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# **GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME**

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**AUTUMN 2020**

**A LEVEL  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 2  
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF  
RELIGION**

**A120U20-1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2020 examination. It was finalised after detailed discussion at examiners' conferences by all the examiners involved in the assessment. The conference was held shortly after the paper was taken so that reference could be made to the full range of candidates' responses, with photocopied scripts forming the basis of discussion. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners.

It is hoped that this information will be of assistance to centres but it is recognised at the same time that, without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation.

WJEC regrets that it cannot enter into any discussion or correspondence about this marking scheme.

## **Marking guidance for examiners, please apply carefully and consistently:**

### **Positive marking**

It should be remembered that candidates are writing under examination conditions and credit should be given for what the candidate writes, rather than adopting the approach of penalising him/her for any omissions. It should be possible for a very good response to achieve full marks and a very poor one to achieve zero marks. Marks should not be deducted for a less than perfect answer if it satisfies the criteria of the mark scheme.

Exemplars in the mark scheme are only meant as helpful guides. Therefore, any other acceptable or suitable answers should be credited even though they are not actually stated in the mark scheme.

Two main phrases are deliberately placed throughout each mark scheme to remind examiners of this philosophy. They are:

- “Candidates could include some or all of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.”
- “This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.”

### **Rules for Marking**

1. Differentiation will be achieved on the basis of candidates' response.
2. No mark scheme can ever anticipate or include every possible detail or interpretation; examiners should use their professional judgement to decide whether a candidate's particular response answers the question in relation to the particular assessment objective.
3. Candidates will often express their ideas in language different from that given in any mark scheme or outline. Positive marking therefore, on the part of examiners, will recognise and credit correct statements of ideas, valid points and reasoned arguments irrespective of the language employed.

### **Banded mark schemes**

Banded mark schemes are divided so that each band has a relevant descriptor. The descriptor provides a description of the performance level for that band. Each band contains marks. Examiners should first read and annotate a candidate's answer to pick out the evidence that is being assessed in that question. Once the annotation is complete, the mark scheme can be applied. This is done as a two-stage process.

#### **Banded mark schemes stage 1 – deciding on the band**

When deciding on a band, the answer should be viewed holistically. Beginning at the lowest band, examiners should look at the candidate's answer and check whether it matches the descriptor for that band. Examiners should look at the descriptor for that band and see if it matches the qualities shown in the candidate's answer. If the descriptor at the lowest band is satisfied, examiners should move up to the next band and repeat this process for each band until the descriptor matches the answer.

If an answer covers different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band and then the candidate's response should be used to decide on the mark within the band. For instance if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content. Examiners should not seek to mark candidates down as a result of small omissions in minor areas of an answer.

### **Banded mark schemes stage 2 – deciding on the mark**

Once the band has been decided, examiners can then assign a mark. During standardising (at the Examiners' marking conference), detailed advice from the Principal Examiner on the qualities of each mark band will be given. Examiners will then receive examples of answers in each mark band that have been awarded a mark by the Principal Examiner. Examiners should mark the examples and compare their marks with those of the Principal Examiner.

When marking, examiners can use these examples to decide whether a candidate's response is of a superior, inferior or comparable standard to the example. Examiners are reminded of the need to revisit the answer as they apply the mark scheme in order to confirm that the band and the mark allocated is appropriate to the response provided. Indicative content is also provided for banded mark schemes. Indicative content is not exhaustive, and any other valid points must be credited. In order to reach the highest bands of the mark scheme a learner need not cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content, but must meet the requirements of the highest mark band.

### **Awarding no marks to a response**

Where a response is not creditworthy, that is it contains nothing of any relevance to the question, or where no response has been provided, no marks should be awarded.

## A Level Generic Band Descriptors

Band	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions</b>    20 marks</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i></li> <li>- <i>influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</i></li> <li>- <i>cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</i></li> <li>- <i>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i></li> </ul>
5	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>17-20 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• An extensive and relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates extensive depth and/or breadth. Excellent use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Insightful connections are made between the various approaches studied.</li> <li>• An extensive range of views of scholars/schools of thought used accurately and effectively.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
4	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>13-16 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A detailed, relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Purposeful connections are made between the various approaches studied.</li> <li>• A range of scholarly views/schools of thought used largely accurately and effectively.</li> <li>• Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
3	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>9-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A satisfactory response, which generally answers the main demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth in some areas. Satisfactory use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Sensible connections made between the various approaches studied.</li> <li>• A basic range of scholarly views/schools of thought used.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
2	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>5-8 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Basic level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A basic response, addressing some of the demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates limited depth and/or breadth, including limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Some accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Makes some basic connections between the various approaches studied.</li> <li>• A limited range of scholarly views/schools of thought used.</li> <li>• Some accurate use of some specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
1	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1-4 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Low level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A very limited response, with little attempt to address the question.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates very limited depth and/or breadth. Very limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Little or no reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Little or no use of scholarly views/schools of thought.</li> <li>• Very few or no connections made between the various approaches studied.</li> <li>• Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary.</li> </ul> <p><b>N.B.    A maximum of 2 marks should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'</b></p>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant information.</li> </ul>

