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Other names

Pearson
Edexcel GCE

Centre Number

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Religious Studies

Advanced

**Unit 4: Implications – The Study of Philosophy
of Religion**

Tuesday 27 June 2017 – Morning

Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Paper Reference

6RS04/1A

You do not need any other materials.

Total Marks

Instructions

- Use **black** ink or ball-point pen.
- **Fill in the boxes** at the top of this page with your name, centre number and candidate number.
- Read the passage carefully.
- Answer **BOTH** part (a) and part (b) of the question.
- Answer the questions in the spaces provided
– *there may be more space than you need.*

Information

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- The marks for **each** question are shown in brackets
– *use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question.*
- Quality of written communication will be taken into account in the marking of your response
– *you should take particular care with your spelling, punctuation and grammar, as well as the clarity of expression.*

Advice

- The assessment of your answers will be based on your knowledge and understanding of the topic in question (for 60% of the marks) and your evaluative skills (for 40% of the marks).

Turn over ►

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Philosophy of Religion

It can be called the religion of the Enlightenment. The horror of religious warfare and persecution hung heavy over European history, and when Enlightenment thinkers did not espouse an entirely anti-religious materialism, they sought above all to define a religion that would foster moral unity rather than immoral hostility within and among human societies.

This political agenda had both epistemological and ecclesiastical ramifications. For it was believed that a non-violent religion could only rest on the universality of reason and not on the particularity of any special revelation; nor could it reside in any church or sect which claimed authority in matters of faith and practice on the basis of such a revelation. In this context, Enlightenment rationalism (or the autonomy of reason) does not signify a rejection of the empiricist appeal to experience in favor of a purely a priori mode of thought; it rather signifies an appeal made by rationalists and empiricists alike to limit religion to those grounds, whether a priori or experiential, which are available to all people, at all times, and in all places. The contrast is not between reason and experience but between reason and faith, in so far as the latter is tied to special revelation and a particular 'church'.

Thus the deist project is motivated by three powerful, interlocking Enlightenment motifs: an epistemic concern for the autonomy of a universal human reason, a political concern for religious tolerance, and an anti-clericalism designed to deny to the church both epistemic and political authority. This project clearly antedates the prevalence of the assumption, bemoaned by Hegel, that we do not know God and must therefore talk about religion. It is confident that, in one way or another, unaided human reason can know all we need to know about God. Still, in seeking to distinguish good religion (morally and politically speaking) from bad religion it begins the shift to philosophizing about religion. It is unembarrassed by talk about God, but it spends more of its energy talking about religion as a human, all too human social reality that is, for better and often for worse, a player on the stage we call history. The problem is less to prove God's existence than to make religion the ally rather than the enemy of morality.

(Source: adapted from Westphal, M. 'The emergence of modern philosophy of religion', Quinn, P. and Taliaferro, C. (ed) *A Companion to the Philosophy of Religion*, Blackwell, 2002, Edexcel Anthology)

- 1 (a) Examine the argument and/or interpretation in the passage. (30)
- (b) Do you agree with the idea(s) expressed? Justify your point of view and discuss its implications for understanding religion and human experience. (20)

(Total for Question 1 = 50 marks)

Start your answer on Page 3.

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TOTAL FOR PAPER 1A = 50 MARKS

