



Pearson
Edexcel

A level Religious Studies

9RS0 01

Philosophy of Religion

Scripts for Feedback
training





Question 1:

1 Explore key ideas of Cosmological Arguments for the existence of God.

(8)

Key ideas of the cosmological argument include that it is an a posteriori argument which ^{is based} ~~uses~~ on experience which uses inductive reasoning to ~~persuade~~ ^{argues} to follow conclusion. The cosmological argument ~~states~~ ^{argues} that ~~existence~~ ^{knowledge} of the universe as proof of the existence of God. Cosmo means universe, logy means knowledge.

~~The~~ It is known as the first cause which focuses ~~and~~ on cause and effect. Infinite regress is rejected in this argument.

It was proposed in Aquinas's book of Summa Theologiae, it includes his first way, uncaused causer, suggesting every effect has a first cause, infinite regress is rejected.

There must be an uncaused causer which is seen to be God. Furthermore the ~~road~~ ^{way of the unmoved mover} ~~way of the unmoved mover~~ ^{is that everything in the world is in motion, he must be something which causes motion of everything, there must be a first mover, infinite regress} is rejected, the unmoved mover is therefore seen to be God. Finally in Aquinas's

third way on contingency it suggests that there are contingent beings in the world, which demand a necessary being to exist, infinite regress is rejected, this necessary

being is seen to be God. Furthermore, ^{Aquinas said that there} ~~it could be argued that~~ ^{is a first cause,} everything in the ^{universe} ~~world~~ ^{has} must have been caused. This is seen to be God.

Furthermore, if everything has a cause what causes God. William Lane Craig ~~rediscovered~~ ^{rediscovered} the Kalam Argument by Al Ghazali and Al Ghazali which argued that

God is eternal, he has no beginning and no end. Therefore he ~~has~~ ^{cannot} have no cause.

Finally Leibniz agreed with Leibniz that there needs to be an external explanation. He said everything is contingent, the ~~world~~ ^{universe} ^{is} full of contingent beings as everything in the

^{universe} ~~world~~ ^{is} full of contingent beings, there must be a ~~necessary~~ ^{external} explanation, a being that cannot not exist, this is seen to be God.



Question 2:

2. Assess the view that the soul can survive the death of the body.

'one

(12)

The view that the soul can survive after death fits with the concepts of dualism, in which the body and soul are separable, the body being the finite material that decays, the soul being the metaphysical and infinite that endures. Plato acts as an advocate for dualism with his belief that the soul can have a post-mortem existence, in a higher realm and world of eternal truths. To him birth is a joining of the soul and body, with the soul coming from this higher realm, and death is the disconnection of the two and the soul returning to knowledge. However, we cannot have knowledge of this higher realm of eternal truths on earth, therefore the concept is unverifiable, the whereabouts of this higher realm is also unknown. Weakening the view. Aristotle can be seen to oppose this view with his materialist view, that the body and soul are one and inseparable, at death the soul ceases to exist. To Aristotle humans are forms and matter, the form (soul) only exists when held in the body, almost ensoul referred to as an ensouled body.



Re-incarnation theory aims to reveal that a soul can exist after death. This Hindu concept discusses the soul passing on from generation to generation, through the judgement of Karma in the eventual hope to reach Brahman and achieve Moksha, the release from this constant transmigration of the soul. Hindu scholars argue this to be the case due to remembered past-lives, similar character traits as well as inexplicable geniuses of children. However, these arguments may be viewed as weak due to the fact memory of past-lives is rare, they may also be hoaxes or unconscious memories of stories told in the past. The concept of re-incarnation causes us to question how we can identify an individual without a body of exact continuity.

Hick attempts to solve this dilemma through his replica theory, a form of resurrection in which God would form an exact replica of us at death, continuing all our memories, characteristics and appearances into another realm. However, this idea can be seen as flawed due to the absence of knowledge of this realm. We can also question what state this replica to continue the soul would be in. Surely as our bodily death was caused by either an illness or damage the replica created would be



in exactly the same state if a complete form of
ourselves.

