



Pearson Edexcel A Level Religious Studies Summer 2023 Feedback

Useful links to documents referred to in this session:

Course Specification:

- [Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in Religious Studies \(9RS0\)](#)

Principal Examiners' Reports:

- [GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 01](#)
- [GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 02](#)
- [GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 03](#)
- [GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 4A](#)
- [GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 4B](#)
- [GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 4C](#)
- [GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 4D](#)
- [GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 4E](#)
- [GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 4F](#)



A Level Religious Studies Exemplar Scripts

‘Explore’ question: Mark scheme.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1).• Knowledge and understanding addresses a narrow range of key religious ideas and beliefs with some inaccuracies (AO1).• Provides a superficial understanding of key religious ideas and beliefs (AO1).
Level 2	3–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1).• Knowledge and understanding addresses a narrow range of key religious ideas and beliefs (AO1).• Develops key religious ideas and beliefs to show a depth of understanding (AO1).
Level 3	6–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1).• Knowledge and understanding addresses a broad range of key religious ideas and beliefs (AO1).• Comprehensively develops key religious ideas and beliefs to show a depth of understanding (AO1).



'Explore' question: 'Where Candidates Did Well' (Page 1/1)

SECTION A

1:33 - 1:43

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

1 Explore key features of the ummah as an expression of Islamic identity.

P1: est. 622, Prophet + a need. P2: allows to for correct practice, e.g. Shahadah (8)

To begin with, one ~~primary~~ key feature of the ummah as an expression of Islamic identity is the history of which it was formed, due to a need to establish a community. This can be seen as the prophet established the ummah in 622, after the Hira to Yathrib, now known as Madinah, following the persecution of Muslims by the Meccas (614-618), and even after this was lifted there were clear limitations on the spread of Islam, including that the prophet could only preach on the outskirts of Mecca. This led to the local saint pledges of Aqaba (621, 622) leading to the Hira. This was a key feature of the ummah as it was a need to be able to freely express himself, allowing the ummah to be established in Madinah and the community to grow.

Another key feature of the ummah as an expression of identity is the idea that the ummah allows for correct practice due to the support from other Muslims. This can be seen in relation to Salah as to pray five times a day is very hard and can be difficult to execute, linking to the idea that life is a test. However, the ummah existing allows for this struggle to be shared and therefore embraced, knowing that you're not alone. This means that the ummah helps to craft Islamic identity due to shared struggles and being able to have support by those aiming for the same thing (greater Jihad).

(Total for Question 1 = 8 marks)



'Explore' question: 'Where Candidates Did **Not** Do Well'. (Page 1/1)

SECTION A

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

- 1 Explore key features of the ummah as an expression of Islamic identity.

Salah (8)

↑

Ramadan.

The ummah is the Islamic community which is very important to Muslims and their Islamic identities.

Through acts such as Salah (praying five times a day) and Ramadan (annual period of fasting) the ummah is brought together and bonds through their shared love and worship of Allah. Community is a large part of Islamic community in these acts.

In the eyes of Allah, all members of the ummah are equal. This is an important element of the ummah. Muslims know that despite their wealth or gender within the ummah they have equality and community.

(Total for Question 1 = 8 marks)



‘Assess’ question: Mark scheme.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1). Information/issues are identified (AO2). Judgements are supported by generalised arguments (AO2).
Level 2	5–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deconstructs religious information/issues which lead to a simplistic chain of reasoning (AO2). Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made (AO2).
Level 3	9–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1). Critically deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question (AO2).



'Assess' question: 'Where Candidates Did Well' (Page 1/3)

Gentile - Logos - Dead Sea Scrolls, Judaism - Logos - the word of God
Children of Light
Manna Bread - suffering servant
Key to the Gospel (12)
Manna Hooker

2 Assess differing views about the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel

The Prologue is a short introduction to John's Gospel. It outlines key themes in the life of Jesus, such as eternal life. This is different to other gospels such as Matthew and Luke which begin with a birth narrative or genealogy. Manna Hooker says the Prologue is the 'Key' to the Fourth Gospel.