<b>Band</b>	<b>Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions</b> 30 marks <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
<b>5</b>	<b>25-30 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set.</li> <li>• Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• The views of scholars/schools of thought are used extensively, appropriately and in context.</li> <li>• Confident and perceptive analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>19-24 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed.</li> <li>• The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Views of scholars/schools of thought are used appropriately and in context.</li> <li>• Purposeful analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied.</li> <li>• Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>13-18 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed.</li> <li>• Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Views of scholars/schools of thought are generally used appropriately and in context.</li> <li>• Sensible analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>7-12 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed.</li> <li>• A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Basic use of the views of scholars/schools of thought appropriately and in context.</li> <li>• Makes some analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied.</li> <li>• Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>1-6 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• An attempt has been made to identify and address the issues raised by the question set.</li> <li>• Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence.</li> <li>• Little or no use of the views of scholars/schools of thought.</li> <li>• Limited analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied.</li> <li>• Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary.</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant analysis or evaluation.</li> </ul>

## A Level Component 2: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion

### MARK SCHEME

To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

#### Section A

1. (a) **Examine the teleological arguments for the existence of God as presented by Aquinas and Paley.** [AO1 20]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Aquinas accepts this as an 'a posteriori' argument. That is it is inductive and based on empirical experience. It has a basis in probability rather than proof. His teleological argument is the Fifth of his Five Ways in proving God's existence, 'from the governance of things.'
- He claims that certain aspects of the universe display evidence of being deliberately designed, for instance, the structure of eyes, hands and the movement of the planets are all proof that the universe is intelligently designed. Aquinas' Fifth Way looks at the regularity of action and order. That is, design qua regularity and design qua purpose. The fact that non-intelligent matter achieves a purpose/end implies an intelligent designer. He argues that beneficial order could not have happened by chance. Many objects do not have the intelligence to work towards an end or final purpose therefore they must be guided to it by something with intelligence. Whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end unless directed by a being endowed with intelligence. This is not only the case for things within the universe but also applies to the universe itself.
- Aquinas provides an analogy of an archer and an arrow. The arrow is unintelligent and would not reach its target unless it is directed by a being with intelligence, the archer. It is important that candidates then relate this to the workings of God and the universe.
- For Paley his teleological argument is focused on order, regularity and purpose. Order, regularity and purpose are seen as marks of design. Beneficial order could not have happened by chance. Therefore, we must be directed to something that has intelligence, which we call God. God exists as the explanation of beneficial order.
- Paley argues by analogy - Paley's watch – the universe is like a complex machine which requires intelligent design. Expect a re-telling of the story regarding finding a watch on a heath. Candidates should point out the difference between the watch and the stone as this highlights the complexity of the watch thus furthering the argument. It is important that candidates relate this analogy to God and the universe. Just as things within the world need a designer, so too does the universe need an intelligent divine designer.
- Paley further argued that his argument would not be weakened if the watch had been broken. One can still see the design of how it should work. He further gave other examples of where the working of the watch is analogous to workings of universe. He referred to natural phenomena – structure of eyes, wings, the number of teats that species have are all additional proof that the universe is intelligently designed.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