~~Therefore we can see the difficulty of proving~~
Near-death experiences are also often utilised to
attempt to show a soul, separate from the body
at death, with accounts of seeing tunnels of light,
perfect landscapes, religious figures or friends. A
possible foretaste of another realm. However these
may be perceived as purely physical and
chemical responses to trauma, either induced by
drugs or oxygen deprivation.

Therefore we can see the difficulty of providing a
entirely sound argument for the idea of continuity
of the soul. Although the concept of a
a continuation of the self may comfort there is
a lack of empirical evidence to support it fully
with lack of verification until that point.



Question 3:

Read the following passage before answering the questions.

The partisan of the parable does not allow anything to count decisively against the proposition 'The Stranger is on our side.' This is because he has committed himself to trust the Stranger. But he of course recognizes that the Stranger's ambiguous behaviour does count against what he believes about him. It is precisely this situation which constitutes the trial of his faith.

Hare's lunatic who has a *blik* about dons doesn't admit that anything counts against his *blik*. Nothing can count against *bliks*. Also the partisan has a reason for having in the first instance committed himself, viz. the character of the Stranger; whereas the lunatic has no reason for his *blik* about dons – because, of course, you can't have reasons for *bliks*. This means that I agree with Flew that theological utterances must be assertions. The partisan is making an assertion when he says, 'The Stranger is on our side.'

(Source: Extract adapted from 'The Philosophy of Religion' - Chapter I, 'Theology and Falsification: A Symposium', edited by Mitchell, B., Oxford University Press, 1977, Edexcel Anthology)

- 3 (a) Clarify Mitchell's ideas in this passage that religious claims are assertions because they do allow things to count against them.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

Mitchell here is replying to an article written by Anthony Flew who held that religious claims hold no meaning because theists do not allow anything / any evidence to count against their beliefs. In other words, they are not falsifiable and Flew (who takes the idea of falsification from Karl Popper as an alternative to verification), uses the test of falsification as a means by which to work out what statements and claims should be considered meaningful. Mitchell replies to Flew. He agrees with the principle of falsification, but differs from Flew by arguing that religious claims do in fact allow things to count against them - theists do not simply seek



to continually qualify them in order to ~~show~~^{ensure} them that nothing will count against them. Mitchell gives his own parable about the 'stranger'. In this parable, the stranger represents God - from the perspective of the Narrator, the conduct of the stranger may at times appear 'ambiguous' (he is shown to be a soldier who sometimes appears to work for the enemy), yet he has faith in him. Mitchell says that 'it is such conduct which constitutes the trial of faith'. In other words, the theist basically admits that the evidence looks bad at face value (the stranger helping the enemy side here is akin to the existence of evil which some believe disproves the existence of God - eg. J.I. Mackie), yet his faith means that he still believes in the stranger. Mitchell therefore effectively ~~says~~^{for} - ~~of course the evidence against God looks bad, but I have faith in God~~ religious statements are falsifiable - this is evident, people lose their faith. The question should instead be, how long until a theist loses their faith. This is the 'trial of faith' to which he makes reference.

Mitchell now refers to 'bliks', an idea coined by R.M. Hare who writes that ~~the~~ ^{any} religious claims made by theists are not falsifiable because they are not assertions (they do not, in other words, belong to what the late Wittgenstein would have referred to as a 'form of life' which concerns =>



meaning in relation to evidence and falsification). Instead, religious claims are expressions of unfalsifiable world views which he calls 'blik's'.

Mitchell disagrees with such a view - the parable of the Lunatic by Hare gives the example of a paranoid student and his 'insane' blik that all ~~do~~^{the student} want to kill him. He has, however, no good reason for his belief and allows no evidence (eg- friendly ~~do~~^{do}) to convince him that his view is wrong. The partisan in the parable of the stranger, however, allows for evidence. His belief in the stranger is inspired by a meeting (akin to a religious experience), and he admits (using evidence that the stranger is apparently, despite being on the side of the partisan, appearing to help the enemy), that the evidence against the stranger looks bad - yet the partisan (at least for now) retains his faith.