Some of the ideas in the Prologue seem to appeal to Gentiles. Firstly, they would have been familiar with the idea of the Logos, the word of God, which would help Gentiles to better understand Jesus' mission and teachings[†]. To add to this, there is ideas of Gnosticism - flesh and spirit as separate and themes of light and darkness. This could perhaps help Gentiles to understand themes such as Jesus' spirit living on after his death. This is important as many describe the Fourth Gospel as a Spiritual Gospel. John has great knowledge of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, which guides the disciples to carry on the work of Jesus. The Gentiles could therefore understand that the Bible is the word of God. Furthermore, the themes of light and darkness, how it ~~was~~ Jesus who ^{will bring} brought the 'light' into the world helps Gentiles understand later in the Gospels when Jesus says 'I am the light of the world' as it

* In the beginning was the word and the word was with God *



uses themes that they are familiar with. This therefore seems to be a strong argument. However, the Gentiles do not view the Logos as a physical reality but more as a way of life which might impair their understanding of Jesus as the Word or God. To add to this, it is believed that Christian Gnosticism did not come until ~~much~~ later than when John's Gospel was written. This may suggest that the Prologue was a later addition to the Fourth Gospel. This is also supported by the idea that themes such as Logos, are mentioned in the Prologue, but not mentioned in the main part of the Gospel itself.

Some would argue that the supposedly 'Gentile' themes do not suggest a Gentile^{or Jew} but a Jewish audience. This is supported by Raymond Brown ~~to~~ who points to the existence of the Dead Sea Scrolls. These ~~scrolls~~ were Jewish scrolls that spoke of themes such as light and darkness. Therefore, it suggests that these themes are not solely for Gentiles but Jews would have also understood them. This may mean that the Prologue was included to help Jews understand the person of Jesus. This is a strong argument as it supported by various references to Jewish ideas in the Gospel. Firstly, the Prologue begins with 'In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God'. The Jews would have



'Assess' question: 'Where Candidates Did Well' (Page 3/3)

understood this as it is a direct reference to Genesis, the first book in Genesis. Secondly, John references the manna bread and eternal life in the Prologue. This will help the Jews understand Jesus' 'I am' saying in the Gospel itself, 'I am the bread of life'. This is because it suggests that though the manna bread the Jews had in the desert spoiled and was not eternal, the bread Jesus provides is eternal - his teachings provide eternal life. Finally, he references the Jews as the 'children of God' in the prologue, which Jews are familiar with, as they believe they are God's children innately from birth, but Jesus strays from the traditional sense - the only way one can become a child of God and receive eternal life is by believing, not about, but in Jesus. These points are slightly weakened by the fact Jews would not believe that God is one, so would view Jesus being the human word of God as blasphemous. Therefore, possibly they would reject the ideas in the prologue.

To conclude, the Prologue does ^{illustrate} ~~show~~ both Gentile and Jewish themes but it is likely that it is a later addition. This is because it seems to explain ideas of the Gospel, but also add in extra such as Logos, so may have been edited at a later date by a redactor.

(Total for Question 2 = 12 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 20 MARKS

HA066403620



'Assess question: 'Where Candidates Did **Not** Do Well'. (Page 1/1)

John Baptist

Hooker & Key to Gospels

2 Assess differing views about the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel.

(12)

Morna Hooker argues that the Prologue is "a key to opening up the gospels", providing the view that the Prologue is important and is needed. As the prologue has distinctive themes of holiness as well as not explicitly referring to Jesus at the beginning, Hooker argues that we are given the key and key a deeper understanding of what the Gospels exactly say. They provide us with prophecies from Isaiah and Jeremiah and Micah, such as "The messiah will be born of a virgin" in the Old Testament, with Mary being told she is pregnant by God even though she is a virgin. Another example can be seen through the story of a dream in Bethlehem.



