

Paper Reference(s)

**9871**

**Edexcel GCE**

**Religious Studies**

**Advanced Extension Award**

Tuesday 23 June 2009 – Afternoon

Time: 3 hours

**Materials required for examination**

Answer book (AB16)

**Items included with question papers**

Nil

**Instructions to Candidates**

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In the boxes on the answer book, write your centre number, candidate number, your surname and initial(s), the paper reference and your signature. The paper reference is shown above.

Answer TWO questions, one from Section A and one from Section B.

Write your answers in the answer book provided.

You must ensure that your answers to parts of questions are clearly numbered.

Additional answer sheets may be used.

**Information for Candidates**

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The marks for individual questions and the parts of questions are shown in round brackets: e.g. (2).

There are 21 questions in this question paper. The total mark for this paper is 80.

All questions carry 40 marks.

There are 8 pages in this question paper. Any blank pages are indicated.

**Advice to Candidates**

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You should spend no more than 30 minutes reading the paper and deciding your choice of questions.

You will be assessed on your ability to organise and present information, ideas, descriptions and arguments clearly and logically, taking account of your use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

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**Answer TWO questions,  
ONE from Section A and ONE from Section B**

**SECTION A**

**Answer ONE question from this section. Write your answer in the answer book provided.**

**You may answer the question from the point of view of one or more religious tradition(s).**

**You should use the knowledge, understanding and skills which you have gained from  
your areas of study.**

1. ‘There are two ways in which scripture might be a source of morals or rules for living. One is by direct instruction, for example, through the Ten Commandments...the other is by example, God or some other biblical character might give us a role model. Both scriptural routes...encourage a system of morals which any civilised person, whether religious or not, would find, and I can put it no more gently – obnoxious. To be fair, much of the Bible is not systematically evil but just plain weird...those who wish to base their morality literally on the Bible have either not read it or not understood it.’

(a) Analyse the argument and/or interpretation in the passage above.

**(20)**

(b) Discuss the implications of the passage for understanding religion and human experience.

**(20)**

**(Total 40 marks)**

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2. ‘With regard to the London bombings [on July 7th 2005]...everyone is being blamed, from the obvious villainous duo of George W. Bush and Tony Blair, to the inaction of the religious ‘communities’. But it has never been clearer that there is only one place to lay the blame and it has ever been thus. The cause of all this misery, mayhem, violence, terror and ignorance is, of course, religion.’

(a) Analyse the argument and/or interpretation in the passage above.

**(20)**

(b) Discuss the implications of the passage for understanding religion and human experience.

**(20)**

**(Total 40 marks)**

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3. The fear of God links reverence before the majesty of the 'ever greater God' with a childlike basic trust in his immeasurable goodness and curiosity about his creative activity in the history of the cosmos, the history of life, and in personal history. The fear of God does not make people slaves of an unloved Almighty, it is merely the other side of the love of God...

The fear of God is a blessing in that it can free modern men and women from the God-complex which has made them drunk with power and induced the mad illusion that the ascendancy that they have acquired over nature makes every thing possible. The fear of God can beget the wisdom which lends human beings power over their own power. We do not have to do everything we are able to do.

(a) Analyse the argument/interpretation in the passage above. (20)

(b) Discuss the implications of the passage for understanding religion and human experience. (20)

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**(Total 40 marks)**

4. Until recently it would have seemed eccentric to publish a companion to the theology of a specific period in religious history. Towards the end of the twentieth century theology came to be seen by many as marginal to the study of the history of religion. This was in reaction to the 'great man' approach in the past.... the motivating force in religious history was not to be found in the writings of the ecclesiastical elite. Attention turned to the 'simple folk'. They were discovered to be not mere recipients of elite preaching and teaching, but active agents who took from the preachers what related to their own experience... and developed in ways the preachers would never have countenanced. It was the social historian not the religious historian who seemed better equipped to ask the real question about religious history, 'What impact did it have on the ordinary people?'

(a) Analyse the argument/interpretation in the passage above. (20)

(b) Discuss the implications of the passage for the understanding of religion and human experience. (20)

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**(Total 40 marks)**

5. 'I don't believe in abortion. That's to say, leaving aside things that happen in war zones and so on, I don't believe in most of the abortions that take place in the world. I don't contest any woman's right, but I do contest the wisdom. It's a big thing to bring a child into the world, but it's a bigger thing to stop one coming into it.

I know all the arguments, but the decision, it seems to me, is always made at a place beyond argument. The same place where all the other decisions about things like love and faith are made.'