Flew later concedes to Mitchell that some religious claims must be falsifiable assertions - otherwise, he writes, we wouldn't have the 'intractable problem of evil' which arises from the fact that, as many/most theists admit, the existence of evil looks bad as the part of God. Mitchell therefore says that religious claims are assertions and that they are falsifiable - it is a question of how long a theist will maintain their faith in the face of contradictory evidence.



(b) Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the challenge to religious language from the verification debate.

(20)

Verificationism
~~The Verification debate~~, championed most notably by the logical positivists of the Vienna circle, is a means by which to assess whether ^{it is meaningful} ~~certain claims/beliefs~~ have to make certain claims / to hold certain beliefs in the face of empirical evidence. Whilst initially a very popular idea, it eventually became weakened to the point of abandonment as there are arguably a lot more stronger ways of assessing the meaningfulness of religious claims.

It must ^{firstly} be stated firstly that the principle of Verificationism was adopted by the logical positivists of the Vienna circle to rule out any ~~to~~ religious and ethical claims. They were concerned only with statements which could be shown to be verifiably (using evidence) true. It aligns itself with the Correspondence theory of truth in which claims are regarded as true if they correspond correctly to the world around us. Wittgenstein was initially very supportive of this attempt to cut religious talk out, writing in his work *Tractatus* that we shouldn't talk about that which we know nothing of (in other words, things that we can't experience and show to be verifiably true). However, this meant that the logical positivists could not make meaningful scientific hypotheses or even talk about the future.



and so it was decided to weaken the theory by splitting it into verifiable in 'practice' and in 'principle'. The verification 'in principle' allowed for things which could conceivably be verified to be spoken of as meaningful - this meant that in principle scientific hypotheses could be considered meaningful, ~~yet this was still an issue for historical statements~~ ~~(which can't be verified in principle)~~ This weakening, however, allowed for John Hick to argue that life after death (a religious claim), could be considered meaningful in principle as in principle, we could die and then experience (and verify) the afterlife - this was an idea known as 'eschatological verification'. This meant that the 'weak' logical positivists had failed in removing religious claims and language as 'meaningful'. Yet Hick's eschatological verification and the verificationists rely heavily on experience and the reliance on our senses. Some may ~~not~~ ~~may~~ argue argue that only analytic and tautological statements can be regarded as necessarily true (and therefore meaningful) as synthetic claims place trust in the senses, something which Descartes, for example, would be greatly sceptical of - he advocated for what has become known as 'Cartesian doubt', writing 'Cogito ergo sum' "I think therefore I am".



Yet a far more pressing (and some even consider fatal) objection to the verification principle is that it doesn't pass its own test. The claim: 'religious language / claims are only meaningful if they can be considered empirically verified' cannot be empirically verified. Whilst the early Wittgenstein would not have regarded this as a particularly pressing criticism, writing that the verification principle should be viewed as a 'tool', it inspired the rise of Karl Popper's falsification principle. The falsification principle is arguably ~~more~~ superior to the verification principle given that it's less intransigent and encourages continual scientific progression as scientific claims should be viewed as falsifiable and consequently falsified where possible. Yet, whilst Anthony Flew argued that falsification could also cut out religious claims (as he believed they're only qualified their beliefs in order that they not become falsified), others such as Mitchell refuted such an argument. The verification principle was therefore (at least its 'strong' version which rejected 'in practice' and 'in principle' distinction), very successful in regarding religious language as meaningful - it, like early Wittgenstein, ~~we does not take~~ views the principle only as a tool (thereby rejecting the view that the verification in practice principle disposes us to).



own acid), then it is perfectly adept in dealing with religious claims.

Yet perhaps a much stronger argument would be that given the verification principle is self defeating, that religious language should be seen as meaningful under the coherence theory of truth.