'Clarify' question: Mark scheme.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1). Knowledge and understanding of key religious ideas and beliefs is superficial (AO1). Knowledge and understanding addresses a narrow range of key religious ideas and beliefs with some inaccuracies that are not directly linked to the extract (AO1).
Level 2	4–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). Knowledge and understanding of key religious ideas and beliefs is detailed, however it is not fully developed (AO1). Knowledge and understanding addresses a narrow range of key religious ideas and beliefs and are linked in most cases to reference from the extract (AO1).
Level 3	7–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1). Knowledge and understanding of key religious ideas and beliefs is detailed and fully developed (AO1). Knowledge and understanding addresses a broad range of key religious ideas and beliefs and is fully linked to references from the extract (AO1).

'Clarify' question: 'Where Candidates Did Well'. (Page 1/2)



In this extract by John Hick from his work in his book 'The Metaphor God Incarnate' John Hick details his beliefs about atonement theory, and the sacrifice of Jesus to deliver humanity from sin. Hick's atonement theory is based off of his other work around his belief that God allows evil to exist in order for people to close the epistemic distance between God and humanity through soul making, following the moral exemplar of Jesus in order to become as close as possible to the perfect child of God. Therefore Hick's atonement theory sees Jesus as a moral exemplar and thus Jesus did not free humanity from sin because this would make humanity morally irresponsible. Hick first shows this view where he raises the question, whether 'repentance, apology, reparation and penance – can be carried over unchanged into our relationship with God' this shows that Hick questions whether it is worth repenting, apologising, pay reparations and penance if one is already atoned from original sin. This is because Hick's belief is that sin still exists and thus repenting, apologising, pay reparations and penance is somewhat pointless because evil and suffering is vital in order for one to do good to close the epistemic distance. This leads Hick to continue this point where he states that 'I suggest that when we have offered reparation-plus-penance to human beings whom we have injured, there is no further reparation-plus-penance to be made solely for God's benefit', this shows that Hick believes that once evil and suffering has occurred one must do good and repent but not solely to God in order to win over God, but pay reparation-plus-penance to those harmed in order to follow Jesus' example as the moral exemplar, and 'love thy neighbour'. This is because God does not require an apology but rather sees one do a good deed through making amends and doing good deeds on earth, thus showing the need for evil in order to permit soulmaking. Hick's next idea in the passage is his narrow atonement model which shows a transactional idea of atonement theory, where one repents for their sin as a transaction for a seat in heaven and the transaction of the death of Jesus to save humanity from sin. Hick states 'God cannot be benefitted, and thus recompensed and atoned to...' this shows to those who believe in the

'Clarify' question: 'Where Candidates Did Well'. (Page 2/2)



transactional view of atonement such as the ransom theory cannot work because God cannot benefit from being atoned to, but instead the person who is atoning must atone through transformational atonement theory, such as John Hick's soul making theodicy following Jesus as the moral exemplar.

Hick goes on to develop this point and end the passage by stating 'But it is not... appropriate to express that fact by depicting his death as an atoning sacrifice that benefits God and so enables God to forgive humanity', this shows that it is wrong to believe in the narrow idea of atonement theory because just because Jesus' sacrificed humanity from original sin does not mean that God should have forgiven humanity, instead God forgave humanity out of love, for no benefit of his own, and allowed us free will and evils in the world to learn from and become as close to Jesus' moral exemplar as possible in order to close the epistemic distance each person has between themselves and God and thus earn a seat in heaven from being the most virtuous person they can possibly be.

'Clarify' question: 'Where Candidates Did **Not** Do Well'. (Page 1/2)



SECTION B

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

Read the following passage before answering the questions.

The question that has to be asked is whether... repentance, apology, reparation and penance – can be carried over unchanged into our relationship with God... Repentance, and apology as an expression of repentance, still apply; the sinner should truly and deeply repent and ask God's forgiveness... I suggest that when we have offered reparation-plus-penance to the human beings whom we have injured, there is no further reparation-plus-penance to be made solely for God's benefit. In doing all we can to repair matters with our wronged neighbour we are doing what genuine repentance requires. For God cannot be benefitted, and thus recompensed and atoned to... In relation to God the truly penitent person... can only accept forgiveness as a free gift of grace, undeserved and unearned. It may well be Jesus' life and teaching that prompt someone to do this. But it is not... appropriate to express that fact by depicting his death as an atoning sacrifice that benefits God and so enables God to forgive humanity.