- (b) **‘Teleological arguments for God’s existence are still persuasive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.’**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 30]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- There are a number of teleological arguments so expect more than one to be referred to.
- One focus against the statement may be the concept of proof. The teleological arguments are inductive and so can only lead to probabilities. It is valid deductive arguments that offer proof. Therefore, today teleological arguments may not give the proof that an empirical world demands.
- A line of argument is to show that the arguments are flawed. For instance, if Paley’s argument is considered reference to Hume’s criticisms and others, may be given. There is the issue of the use of an unsound analogy – our world is not like a machine, it is more organic than mechanical. Similar effects do not necessarily imply similar causes. The analogy leads to an immoral God because of the existence of natural evil. It suggests that the designer is evil or weak.
- Further arguments against the statement may focus on other explanations for apparent order, especially Darwin and the theory of evolution. This could be seen to explain the mechanism for order. Random mutations can easily explain aspects that were otherwise ascribed to a divine designer. Today such scientific theories are more widely accepted and are therefore more persuasive than design arguments.
- However, the theory that evolution alone can explain human life can be shown to be an ineffective challenge. The anthropic principle suggests that the universe provides us with what we need to survive and is capable of being rationally analysed by humans. This is due to a designer God working within the evolutionary process in order for life to be sustained. Thus, evolution alone cannot explain life. Candidates may refer specifically to the work of Tennant in their answer. Wider reading may introduce scholars such as Polkinghorne.
- In addition, if survival of the fittest were true then we would have no need for the appreciation of beauty, art, music and so on. However, we clearly do appreciate these things, so an omnibenevolent God designed humans in such a way that we would appreciate beauty. God wants humans to not only survive but also to enjoy the world (the aesthetic argument.)
- There is much contemporary support for design. There is intelligent design incorporating irreducible complexity. Some scholars support the anthropic principle such as Polkinghorne who argues that God continues to create and to sustain. P. Davies says that the universe being as it is without divine intelligence behind it is virtually impossible.
- In response, it could be said that design is something that our mind imposes on the universe and actually the universe is completely chaotic. Therefore, with no design there is no need to infer a designer. This could be consolidated by psychological theories regarding knowledge of the mind which may appeal to the contemporary world.
- It could be argued that cosmological or ontological arguments are more or less persuasive than the teleological arguments.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**



**2. (a) Explain how ontological arguments may be challenged with reference to Gaunilo and Kant. [AO1 20]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Ontological arguments are 'a priori' arguments and attempts to prove God's existence by using the meaning of the word 'God'. It is deductive and analytic because the truth or falsity of the argument is determined by the meaning of the words used. One reason for the challenges to the arguments is that the nature of such arguments is that they fail. The argument has been accused of using circular logic. One may well accept the premises but then the conclusion may not necessarily follow.
- This is coupled by the fact that the argument's success relies on the acceptance of the definition of the word 'God'. Critics argue that there is no clear agreement on what the word 'God' means or the definition, as given by various proponents of the ontological argument, could simply be wrong.
- A further challenge concerns the idea of the term 'greatest or most perfect being.' Are such terms meaningful and does 'most loving' have a maximum? This aspect of the ontological argument has been severely challenged by numerous scholars.
- Gaunilo's challenges centre on the view that replacing the word 'God' with 'greatest island' produces true premises, but a false conclusion. The greatest island does not necessarily exist. We can always think of a bigger or better island, but such an island cannot have an 'intrinsic maximum.'
- As some have also pointed out, against St. Anselm, there are some things that are actually greater in the mind than in reality. Our minds can conjure up fantastic ideas which, if they materialise, may not be anywhere near as great as they were when conceived in the mind.
- Kant argues that existence is not a real predicate because it does not tell us what an object is like. The rejection of 'existence' as a predicate is a very popular challenge to the ontological argument.
- Moreover, the word 'exist' merely states that a concept has an actuality. It does not actually add anything to the concept. The real contains no more than the merely possible. Kant used the example of 100 really thalers/100 real thalers existing. They contain no more thalers than the merely possible.
- Kant challenges the view that God is a necessary or 'first order' predicate as it only uses concepts and not realities. He claimed that God cannot be argued into existence and therefore, existence cannot be a predicate. Thus, if you have a triangle, then you must have three angles, but if you do not have a triangle, then you do not have three angles. One can reject the triangle along with its properties. So too one can reject God along with God's properties.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