The later Wittgenstein argued that religious claims and language should be seen as meaningful within a particular 'form of life' - in this case, religious claims within a church / group of theists would be considered meaningful as religious statements are meaningful to theists. This is a far less intransigent approach to religious language than the logical positivists argued for: furthermore, Wittgenstein's form of life allow for the logical positivists to make their own meaningful claims within their group, using their own rules / frame of reference.

~~it appears that there is no good reason in conclusion~~
while the ^{in practice} verification principle successfully rules out religious talk as being meaningless, there is no good reason to accept the principle itself, and when it is weakened, it only allows for religious statements to become verifiable 'in principle' as shown by Hick.



Question 4: Script i

- 4 **Evaluate** the view that the problem of suffering shows that ideas about the nature and existence of God are inconsistent. Irenaeus,
Augustine.

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Philosophy of Religion have been influenced by **one** of the following:

- Religion and Ethics
- New Testament Studies
- Study of Religion.

FWD
(Swinburne)

David Griffin / A.N.
Whitehead
(process
theology)

(30)

Within Christianity, God is said to be the perfect being, with qualities such as being omnipotent and omnibenevolent. However, scholars have questioned his nature due to the extent of suffering within the world, as if he was all powerful, the problem of suffering wouldn't exist. This essay will outline how, to a great extent, ideas about God's nature and existence are very inconsistent.

J.L. Mackie is one critic of God's nature and his existence. He derived the inconsistent triad, which is comprised of three parts; God is omnipotent, God is omnibenevolent, yet evil exists. Mackie explains that these cannot all be true at the same time, as if God was both all loving and all powerful, he would not allow evil to exist. This ~~then~~ causes problems as it shows that God may be neither all powerful or all loving, which completely degrades his nature.

Due to the ~~inconsistent~~ inconsistencies about God's nature, various



theodicies have been created, which try and justify how God exists even with the existence of evil.

~~There~~ St Augustine of Hippo came up with the Augustinian theodicy, which is based on the idea that evil came about due to human disobedience. He explains that God created a completely perfect universe and that he never intended for evil to come about as it wasn't a part of the divine plan. Evil came about when free beings turned their back on God, which is most commonly associated with when Adam and Eve ~~an~~ disobeyed God, also referred to as the ~~sign~~ Original Sin. Therefore, only humans are to blame for the occurrence of evil, ^{and} ~~as~~ it is a divine judgement/punishment from God.

This theory is very weak in its nature as firstly, it seems to be a logical contradiction; how could a perfect world go so wrong? Schleiermacher stated that either the world was never created perfect, or God allowed it to come into the world. Also, why would perfect beings choose to be evil? If goodness was hard-wired into our nature, then it seems unlikely that we would choose to be evil. Therefore, this theodicy, whilst attempting to justify the problem of suffering, ~~is~~ is weak in its



attempt as it seems incoherent and contradictory.

Another theodicy that aims to justify the problem of suffering is the Irenaean theodicy, which is associated with St Irenaeus. His ideas differ from Augustine in that he believed that God deliberately created an imperfect universe. This was because evil was a test to help humans develop qualities needed for perfection, such as kindness and courage. Irenaeus believed that eventually, all evil be overcome and all humans will dwell together in heaven.

Whilst this attempt seems justified in that it says how evil can have a positive purpose, it is also greatly flawed. For example, it says that evil is necessary for moral growth, however sometimes it can morally ~~degen~~ degrade, having the opposite effect. For example, it's very hard to see how a mother's daughter being brutally murdered can be positive and lead to moral development. Also, a further flaw is that if eventually all humans will dwell together in heaven, where is the motivation for developing good qualities. It is also very hard to justify ~~how~~ how the extent of evil could possibly have a positive outcome, as an all loving God would not allow terminal illnesses like cancer, and he would



be powerful enough to stop natural disasters, so this brings his nature and existence into question.

The free will defence, most commonly associated with Richard Swinburne, explains how God gave humans free will with the possibility of evil, which some choose to exercise. He explains that if humans had no free will, we would be no more than robots as we would be programmed to always act good. Therefore, Swinburne says that God even has to allow for mass killings like genocide because if he intervenes, it takes away human freedom.

