence of God...

**Knowledge and Understanding 10 marks. Analysis and Evaluation 15 marks. 5 additional marks for coherence of argument.**

**2 In what ways does modern science support or undermine the design argument for the existence of God?**

How the “order” appealed to in design arguments has been (a) order consisting in the functionally efficient arrangement of the parts of a system, or (b) order consisting in the recurrent, patterned sequences in which events in nature follow one another:

The order appealed to in (a) is seen in biological systems, and modern evolutionary theory offers an explanation of how that order emerges there; remaining to be accounted for is the existence of the initial DNA the pre-condition of evolution: is chance a reasonable explanation?

The “fine tuning” of the universe such as to make the emergence of life possible would also exemplify this sort of order (a); again, the reasonableness of ‘chance’ as an explanation for “fine tuning” is debated;

Order of type (b), since it predates life, cannot have an evolutionary explanation; indeed, since it is a presupposition of scientific explanation it cannot be given a scientific explanation;

The near universality of order type (b), according to scientific enquiry, gives strength to design arguments based on that order;

Whether the conformity of the physical world to mathematical description gives a reason for asserting design?

Are there flaws in the form of design arguments (eg as depending on an analogy when the universe is unique) which render it worthless irrespective of current scientific beliefs?

**Knowledge and Understanding 10 marks. Analysis and Evaluation 15 marks. 5 additional marks for coherence of argument.**

**3. “If you want to know what you ought to do, you must find out what God wants you to do.” Discuss.**

The utterer of the above might be saying any of several things: eg (a) that “what you ought to do” means “what God wants you to do”, or (b) that what you ought to do consists of, just is, what God wants you to do, or (c) that the best way of (what can be difficult) finding out what you ought to do is finding out what God wants you to do, or (d) that, of the several factors you ought to have in mind when deciding what you ought to do, what God wants is overriding;

Apparently problems for each of these will be, eg, for (a) that atheists and believers appear to mean the same thing when they discuss what one ought to do; for (b) that, surely, God’s wanting you to torture a child wouldn’t make that something you ought to do; for (c) that it is often not easy to discover what God wants; for (d) as for (b).

Possible responses to the above: (a) maybe atheists are confused about what “ought” means; (b) and (d) (i) could God command that?, (ii) if we add to the quotation saying that we must find out what a loving God wants, we avoid the problem; (c) maybe it is just hard to discover your duty anyhow?

**Knowledge and Understanding 10 marks. Analysis and Evaluation 15 marks. 5 additional marks for coherence of argument.**

## Section B – Religious Experience

### 1. Given its unpredictable nature, can religious experience be studied?

*This question requires candidates to have an appropriate breadth of knowledge and understanding of issues regarding the nature and study of religious experience, and to have a reasoned view as to its study.*

**Knowledge and Understanding (max 10) should be awarded for, eg:**

- examples of religious experiences
- evidence that suggests it cannot be predicted or manufactured
- (any contrary evidence)
- attempts to study the phenomenon
- taxonomies, classification systems, research conclusions.

**Analysis and Evaluation (max 15) might include:**

- consideration of the assertion that religious experience is unpredictable in nature, perhaps by a juxtaposition of differing evidence
- legitimacy or otherwise of a variety of attempts to study it, perhaps within a context of the nature of scientific study
- evaluation of different approaches to its study, with reference made to place of self-report/biography
- a consistent argument that addresses the question directly, and presents a case throughout.

Conclusions that may be drawn throughout, should be derived from a discernible argument.

5 additional marks available for coherence of argument.

### 2. “Not all religious people have religious experiences, not all religious experiences happen to religious people.”

**Discuss.**

*Much of this question hinges upon any definition of religious experience. Candidates should consider how religious experience is understood, perhaps variously, in religious traditions and the extent to which they are confined to them.*

**Knowledge and Understanding (max 10) should be awarded for, eg:**

- definition(s) of religious experience, with particular reference to religious traditions
- examples of religious experiences from within religious traditions
- examples of religious experiences from outwith formal religious traditions
- emphasis/interpretation placed upon religious experience by religious traditions.

