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# A-level RELIGIOUS STUDIES 7062/2A

Paper 2A Study of Religion and Dialogues: Buddhism

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Mark scheme

June 2023

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Version: 1.0 Final



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Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

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## Methods of Marking

It is essential that, in fairness to students, all examiners use the same methods of marking. The advice given here may seem very obvious, but it is important that all examiners follow it as exactly as possible.

1. If you have any doubts about the mark to award, consult your Team Leader.
2. Refer constantly to the mark scheme throughout marking. It is extremely important that it is strictly adhered to.
3. Remember, you must **always** credit **accurate, relevant and appropriate** answers which are not given in the mark scheme.
4. Do **not** credit material that is irrelevant to the question or to the stated target, however impressive that material might be.
5. If a one-word answer is required and a list is given, take the first answer (unless this has been crossed out).
6. If you are wavering as to whether or not to award a mark, the criterion should be, 'Is the student nearer those who have given a correct answer or those who have little idea?'
7. Read the information below about using Levels of Response mark schemes.
8. Be prepared to award the full range of marks. Do not hesitate to give full marks when the answer merits full marks or to give no marks where there is nothing creditable in an answer.
9. No half marks or bonus marks are to be used under any circumstances.
10. Remember, the key to good and fair marking is **consistency**. Do **not** change the standard of your marking once you have started.

## Levels of Response Marking

In A-level Religious Studies, differentiation is largely achieved by outcome on the basis of students' responses. To facilitate this, levels of response marking has been devised for many questions.

Levels of response marking requires a quite different approach from the examiner than the traditional 'point for point' marking. It is essential that the **whole response is read** and then **allocated to the level** it best fits.

If a student demonstrates knowledge, understanding and/or evaluation at a certain level, he/she must be credited at that level. **Length** of response or **literary ability** should **not be confused with genuine religious studies skills**. For example, a short answer which shows a high level of conceptual ability must be credited at that level. (If there is a band of marks allocated to a level, discrimination should be made with reference to the development of the answer.)

Levels are tied to specific skills. Examiners should **refer to the stated assessment target** objective of a question (see mark scheme) when there is any doubt as to the relevance of a student's response.

Levels of response mark schemes include either **examples** of possible students' responses or **material** which they might use. These are intended as a **guide** only. It is anticipated that students will produce a wide range of responses to each question.

It is a feature of levels of response mark schemes that examiners are prepared to reward fully, responses which are obviously valid and of high ability but do not conform exactly to the requirements of a particular level. This should only be necessary occasionally and where this occurs examiners must indicate, by a brief written explanation, why their assessment does not conform to the levels of response laid down in the mark scheme. Such scripts should be referred to the Lead Examiner.

## Assessment of Quality of Written Communication

Quality of written communication will be assessed in all components and in relation to all assessment objectives. Where students are required to produce extended written material in English, they will be assessed on the quality of written communication. The quality of written communication skills of the student will be one of the factors influencing the actual mark awarded within the level of response. In reading an extended response, the examiner will therefore consider if it is cogently and coherently written, ie decide whether the answer:

- presents relevant information in a form that suits its purposes
- is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate, so that meaning is clear
- is suitably structured and that the style of writing is appropriate.

## LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

### Levels of Response: 10 marks A-level – AO1

- Level 5**  
**9–10**
- Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate, relevant and fully developed in breadth and depth with very good use of detailed and relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate.
  - Where appropriate, good knowledge and understanding of the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion is demonstrated.
  - Clear and coherent presentation of ideas with precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
- Level 4**  
**7–8**
- Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate and mostly relevant with good development in breadth and depth shown through good use of relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate.
  - Where appropriate, alternative views and/or scholarly opinion are explained.
  - Mostly clear and coherent presentation of ideas with good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
- Level 3**  
**5–6**
- Knowledge and critical understanding is generally accurate and relevant with development in breadth and/or depth shown through some use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate.
  - Where appropriate, there is some familiarity with the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion.
  - Some organisation of ideas and coherence with reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
- Level 2**  
**3–4**
- Knowledge and critical understanding is limited, with limited development in breadth and/or depth shown through limited use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate.
  - Where appropriate, limited reference may be made to alternative views and/or scholarly opinion.
  - Limited organisation of ideas and coherence and use of subject vocabulary.
- Level 1**  
**1–2**
- Knowledge and critical understanding is basic with little or no development.
  - There may be a basic awareness of alternative views and/or scholarly opinion.
  - Isolated elements of accurate and relevant information and basic use of appropriate subject vocabulary.
- 0**
- No accurate or relevant material to credit.

