



# **2009 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies**

## **Advanced Higher**

### **Finalised Marking Instructions**

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

**Advanced Higher 2009**

### **Section A – Philosophy of Religion**

**1. “The Cosmological Argument for the existence of God is flawed.”**

**Assess the validity of this statement.**

**Knowledge and Understanding may include:**

- an account of the cosmological arguments of Aristotle, Aquinas and Kalam
- criticisms of the above by Hume and Russell
  - (a) that infinite series are possible
  - (b) that the universe may have come into existence uncaused
- an account of modern scientific theories of cosmology ie Big Bang.

**Analysis and Evaluation may include:**

- discussion of whether an infinite series requires a cause outside the series
- the extent to which modern scientific theories of cosmology support the cosmological argument
- the best candidates will distinguish between traditional and contemporary forms of the argument and counter-argument and draw on a range of sources which might include Davies, Swinburne, Hawking, Hick and others.

**30 marks**

5 additional marks are available for coherence of argument.

**2. How far can the Design Argument establish the existence of God?**

**Knowledge and Understanding may include:**

- an account of at least one argument from design, with reference (at least) to the existence of other design arguments
- if the Paley/Watchmaker argument is discussed, an exploration of the relevance of evolutionary theory
- the merely probable conclusion of any design argument
- alleged relevance of the extent of suffering
- arguments from order of succession and/or 'fine tuning'.

**Analysis and Evaluation may include:**

- discussion of the nature and strength of the analogy argument
- consideration of whether the first DNA could have happened by chance
- discussion of whether the uniqueness of the universe excludes our arguing from design
- discussion of whether design gives reason for belief in several gods
- the best candidates will distinguish between traditional and contemporary forms of the argument and counter-argument and draw on a range of sources, which might include Hume, Dawkins, Stannard, Tennant and others.

**30 marks**

5 additional marks for coherence of argument.

**3. Evaluate the claim that without belief in God there is no foundation for morality.**

**Knowledge and Understanding may include:**

- distinguishing meanings of the theory that morality is based on God: is it
  - (a) about the meaning of moral language?
  - (b) about the nature of morality?
- noting the morality of unbelievers, and its implications
- asking whether if true, the theory allows God to be praised for goodness
- asking whether the theory forces us to hold that cruelty is good just so long as God commands it.

**Analysis and Evaluation may include:**

- considering the implications of moral dialogue between believers and non-believers
- discussing the implications of the last two issues noted in Knowledge and Understanding above
- discussion of whether the theory will encourage moral scepticism in unbelievers
- evaluation of accounts of morality proposed as alternatives to the theory.

**30 marks**

5 additional marks for coherence of argument.

## Section B – Religious Experience

### 1. “Religious experience cannot be analysed.”

To what extent do you agree?

**Knowledge and Understanding may include:**

- examples of religious experiences
- examples of research studies
- different research methods and their presuppositions
- understanding of what ‘analysis’ means (comparing one thing to another).

**Analysis and Evaluation may include:**

- agree – such experiences are too personal for objective analysis  
barrier of language  
lack of set standard against which to compare
- disagree – effect can be categorised – different such taxonomies  
comparisons are legitimate and rational  
non-experimental research methods can be valid and reliable.

**30 marks**

Conclusions may be presented throughout, and should derive from a discernible argument.

### 2. “How religious experiences are interpreted depends on the culture, ideas and language of their particular time and place.”

**Discuss.**

**Knowledge and Understanding may include:**

- examples of religious experiences from identified times
- examples of such from different cultures, ideas and traditions together with identification of such
- variety of interpretation.

**Analysis and Evaluation may include:**

- culture – discussion of expectations/social norms/‘atypical’ behaviour
- ideas – role of ideas in interpreting phenomena, eg scientific materialism, eastern mysticism, animism etc
- language – how language influences interpretation
- consideration of whether one of the above is more influential than another, or whether something else is more important, eg religion itself.

**30 marks**

Conclusions may be presented throughout, and should derive from a discernible argument.

**3. “Secular perspectives on religious experience cannot determine whether they can be explained in non religious ways.”**

**How far do you agree?**

**Knowledge and Understanding may include:**

- examples of religious experiences
- examples of secular perspectives
- understanding of ‘secular’ and its assumptions
- limitations of secularism.

**Analysis and Evaluation may include:**

- agree – untestable assumptions of secularism/scientific materialism
- disagree – objectivity of scientific method and testability against publicly verifiable criteria
- partially agree – non-religious interpretations not necessarily incompatible with religious interpretation
- cannot derive a cause from an effect.

**30 marks**

Conclusions may be presented throughout, and should derive from a discernible argument.

## Section C – Bioethics

### 1. “If embryo research helps to save lives, all objections to it should be dismissed.”

#### Would you agree?

This question allows candidates to discuss religious, secular and practical issues relating to embryo research and genetic engineering.

- Types of embryo research.
- Methods of embryo research.
- Legislation relating to the research.
- Benefits of research.
- Dangers of research.
- Medical issues eg status of the embryo, destruction, risks, applications, best interests of humanity.
- Religious issues eg status of the embryo, use of the embryo, God’s will, God’s purpose, Natural Law.
- Different religious views eg RC, CofS, other religious, secular views.
- Consideration of secular organisations and individuals eg HFEA, BMA, Prolife groups, Singer etc.

**30 marks**

2. “Every year 5000 people die waiting for organs. Something needs to be done about this.”

**Consider the religious and moral implications raised by this statement.**

Answers can be very broad in nature and may cover the following areas. They should include more than one area.

**Organ donation:**

- opt in or opt out
- legal implications
- implications relating to human rights
- religious implications.

**Organ procurement:**

- payment
- altruistic giving
- religious implications
- legal implications.

**Xenotransplanting:**

- methods
- religious implications
- medical implications.

**Distribution of organs:**

- prioritising
- judgement of most deserving case
- medical issues.

**30 marks**

Religious and secular views of each area may also be covered.

**3. “Morally, it is worse to prolong a patient’s life unnecessarily than to administer euthanasia.”**

**Discuss**

The question allows candidates to discuss both life prolongation issues and issues relating to euthanasia.

**Life prolongation:**

- methods
- purposes
- circumstances/cases
- medical issues eg cost, hope, diagnosis, prognosis, preparation for the patient and family, professional guidelines
- religious issues eg God’s plan, interference, preparation for patient and family.

**Euthanasia:**

- methods
- purposes
- circumstances/cases
- medical issues eg who does it, Hippocratic Oath, patient’s best interests, professional guidelines
- religious issues eg commandments, slippery slope, value of life, sanctity of life.

Comparison of the two.

**30 marks**

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]