**Analysis and Evaluation (max 15) should be awarded for, eg:**

- issues surrounding various definitions, and the extent to which they might be objective and representative within religious traditions
- place of religious experience, eg conversion in religious and non-religious traditions
- consideration of similarities between religious and non-religious experiences of the mystical
- theological implications for individuals and faith systems, for example, different categories of adherents with regard to religious experience, membership, sainthood, etc.

Conclusions that might be drawn throughout, should be derived from a discernible argument.

5 additional marks available for coherence of argument.

**3. “Interpretations of religious experience based upon secular perspectives are flawed.”**

**Evaluate this claim.**

*This question invited candidates to consider a bold statement that demands a response. Candidates may agree wholeheartedly with the statement, or disagree with equal alacrity. The concept of ‘flawed’, however, needs to be considered.*

**Knowledge and Understanding (max 10) should be awarded for, eg:**

- a range of secular interpretations, from, eg psychology, sociology, anthropology, biology
- an understanding of the meaning(s) of ‘secular’
- the assumptions/presuppositions/methodology/ies of secular interpretations
- seminal secular works in the field.

**Analysis and Evaluation (max 15) might include:**

- consideration of evidence for the statement, for example allegedly irreconcilable differences in methodology, non-sequitur conclusions, bias of writers, etc
- consideration of evidence against the statement, for example cumulative case, objectivity of scientific research, weakness of non-scientific, ie faith interpretations
- possibility of statement being partially accepted/rejected
- discussion about what might constitute a ‘flaw’ in an argument or case.

Conclusions that may be drawn throughout, should be derived from a discernible argument.

5 additional marks available for coherence of argument.

## Section C – Bioethics

1. **“Genetic screening is now used to screen for some hereditary conditions in human beings. Research is ongoing in the use of gene therapy in the attempt to correct some of these conditions.”**

**Why does this kind of research raise religious and moral issues?**

- Research with some examples.
- Current situation.
- Interfering with nature.
- Playing God.
- Concerns about uses of information.
- Role of commerce in research.
- Social and psychological impact on individuals.
- Slippery slope.
- Consent to being screened.
- Counselling.
- The risk of stigma.
- Confidentiality.
- The possible use of genetic information by insurers or employers.
- The storage and use of genetic information for legal purposes.

2. **“There are two central questions when considering organ transplants: how organs are obtained and who receives them.”**

**Explore the religious and moral issues raised by these two questions.**

- Selection of the sickest patient.
- Selection of the patient most likely to benefit based on medical or other criteria.
- Selection of the patient on the waiting list for the longest period.
- All patients on the waiting list should have an equal chance of selection.
- Selection of patients on the basis of their importance for the well-being of others.
- Preference in selection to patients who have already had an organ.
- Who gets what organs.
- Patient’s lifestyle.
- Who decides.
- Cost recovery.
- Long term benefits to society.
- Living organ donors.
- Status of the ‘dying’ donor.
- Payment for organs.

3. **“Relief of suffering is more important than prolonging life.”**

**Would religious believers find this statement morally acceptable?**

- Description of current trends in care of the dying.
- Playing God.
- Duty of care.
- Issues relating to human dignity.
- Issues relating to human personhood.
- Issues relating to patients’ best interests.
- Quality v. quantity of life.
- Biblical teaching.
- Teaching/advice of various denominations.

**Knowledge and Understanding**

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of complex concepts and issues

Make selective reference to context of sources and their contents

**Analysis**

Present a detailed and balanced analysis of complex concepts and issues

**Evaluation**

Make considered judgements on:

- interpretation of texts/sources
  
- the relative merits of viewpoints

**Coherence of argument**

**TOTAL**

<b>TOTAL</b>	
5	
5	
5	
5	
5	
5	
30	

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]