**Levels of Response: 15 marks A-level – AO2**

- Level 5**  
**13–15**
- A very well-focused response to the issue(s) raised.
  - Perceptive discussion of different views, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought with critical analysis.
  - There is an appropriate evaluation fully supported by the reasoning.
  - Precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
- Level 4**  
**10–12**
- A well-focused response to the issue(s) raised.
  - Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought, with some critical analysis.
  - There is an appropriate evaluation supported by the reasoning.
  - Good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
- Level 3**  
**7–9**
- A general response to the issue(s) raised.
  - Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought.
  - An evaluation is made that is consistent with some of the reasoning.
  - Reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.
- Level 2**  
**4–6**
- A limited response to the issue(s) raised.
  - Presentation of a point of view relevant to the issue with some supporting evidence and argument.
  - Limited attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary.
- Level 1**  
**1–3**
- A basic response to the issue(s) raised.
  - A point of view is stated, with some evidence or reason(s) in support.
  - Some attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary.
- 0**
- No accurate or relevant material to credit.

0 1 . 1

**Examine why there are different views about the application of ahimsa.**

**[10 marks]**

**Target: AO1.3:** Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

One reason why there are different views about the application of ahimsa is because Buddhism is a collection of many traditions. This can be found in the different approaches to the treatment of animals, for example eating meat. Many Buddhists are vegetarian because the killing of animals is not consistent with ahimsa. Many western Buddhist traditions are vegetarian. Some Mahayana Buddhists may follow key texts which advocate vegetarianism. In Theravada Buddhist countries, although vegetarianism is admired, it is often not practised.

Another reason for different applications of ahimsa is because there are different cultural influences in Buddhism. Many Buddhists argue, for example, that the death penalty is not consistent with ahimsa. This is because the killing of another sentient being goes against the first precept and may bring about negative karmic consequences. However, in some Buddhist countries, the death penalty is used for the purposes of retribution and deterrence. This tradition of the death penalty predates Buddhism but has been embraced by many Buddhists because those being executed have themselves ignored the concept of ahimsa.

A final reason for different applications of ahimsa is because there are different interpretations of Buddhist scriptures. Buddhist approaches to abortion illustrate this. For some Buddhists, abortion is wrong because of the cycle of rebirth; life begins at fertilisation, and karmic identity from one rebirth to the next is unbroken. Other Buddhists may allow abortion until the point in pregnancy at which the five aggregates, which constitute a person, have been developed.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that only explain different views.

0 1 . 2

**‘There is little agreement in Buddhism on concepts of Buddha.’**

**Evaluate this claim.**

**[15 marks]**

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to the consideration of the following specification content: Ultimate Reality: The key differences between the Theravada and Mahayana concepts of Buddha; the key features of the Trikaya doctrine in Mahayana Buddhism.

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

There is little agreement because within Buddhism there are many different concepts of Buddha. Some Buddhists describe the Buddha with superhuman attributes, for example that the Buddha’s birth was a miraculous conception. Others believe that he was a normal human being who was conceived naturally. However, most Buddhists agree that the Buddha was unique, and that superhuman attributes, whether real or metaphorical, point towards someone who is unique and special.

For Mahayana Buddhists there are many Buddhas, for example Amitabha Buddha. Theravada Buddhists only accept the historical Buddha, with the belief that another Buddha will arise in the next age. This means there is little agreement about the concept of Buddha. However, both traditions agree that a Buddha is an enlightened being, and that enlightened beings can lead others towards enlightenment. Therefore, there is considerable agreement about the nature and purpose of Buddha.

Mahayana Buddhists believe in the Trikaya, the three bodies of Buddha. For Mahayana Buddhists, one body of Buddha has special powers and can be called on to help those in need. Theravada Buddhism only recognises the earthly body of the Buddha. This means that there is little agreement on the concepts of Buddha. However, most Buddhists agree that the teachings and path of Buddha are a way to reach enlightenment, so there is substantial agreement about Buddha’s aim and purpose in the world.

0 2 . 1

**Examine how Buddhism responds to materialistic secular values.**

**[10 marks]**

**Target: AO1.1:** Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

One way that Buddhism responds to materialistic secular values is to reject them because they may lead to attachment and craving. Members of the monastic Sangha give up wealth and possessions, focusing on enlightenment and following the teachings of the Buddha. The Buddha gave up possessions and wealth when he realised that they would not help him to understand the truth of suffering, and eventually sought a middle way between the extremes of luxury and self-denial.

A second way that Buddhists respond is by embracing materialistic values. Members of the lay Sangha do not give up wealth and possessions, and in Mahayana Buddhism a wealthy person can become enlightened if wealth is gained in a wholesome way. For these Buddhists, the key moral issue is the way that the wealth is used and gained, rather than the wealth itself. They would agree that the focus of Buddhism is on spiritual wealth rather than material wealth, and it is possible to have both.