(Source: extract adapted from 'The Metaphor of God Incarnate' Hick, J., Edexcel Anthology)

- 3 (a) Clarify the ideas about Hick's views illustrated in this passage.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

This passage is written by Hick who argues that atonement ~~is not needed~~ is needed by humans. Firstly, Hick argues that when we do bad things in our lives we try to 'repent, apologise...' for what we have done wrong however this affects our relationship with God as we are going against him. Therefore we ask for God's 'forgiveness' so we can spend eternity with him in heaven. However, Hick argues that we should also apologise to the person we have hurt, not just God for the sake of getting into heaven and for God's benefit. Thus we should be civil to the 'wronged neighbour' (the person we have hurt) because then we are truly sorry for what we have done. Jesus lived a perfect and

'Clarify' question: 'Where Candidates Did **Not** Do Well'. (Page 2/2)



sin free life (moral exemplar) which will inspire us as Christians to follow his example of life and live sin free. However, this argues that just because Jesus died to take away our sins it does not mean that God has to forgive us straight away. We have to be truly apologetic for our sinful behaviour, and that is the point of living an immoral life if we know we will go to heaven regardless.

‘Analyse’ question: Mark scheme.



Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1). Information/issues are selected (AO2). Makes basic connections between a limited range of elements in the question (AO2). Judgements are supported by generic arguments (AO2).
Level 2	5–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, some of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). Deconstructs religious information/issues (AO2). Makes connections between a limited range of elements in the question (AO2). Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made with little or no attempt to appraise evidence (AO2).
Level 3	9–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). Deconstructs religious information/issues, which lead to a simple chain of reasoning (AO2). Makes connections between many but not all of the elements in the question (AO2). Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made, which are supported by an attempt to appraise evidence (AO2).
Level 4	13–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected, most of which are used appropriately and accurately throughout (AO1). Deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). Makes connections between a wide range of elements in the question (AO2). Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of many but not all of the elements in the question, which are supported by the appraisal of some evidence (AO2).
Level 5	17–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1). Critically deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). Makes connections between the full range of elements in the question (AO2). Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question, which are fully supported by the comprehensive appraisal of evidence (AO2).

‘Analyse’ question: ‘Where Candidates Did Well’. (Page 1/3)



1:10 - 1:30 - 1:45 - 2:15 = 2:55

(b) Analyse the view that Situation Ethics fails to offer a convincing morality.

(20)

Situation Ethics (SE) refers to the relativist ethic based on 'agape' unconditional love to decide the morality of an action. It was developed by Joseph Fletcher following the 1966 study on sex and morality which highlighted the fact that individuals were moving away from legalism (established laws and rules) towards antinomianism which is the abandonment of all rules. SE was devised by Fletcher to bring individuals back to the teachings of Jesus through adoptive normative standards.

SE is an ethic based on moral relativism which is the belief in anti-realism. Morality is deemed to be created rather than discovered. Relativism within SE is a strength of the ethic as it means individual circumstances are accounted for as there is no fixed basis for rules which absolutism poses. Moral relativism also ensures there is no moral rigidity which allows individuals to practice morality through their personal evaluations. This means that the individual is considered the centre of SE which is a strength to the ethic of individual autonomy.

'Analyse' question: 'Where Candidates Did Well'. (Page 2/3)



is a natural right.

However, there are also fundamental issues within SE's moral relativism as there is no clear basis for which decisions to make. Therefore, it is convoluted and can produce harmful decisions. Furthermore, the ethic is weakened by its optimistic belief that all humans have the capacity to reason which decision produces the most agree. Lastly, the subjective nature of SE means there is no standard for morality and any individual can argue that their decision was out of love even for humans actions.