- (a) Analyse the argument and/or interpretation in the passage above. (20)
- (b) Discuss the implications of the passage for understanding religion and human experience. (20)

**(Total 40 marks)**

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6. 'Suppose someone were a believer and said: "I believe in a last judgement," and I said: "Well I'm not sure. Possibly." You would say that there was an enormous gulf between us. If he said "There is a German aeroplane overhead" and I said "Possibly. I'm not so sure," you'd say we were fairly near.

It isn't a question of my being anywhere near him, but on an entirely different plane, which you could express by saying: "You mean something altogether different, Wittgenstein."

- (a) Analyse the argument and/or interpretation in the passage. (20)
- (b) Discuss the implications of the passage for understanding religion and human experience. (20)

**(Total 40 marks)**

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7. 'Shamanistic religions... assume from the start, that on certain occasions man can rise to the level of the gods. And since man is thus, from the beginning, held to participate in the authority of the gods, there is scarcely any more impressive power that he can acquire. What the shamanistic séance thus protests is the dual omnipotence of God and man. It celebrates a confident and egalitarian view of man's relations with the divine, and perpetuates that original accord between God and man which those who have lost the ecstatic mystery can only nostalgically recall in myths of creation, or desperately seek in doctrines of personal salvation.'

- (a) Analyse the argument and/or interpretation in the passage above. (20)
- (b) Discuss the implications of the passage for understanding religion and human experience. (20)

**(Total 40 marks)**

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**TOTAL FOR SECTION A: 40 MARKS**

**SECTION B**

**Answer ONE question from this section. Write your answer in the answer book provided.**

**You may answer the question from the point of view of one or more religious tradition(s).**

**You should use the knowledge, understanding and skills which you have gained from your areas of study.**

8. ‘The scriptures are full of confusing and contradictory teachings and therefore are of no real use to anybody today.’

Analyse and evaluate this claim.

**(Total 40 marks)**

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9. ‘Religious faith is invalid because it is based on scriptures which do not stand up to serious scrutiny.’

Analyse and evaluate this claim.

**(Total 40 marks)**

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10. ‘For some, the task of theology is to provide a clear and comprehensive description of religious teachings. For others, it is thinking about important issues from the perspective of faith.’

Analyse and evaluate this claim.

**(Total 40 marks)**

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11. ‘God and salvation are universally available through all religious traditions.’

Analyse and evaluate this claim.

**(Total 40 marks)**

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12. ‘Theologians are the best people to write religious history.’

Analyse and evaluate this claim.

**(Total 40 marks)**

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13. ‘Historical insight is not an optional extra for anyone wishing to understand faith at work in society.’

Analyse and evaluate this claim.

**(Total 40 marks)**

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14. 'Religions tend to present diametrically opposed positions on moral dilemmas. So, a religious perspective on morality is of no use.'

Analyse and evaluate this claim.

**(Total 40 marks)**

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15. 'Ethical virtues are rooted in history and culture, and are not independent of social tradition.'

Analyse and evaluate this claim.

**(Total 40 marks)**

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16. 'God wants obedience, not rituals.'

Analyse and evaluate this claim.

**(Total 40 marks)**

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17. 'Religious rituals and practices help us to realise that we are not alone in the universe. They enable us to encounter God/ultimate reality and to discover truths that science could never tell us.'

Analyse and evaluate this claim.

**(Total 40 marks)**

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18. 'A philosophical study of religious and scientific beliefs concludes that either these beliefs are fundamentally compatible with each other, or they rule each other out.'

Analyse and evaluate this claim.

**(Total 40 marks)**

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19. 'The atheistic position is at its weakest when faced with the claims of religious experience.'

Analyse and evaluate this claim.

**(Total 40 marks)**

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20. 'Disciplines such as psychology and sociology provide distinctive and indispensable insights into religion.'

Analyse and evaluate this claim.

**(Total 40 marks)**

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21. 'Naturalistic attempts to explain the phenomena of religion are reductionist and must end in failure.'

Analyse and evaluate this claim.

**(Total 40 marks)**

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**TOTAL FOR SECTION B: 40 MARKS**

**TOTAL FOR PAPER: 80 MARKS**

**END**

Quotations in Section A of this paper are in most cases taken from original texts, and except for omissions, their language has normally been left unaltered.

**Sources used in Section A of this question paper**

- Question 1: Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Bantam Press 2006), p.237
- Question 2: Muriel Gray, (Glasgow Herald, July 24th 2005)
- Question 3: Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology* (SCM 2000), pp338–340
- Question 4: *A Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*, p.1
- Question 5: Barnes J, *Love etc* (Picador 2001), p.244
- Question 6: Wittgenstein L, *Lectures and Conversations* (Blackwell 1966), p.53
- Question 7: Lewis I, *Ecstatic Religion* (Penguin 1975), p.205