A third way that Buddhists respond to materialistic secular values is by trying to focus on the teachings of impermanence. Nothing is permanent, and clinging to wealth causes suffering. For Buddhists, material gain is only temporary, and so is the happiness it brings. The idea that material things can make people genuinely happy is one of the key misconceptions that Buddhism seeks to overcome. Suffering is caused by craving, which can be linked with materialism. This in turn acts as a barrier to enlightenment and the ending of Dukkha.

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**‘Buddhism responds successfully to the issues raised by genetic engineering.’**

**Evaluate this claim.**

**[15 marks]**

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Note that answers may, but need not, be limited to the consideration of the following specification content: Different Buddhist responses to ethical issues raised by science: genetic engineering.

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

One issue raised by genetic engineering is the view that since all sentient beings are a result of previous karmic consequences, altering the genetic material is interfering with the causal laws of nature. A successful Buddhist response may be that scientists should be allowed to do this as an act of compassion. However, for some Buddhists, disease and illness may be a karmic consequence of former bad actions. This means that they should accept illness and focus on enlightenment, otherwise these bad effects might be postponed for a future life.

Genetic engineering may have unforeseen consequences, which may cause harm. Buddhists may respond successfully by ensuring that the risks are minimised, and if genetic engineering will benefit people now or in the future, it is worthwhile. However, the principle of ahimsa can be applied to genetic engineering. If this process were to have negative long-term consequences, then Buddhists might consider it to be violence against future people.

Buddhists may argue with some success that genetic engineering can be used to prevent or reduce human suffering through increasing food production to end world hunger. This is an act of compassion which may help to end suffering, and this is consistent with Buddhist teachings. However, many Buddhists are concerned about the impact of genetic engineering on the environment. This may cause unforeseen suffering because all things are interconnected.

0 3 . 1

**‘Philosophical arguments for the existence of God show that Buddhist beliefs about Ultimate Reality are not coherent.’**

**Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and philosophy.**

**[25 marks]**

**Target: AO1.4:** Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

### **AO1**

#### **Buddhism**

There may be consideration of Theravada concepts of Buddha the key features of the Trikaya in Mahayana Buddhism. Anicca: the meaning and importance of the concept of Anicca; the development of that idea in the Mahayana doctrine of emptiness.

#### **Philosophy**

There may be consideration of any arguments for the existence of God and criticisms of those arguments.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and philosophy.

**AO2**

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

The Cosmological Argument suggests that God is a necessary first cause; God must exist for the universe to exist because there cannot be an infinite chain of causes. For Aquinas, the existence of the universe is proof that there must be a divine creator. This does not cohere with the Buddhist view that there is no need for a first cause, and that belief in a creator God is not necessary. However, Buddhism argues that everything is impermanent and changing. This can be observed and proven empirically. It is perfectly logical to have an infinite chain of contingent causes and changes.

Anselm's Ontological Argument proposes a necessary being 'than which nothing greater can be conceived'. It is a deductive argument which seeks to prove the existence of God, arguing that 'God exists' is a necessary truth and can be known without sense experience. This does not cohere with the Buddhist view that sense experience is important, and reality can only be seen through experience. However, for Buddhists, enlightenment brings understanding of Ultimate Reality, which is coherent with Anselm's notion of faith seeking understanding.

Paley's Design Argument states that the complexity, order and apparent purposefulness of the world show evidence of a divine designer. This does not cohere with the Buddhist view that the world is one of many that have existed. However, complexity, order and apparent purposefulness are created through the natural law of karma, which operates as part of the natural order of the universe. In this way, Buddhist understandings of Ultimate Reality cohere with arguments from design.

0 4 . 1

**‘Philosophy does not support belief in the authority of the Pali Canon.’**

**Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and philosophy.**

**[25 marks]**

**Target: AO1:4:** Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

### **AO1**

#### **Buddhism**

There may be consideration of: the nature and authority of the Pali canon, different views about how far this is an accurate record of Gautama Buddha’s teaching, and the relevance for Buddhists of this debate. Consideration may also be given to the Mahayana view that the life and teaching of Gautama Buddha was ‘skilful means’.

#### **Philosophy**

There may be consideration of any relevant philosophical discussion, including religious experience, sources of authority and religious language.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and philosophy.

## **AO2**

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

For many Buddhists, the authority of the Pali Canon derives from the religious experience of the Buddha and the wisdom of his teachings. Philosophers disagree about the nature of religious experiences, and have questioned whether religious experiences have any authority, therefore undermining the authority of the Pali Canon. However, Buddhism may respond that religious experiences are widespread and well-attested, and Swinburne's principles of credulity and testimony support the view of the Pali Canon as having authority.