Fletcher devised the four working principles to clarify SE. Personism, ~~emphasised~~ strengthened the ethic by ensuring the individual was at the center of their decision. Positivism, strengthened the ethic by asserting that love is the best calculator for morality which ensures individuals act out of love on all their decisions. Pragmatism, strengthened the ethic by producing a practical approach to moral decision making rather than being bound by fixed rules. Finally, Relativism ensured circumstances and context was accounted for when one made their decision.

'Analyse' question: 'Where Candidates Did Well'. (Page 3/3)



constitutes a loving action. ~~the~~ Lastly, Bordy highlighted the likelihood of individuals to be swayed by factors such as fear or emotion.

However, SE can be considered an effective ethic as Robinson highlights that it brings biblical teachings towards a growing secular society. Furthermore, agape was the fundamental precept of Jesus' message to "love thy neighbour." The moral relativity of SE also allows it to be implemented in any society whilst respecting cultural norms. Therefore, ~~there~~ no normative ethic has a monopoly on moral truth.

In conclusion, SE does indeed fail to ~~be~~ offer a convincing morality as it is based on subjective principles which have no fixed standard. Any individual can interpret agape whichever way they see fit which reduces SE to moral absurdity.

'Analyse' question: 'Where Candidates Did **Not** Do Well'. (Page 1/1)



(b) Analyse the view that Situation Ethics fails to offer a convincing morality.

(20)

Situation ethics although very universal and able to adapt over time along with society, it does not demonstrate a clear path to take when faced with moral dilemmas. Therefore actions may not always be as intrinsically good as the individual would have hoped. Because all situations are different and unique, Fletcher developed his basic principles to help us have an understanding of why we do not need "prefabricated rules and laws and principles". Fletcher believed that nothing in the world is intrinsically right or wrong. This makes it very hard to act in a way we know is best for the situation we are put in. This highlights weaknesses in situation ethics when offering a convincing morality because it provides little guidance to the individual on how to choose a good or bad approach.

Robinson's development of Agape love however provides situation ethics with a demonstration from Jesus of how to always show unconditional love to others.

'Evaluate' question: Mark scheme.



Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1). Information/issues are identified (AO2). Makes basic connections between a limited range of elements in the question (AO2). Judgements are supported by generic arguments (AO2). Judgements made with no attempt to appraise evidence (AO2). Conclusions are provided but are simplistic and/or generic (AO2).
Level 2	7–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, some of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). Deconstructs religious information/issues (AO2). Makes connections between a limited range of elements in the question (AO2). Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made (AO2). Judgements made with little or no attempt to appraise evidence (AO2). Conclusions are provided, which loosely draw together ideas but with little or no attempt to justify (AO2).
Level 3	13–18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). Deconstructs religious information/issues, which lead to a simplistic chain of reasoning (AO2). Makes connections between many but not all of the elements in the question (AO2). Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made (AO2). Judgements are supported by an attempt to appraise evidence (AO2). Conclusions are provided, which logically draw together ideas and are partially justified (AO2).
Level 4	19–24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected, most of which are used appropriately and accurately throughout (AO1). Deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). Makes connections between a wide range of elements in the question (AO2). Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of many but not all of the elements in the question (AO2). Reasoned judgements are supported by the appraisal of some evidence (AO2). Convincing conclusions are provided, which fully and logically draw together ideas and are partially justified (AO2).
Level 5	25–30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1). Critically deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). Makes connections between the full range of elements in the question (AO2). Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question (AO2). Reasoned judgements are fully supported by the comprehensive appraisal of evidence (AO2). Convincing conclusions are provided which fully and logically draw together ideas and are fully justified (AO2).

‘Evaluate’ question: ‘Where Candidates Did Well’. (Page 1/8)



SECTION C

Write your answer in the space provided.

→ strengths & religious critiques.

4 Evaluate the claim that critiques of religious belief provide decisive challenges to religion.

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 a Religion.