Whilst this theory is stronger than the previous two, it is also weak in that it assumes that everyone has equal free will, however this is not the case. Also, it only really addresses moral evil, which is human based, as opposed to natural evil.

In the New Testament, links can be seen with the problem of suffering. For example, Jesus is said to be called the suffering servant, in which he died on the cross to save our sins. However, some believe the suffering servant is the Land of Israel. Also, in the gospels, Jesus permits war to happen,



like when he tells his disciples 'Sell your cloak to buy a sword', and says 'Those who live by the sword will die by the sword' which shows how he allows suffering to some extent.

To conclude, although various attempts have been made to justify the existence of evil regardless of God's nature, each attempt is more unsuccessful as they all propose serious problems, and therefore inconsistencies.



Question 4: Script ii

rest in conclusion - make judgement
physical weakness
mental suffering, moral wickedness
SECTION C
problem of evil
rock of atheism
John Hick
Anglican
A.N. Whitehead
free will
defence
become enlightened to see it for what it is.
(30)

Write your answer in the space provided.
Evaluate the view that the problem of suffering shows that ideas about the nature and existence of God are inconsistent.

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Philosophy of Religion have been influenced by one of the following:

- Religion and Ethics
- New Testament Studies
- Study of Religion.

prevalent
Catholicism
Buddhism
natural evil
moral evil
4 noble truths
dharma
part of life

The problem of evil presents a barrier to belief in God for the atheist and faith in God for the theist. David Hume called the problem of evil the "rock of atheism", since how can the God of classical theism who is omnipotent (all powerful), omniscient (all knowing) and omnibenevolent (all loving) allow evil to happen? Hume would certainly support the view that the problem of suffering shows that ideas about the nature and existence of God are inconsistent, and concluded himself that God does not exist.

J.L. Mackie was Hume's point of reference for concluding that due to the problem of evil, God does not exist. J.L. Mackie explored the inconsistency's of belief in the Abrahamic God's 3 attributes by presenting the inconsistent triad. This puts the 3 attr



tributes on the three points of a triangle, but one is always missing due to the presence of evil. God ~~cannot~~ be omnipotent and omniscient but not omnibenevolent. This is in conflict with idea of an all-loving God ("those who live in love live in God"). It also presents an issue of would you want to worship a God who willed evil despite the power to stop it. A Christian response may be that evil is a just punishment for the fall in Genesis. This then leaves God to only be omniscient and omnibenevolent but not omnipotent. Once again, is such a limited God worth worshipping? ~~and~~ If he knew evil would occur, should he have created the world at all? J-L Mackie demonstrates with the inconsistent triad that a solution is required to explain why God allows evil to occur and demonstrates the different views of God's attributes that are held in response by some.

Solutions to the problem of evil are put forward in theodicies. Theodicies are arguments that defend God's attributes in the face of evil. Moral evil (caused by immoral human action) is explainable by free will, by natural evil (the apparent malfunctioning of the natural world such as earthquakes) presents a trickier issue. This is because natural evil is beyond our control and the blame often falls to God, which



theodicies attempt to reconcile

St Augustine ~~rest~~ put forward his traditional theodicy ('Augustinian') which uses Genesis to explain the problem of evil. Augustine argued that God had created the world perfectly ("he saw what he had made and it was very good"). HE went on to say that evil is simply the privation of good, for example sickness is merely an absence of good health. Therefore, God did not create evil because he is omnibenevolent and evil is just a privation of good so does ^{not} preside as an entity itself. Augustine argued that evil, both moral and natural comes from the fall in Genesis. Original sin (disobeying God and eating from the tree of knowledge) meant God punished humanity since we were ~~pre~~ "seminally present in the loins of Adam". Adam and Eve disturbed the natural order by acquiring knowledge, causing natural evil and created moral evil through their disobedience. Augustine concludes that this is a just God rightly punishing ^{people} and that God shows his omnibenevolence by sending his son Jesus to die for our sins and allow believers a chance at eternal bliss.