Philosophers such as Ayer and Flew have questioned the meaningfulness of religious language. This challenges the authority of the Pali Canon because it can be argued that its contents can neither be verified nor falsified, therefore making it meaningless. However, aspects of the Pali Canon can be verified, for example the teachings about meditation have been studied and proven to be useful. Other approaches to religious language may support the view that the Pali Canon is meaningful and has authority. For example, Aquinas' view that religious language is analogical, or Tillich's view that religious language is symbolic, could be seen to support the authority of the Pali Canon.

The authority of the Pali Canon comes from the stories about the Buddha. The Pali Canon explains that the Buddha possessed superhuman abilities, something that philosophy may not support. Some philosophers discount the probability of miracles, undermining the authority of the Pali Canon. However, for secular Buddhists, the miracles contained in the Pali Canon are not meant to be taken literally. Instead, they are metaphors which show that the Buddha was a special being, so they do not challenge the authority of the Pali Canon.

0 5 . 1

**‘Natural Moral Law gives Buddhists clear guidance on issues surrounding wealth.’**

**Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and ethical studies.**

**[25 marks]**

**Target: AO1:4:** Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

## **AO1**

### **Buddhism**

There may be consideration of Buddhist responses to materialistic secular values, the value of wealth and possessions. Buddhist responses to materialistic secular values.

### **Ethics**

There may be consideration of Natural Moral Law and its strengths and weaknesses.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and ethical studies.

**AO2**

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

Natural Moral Law (NML) is a mainly deontological, absolutist system of ethics which offers guidance based on five primary precepts from which secondary precepts are derived. Acts are either right or wrong. Thus NML gives clear moral guidance on all matters, including wealth. However, for Buddhists, there are no absolute rules and they do not come from a divine law giver as in NML. This means that Buddhists may focus on the intention behind the act rather than rules when making decisions about wealth.

One issue for Buddhists is the question of what they should do with the wealth that they possess. NML seems quite clear that wealth should be used to pursue the primary precepts, for example, the worship of God, because this is one of the primary precepts. It could be argued that although many Buddhists do not believe in God, they use their wealth to support the monastic Sangha. However, NML does not give clear guidance for Buddhists on this issue because the reasoning behind the action is different; Buddhists sustain the monastic Sangha primarily to gain karmic merit rather than solely to worship God.

Another issue that arises from wealth is how humans can use resources and animals to gain wealth. NML, as expressed by Aquinas, is quite clear that humans may cause damage to the environment and use animals in order to gain wealth. Some Buddhists might argue that it is justifiable to kill animals for food. However, other Buddhists disagree with gaining wealth in this way. For Buddhists, life exists in a complex web of cause and effect; all are reliant on the environment and each other. Because of this, NML does not offer clear guidance for all Buddhists.

0 6 . 1

**‘Bentham’s consequential ethics have no value for Buddhists.’**

**Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and Bentham.**

**[25 marks]**

**Target: AO1:4:** Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

**Target: AO2:** Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

## **AO1**

### **Buddhism**

There may be consideration of good conduct and the importance of good moral conduct in the Buddhist way of life, the importance of intention; actions as kusala (healthy) or akusala (unhealthy). How far Buddhist ethics can be considered consequential.

### **Ethics**

There may be consideration of utilitarianism including the key ideas of Bentham about moral decision making, and teleological and consequentialist moral principles.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and Bentham.

**AO2**

Answers may present, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments:

Bentham's Act Utilitarianism is a naturalistic theory which defines good as the maximisation of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Buddhists disagree with the focus of maximising pleasure. For Buddhists, pleasure is impermanent and eventually leads to suffering. Therefore Bentham's basic premise is wrong, and his theory has no value for Buddhists. However, it could be argued that Buddhists have a duty to alleviate Dukkha, which would in turn bring about pleasure, so Bentham's approach could be considered consistent with a Buddhist approach to ethics.

Bentham's commitment to social equality led him to the view that the principle of utility should act for the maximum number of people, without regard to status. This seems to reduce human beings to impersonal units. Buddhists may see no value in this because for them, there is no such thing as self, and it is impossible to reduce people to separate units. However, Bentham's view that social status and wealth do not define people's worth is consistent with Buddhist teaching. Therefore the inherent fairness of Bentham's system has value for some Buddhists today.

Utilitarianism considers that the ends justify the means. This means that some evil could be justified to achieve a good end goal. This is not compatible with Buddhism because only wholesome means can bring about wholesome ends, so Bentham's ethics have no value for Buddhists. However, Mahayana Buddhism and the teaching of 'skillful means' may justify violating the precepts to bring about the most beneficial outcomes for all beings, for example in the Parable of the Burning House in the Lotus Sutra. This means that Buddhist ethics can also be considered consequentialist because, in some cases, the end does justify the means.