(Plan =) (30)

Agree (challenges) =	Disagree =
1) creation challenges = science v teleological, a. & causation, Hume, Dawkins.	1) strengths & religious views & creation = Paley, teleological, a posteriori, gravity.
2) morality challenge = (links to ethics) opposed & Dawkins, Russell debate VS WML.	2) rectification & lang. games = (ethics) intuition, Wittgenstein lang. games, Tillich 'symbol'.
3) Russell's superior arguments in debate = existence not predicated, illogical causation, i.e. subjective.	3) strengths & Cop. = logical 'necessary being', reasonable in causation + i.e., 'morality & objects'.
4) i.e. = franks ^{Paul's} friend, Vardy	4) i.e. ⊕ = ^{saul} alto - lane

Answer =

The critiques of religious beliefs have significantly challenged religion in many

'Evaluate' question: 'Where Candidates Did Well'. (Page 2/8)



areas. A few of these are clear in: the debate about creation, the question of morality and religious experiences. Whilst these critiques to religion have sparked debate, I would ultimately argue that they have failed to sufficiently challenge religious belief, on the grounds that these questions still haven't been solved.

One reason why you could agree that critiques of religious belief have provided decisive challenges to religion, is due to their strengths of demystifying creation. For example, this was clear in the Copleston-Russell debate, during which Russell convincingly put down many religious arguments; one example of this, was his critique that existence is not a predicate, as Copleston assumes in his ontological argument, and that the concepts of 'causation' and 'contingency' can't be applied to a transcendent being. This strongly criticized religion through the 'fallacy of composition', showing it to make assumptions about nature. This

'Evaluate' question: 'Where Candidates Did Well'. (Page 3/8)



can be similarly observed in Hume's strong critiques of the teleological argument, suggesting that 'the universe may contain the spring or order within itself as well as the mind does', using the evidence that some particles can come in and out of existence independently as proof. This was a convincing critique of religious beliefs about creation, as it highlighted their inherent inconsistencies, and how the universe may be its own cause for existence.

On the contrary, you could argue that critiques of religious beliefs haven't been challenged enough, as religious creationist beliefs are still prevalent and logical. For example, this is clear in the reason of Copleston's 'causation' argument for God's existence, that, using Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason, it would be logical to assume the existence of an uncaused cause to prevent infinite regress. This shows how Copleston draws upon logic in his religious assertions against Russell. This argument can be extended to the 'a

'Evaluate' question: 'Where Candidates Did Well'. (Page 4/8)



posterior' nature of the teleological argument, drawing upon experience to show God's existence, such as the universe being 'providential in nature' (Summers), with the force of gravity, and how the earth would be sterile and lifeless if it was different. This convincingly shows how religious beliefs are logical and continue to be argued, which suggests that critique hasn't been strong enough to render their claims weak. Therefore, decisive challenges have not been made to religious beliefs about creation, as they continue to be upheld by parallel religions such as Christianity, and fiercely debated.

Another reason why you might argue that critiques of religious beliefs have decisively challenged religion, is due to their challenges to morality. For example, this links to the critical study of 'religion and morality', where Rawls and Sharpe materialistically criticise

'Evaluate' question: 'Where Candidates Did Well'. (Page 5/8)



the relationship between religion and morality in Natural Moral Law, suggesting that the two concepts are actually opposed than united; Rawls says that 'science is deeply corrosive to religion', and draws upon religious terror, such as the 9/11 Islamic terrorist attacks, to show how religion motivates evil. Further, Russell criticized this relationship in his debate with Copleston, maintaining that they are independent concepts (good and evil), using the analogy of 'blue and yellow' to show how they can be distinguished. This strongly suggests that the relationship between religion and morality has come under major scrutiny in recent times, showing how critiques to religious beliefs have shown religion to be weak.