Augustine's theodicy has been highly criticised. Schleiermacher arguably presents a convincing case. He references the issue that Augustine said the fall created moral evil and thus disobedience, but how did the Angels and humans know how to disobey in the first place? The illogical nature of Augustine's point here is a valid criticism. ~~Also~~ Furthermore, Augustine's argument is biologically unsound, as not all humans are 'seminally present in the loins of Adam'.* Augustine's theodicy also fails to stand up to evolution, which repudiate the notion that the world was made perfectly. It is arguably quite clear then, that original sin as an explanation for the problem of evil is outdated and weak.

Irenaeus offers a different theodicy to Augustine, despite agreeing that moral evil is created through freedom and disobedience. Irenaeus's theodicy is often referred to as 'soulmaking' as it focuses on evil as a necessary experience to make us 'perfect' moral beings. Irenaeus argues that there were no (which explains natural evil).

* This then asks the question, is it fair as humans must suffer evil? Is this really a 'just' God as Augustine claims?



stages to creation. The first was Genesis, where we were made in the 'image of God'. The second is a gradual development where we are working towards the 'likeness of God'. Irenaeus concludes that evil is present to provide conditions that test us and make us better people. This supports call the world a 'soul-making vale'. Irenaeus argued that eventually, all of humanity would reach moral perfection in heaven, where many would continue to develop because our time on earth is not long enough.

Irenaeus like us faced many criticisms just as Aquinas did. Primarily, that '~~that~~ his view of the afterlife is theologically unsound as well as ~~and~~ his claim that we are working towards the 'likeness of God'. There is the precedential problem of evil, the sheer amount of evil seems unnecessary to test us. Irenaeus also seems to suggest that evil will make us better people because it forces us to choose between good and bad. ~~at~~ However, many 'evils' make people worse and angry and do not better themselves. Arguably, Irenaeus does succeed in maintaining God's 3 attributes but his argument is weak in the sense that it does



not explain the sheer amount of evil in the world.

A less popular theodicy to explain the problem of evil is 'process theodicy' put forward by A.N. Whitehead. Whitehead suggests that God is not omnipotent but remains omniscient and omnibenevolent. This bold claim limits God and is unsupported by most theists since God's omnipotence is central to the Abrahamic God's character. Nonetheless, Whitehead claims that God ~~is~~ did not create the universe since he is part of the uncreated process himself. This theodicy claims that we are all in an interconnected momentary process, where good moral action promotes harmony in the universe and bad moral action creates natural evil. Whitehead goes as far to say that since the world is God's body in a sense, he ^{the} feels pain of natural evil and is our "fellow sufferer who understands".

Process theodicy is criticised for compromising God's nature and ~~one~~ is even said to not be a theodicy since it does not defend all three



of God's attributes. However, process theodicy is reticent of the Indian traditions such as Buddhism. The idea of anicca (change) is central to Buddhist teaching. and There is a belief that everything is interconnected. Certainly in the vedic Hindu tradition, the concept of Brahman as original source and all things Brahman reflects the momentary process which man observes of the world.

Buddhist response to the problem of suffering does not include a God and they simply view suffering (dukkha) as a fact of life (dhamma). This means there are less inconsistencies about the nature of being, ~~and change is cent~~ the four noble truths provide a clear response to the cause of suffering. The four noble truths diagnose the human condition and see desire (tanha) as the root of all evil. The wish for things to be different stops us from attaining nirvana. Enlightenment provides the necessary tools to deal with the problem of evil ~~so~~ so it is the goal in Theravada Buddhism and also central to Mahayana, including the



Bodhisattvas.

The clear response Buddhism provides to the problem of evil is not found in the theistic traditions, ~~such as Christianity~~ ~~use~~ The theodicies themselves demonstrate the variety of conclusions and justification reached when dealing with the problem of evil. Certainly, there are inconsistencies seen in descriptions in the nature and existence of God relating to the problem of suffering. All theodicies explored assume a belief in God and explain evil in these terms to justify his existence. However, to the atheist theodicies are inadequate forms of argument for God due to the assumption God exists at the beginning.