However, you could argue that challenges to religious belief have not been decisive, as religious language theories have been strong in proving the meaningfulness of language. For example, this was clear in Wittgenstein's language games theory, which suggests

'Evaluate' question: 'Where Candidates Did Well'. (Page 6/8)



that religious people and scientists are playing two different games of language with completely separate rules, showing why there are conflicts in science and religion. This can be made more convincing when Wittgenstein said, 'whereof we cannot know, thereof we cannot speak'. This shows how language games has solved the conflict of science and religion. The argument can be made stronger, in the limitation of verification in showing religious language as meaningful; this is largely because Ayer's verification principle is self-contradictory, and can't be verified itself. Therefore, this coherently displays how challenges to religion have largely failed, due to the continued use of religious language, and stronger theory of Wittgenstein compared to Ayer.

A third reason why you could agree that critiques of religious belief have decisively challenged religion, is due to the criticisms of religious experience. For

'Evaluate' question: 'Where Candidates Did Well'. (Page 7/8)



example, vardy highlights the subjective nature of religious experiences, and how they can't be used as conclusive evidence. More, Caroline Franks-Rees provides a strong critique in her 'description-related problems' with religious experience, and how the experience tends to be inconsistent in their recollection of events; this was clear with St Teresa of Avila, who claimed Jesus was physically at her side, but later said it was merely symbolic. This shows how critique of religious experience has been strong in determining the existence of God. Moreover, Freud provides a psychological explanation, suggesting humans have an innate need for a God in their lives that they can depend on, and therefore we mis-interpret events as a religious experience. This clearly demonstrates the issues posed by religious experiences, and how they have been strongly critiqued.

On the other hand, you could suggest that the argument from religious experience is stronger in its nature, than its critiques. For example, Copleston convincingly shows how it's logical to



assume that there is 'some objective cause of that experience', being God. Moreover, ^{William} James highlights the 'ineffable' and 'transient' nature of religious experiences, which makes them more convincing. An example, is the story of Saul on the Road to Damascus, who converted from a Christian persecutor, to a loyal follower of Jesus after a mystical, vision experience. This strongly exhibits the notion that religious experiences must have a reason other than Freud's psychological explanation, and that attempts of critique have failed to show their existence. Therefore, challenges to religious belief have failed to decisively discount religious experiences.

In conclusion, I disagree with the view that critiques of religious beliefs have decisively challenged religion. This is largely because debates surrounding religious experience and God's existence continue, and how critics have failed to discount religious claims.

(Total for Question 4 = 30 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION C = 30 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 80 MARKS

'Evaluate' question: 'Where Candidates Did **Not** Do Well'. (Page 1/2)



SECTION C

Write your answer in the space provided.

- 4 Evaluate the claim that critiques of religious belief provide decisive challenges to religion.

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 a Religion.

(30)

Within this essay we will be evaluating the positives and negatives of critiques of religious beliefs including works from a range of scholars such as Aquinas and Hume.

One may agree to with the statement that "critiques of religious belief provide decisive challenges to religion" as it allows for religious belief to be argued and criticised. Within philosophy there are a range of beliefs that go against the existence of God and the idea of a faith being contradicted and one of the main contributors to this is David Hume who believed that religious belief is pointless as "if there is no evidence to prove there ^{being} a God existing, then why should there be any reason for ~~God~~ a faith existing as it is unreasonable to assume it exists without any sort of evidence backing it up to prove it actually existing.

ELA/HR/RS/2023/001

'Evaluate' question: 'Where Candidates Did **Not** Do Well'. (Page 2/2)



On the other hand, some scholars may argue that there is more than one way to experience God and that God can be experienced via an analogy and by the use of symbols. A key scholar and philosopher Paul Tillich argues that objects can be a way of experiencing a Godly figure and a way of experiencing faith whether that be a rosary with a cross for Christians or going to observing the crucifix of Christ; these symbols can be used to identify a ^{wholly} ~~completely~~ good experience of God. Within Sikhism there is a concept of taking anant (ambrosial nectar) to become closer with God and in this way it creates a way in which Sikhs can be apart of our congregation and experience the true power of God through coming together in a sangat or (congregation).

Overall, one reason why there has been critique of religious belief is because of ideas from scholars ~~such as~~.