**(b) 'A priori arguments can never prove God's existence.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 30]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Ontological arguments are 'a priori' arguments and may appear to be persuasive as a 'proof.' This is because the argument is presented in a logical, sequenced fashion with premises that lead us to an inescapable conclusion. Many would accept premises such as the definition of God given by Anselm. If the premises are correct then it is possible that the conclusion is also correct.
- However, 'a priori' arguments do rely on the premises being correct in order that a correct conclusion may follow. Also, even if the premises of an argument are correct then the conclusion may still be incorrect thus making 'a priori' arguments unpersuasive in proving God's existence.
- It could be argued though that 'a priori' arguments are 'pure' arguments in the sense that they do not rely on (subjective) evidence unlike 'a posteriori' arguments. Supposed evidence can be wrong due to misinterpretation. The persuasiveness of an 'a priori' argument rests on the notion that they can be deemed to be universally valid. Once a definition is established in an 'a priori' fashion then it cannot be rejected. For example, a bachelor is always an unmarried man.
- Contrary to this though, it could be argued that 'a priori' arguments are not persuasive due to the very fact that they are not based on evidence and experience. This would lead us to contend that 'a posteriori' arguments are far more persuasive. Today's world asks for empirical proof before accepting something as valid. 'A priori' arguments cannot give us this 'scientific' proof and they are therefore unreliable.
- Classical arguments for God's existence such as the cosmological and teleological arguments are both examples of 'a posteriori' arguments. They provide us with far more reliable grounds for proving God's existence than 'a priori' proofs do. They have stood the test of time and their inductive nature is persuasive.
- Some indeed say that 'a priori' proofs are nothing more than circular arguments which really present us with no new information and do not actually 'prove' anything.
- 'A priori' arguments rely on the understanding of the use of language such as definitions of words. This can be viewed in two ways. First, they can be deemed to be unpersuasive as they are merely play on words, pure semantics. However, on the other hand it could be argued that they are untainted by changing times and are therefore persuasive.
- Specific reference may be made to the persuasiveness or not of ontological arguments but the question is wider than that alone. Appropriate use of the Band descriptors should be used if an answer is confined solely to ontological arguments.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

## Section B

3. (a) **Examine the four characteristics of mystical experience as presented by William James.** [AO1 20]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- James' characteristics of mystical experience should be examined in detail and each characteristic should be given appropriate exemplification. Candidates could provide appropriate exemplification from the tradition of one or more world religions in their explanation. These need to be linked to the characteristics given by James and not just self-contained exemplifications.
- Each of the four characteristics are described by James in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, lectures 16 and 17.
- **Ineffability** – This means that the experience is one that is difficult to put into ordinary language. This shows that the experience must be a direct one. One person cannot pass the nature of this experience on to someone else. It defies words. He acknowledges that this does lay the mystic open to ridicule and disbelief. However, the fact that it cannot be described, does not, according to James detract from its value. James writes '*The subject of it immediately says that it defies expression, that no adequate report of its contents can be given in words. It follows from this that its quality must be directly experienced; it cannot be imparted or transferred to others.*'
- **Noetic Quality** – This means that the experience affords a deeper knowledge to the individual having the experience. Mystics will claim that deep insight has been given into truths that were previously hidden to them during their experience. James writes '*They are states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect. They are illuminations, revelations, full of significance and importance, all inarticulate though they remain; and as a rule they carry with them a curious sense of authority for after-time.*'
- **Transiency** – This means that the experience itself does not last for a very long time or the person experiencing may not have any recollection of the time the experience lasted. James writes '*Mystical states cannot be sustained for long. Except in rare instances, half an hour, or at most an hour or two, seems to be the limit beyond which they fade into the light of common day.*' He does say though that the effects of the experience are not short-lived.
- **Passivity** – This means that the individual having the experience reports being completely 'taken over' where the experience happens to them; they have no control over it. This does not deny the active role a recipient may play in the stages up to the mystical experience. However, once that experience begins they are taken over by a superior power. James writes '*Although the oncoming of mystical states may be facilitated by preliminary voluntary operations... when the characteristic sort of consciousness once has set in, the mystic feels as if his own will were in abeyance, and indeed sometimes as if he were grasped and held by a superior power.*'
- Each of the characteristics should be addressed in turn. In accordance with the trigger 'explain' candidates are also expected to exemplify each characteristic as appropriate. The exemplification may come from any suitable religious tradition within the Specification.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

- (b) **‘Mystical experiences are not adequately defined by James’ four characteristics.’**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 30]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- It could be argued that James’ four characteristics are more than adequate as they integral characteristics to the majority of religious experiences. Any other characteristics given by other scholars are either peripheral to mystical experiences or simply present James’ characteristic using different words. This may be illustrated by making reference to the number of James’ characteristics present in reported mystical experiences of, for example, St Teresa of Avila.
- However against this there are many aspects of the mystical experience which James’ four characteristics do not refer to. Examples of these could be the kataphatic nature of some experiences where the mystic can make some positive claims about the experience. This adds to the ineffable nature as outlined by James. Stace’s classification of introvertive and extrovertive could be claimed to be important characteristics also. Having only four characteristics severely restricts the nature of the mystical experience and is not all-encompassing enough. There are other examples that a candidate may discuss which would add to James’ definitions.
- In a similar vein, James deals only with the characteristics of a mystical experience. Other important studies have identified the stages of mysticism which are lacking in James’ work.
- It could be suggested that James’ four characteristics should be used alongside those other features identified by other scholars. Candidates may refer to the work of Otto, Happold or any other relevant scholar. This would mean that James’ work has a degree of adequacy, but does need other things in order to complement and enhance his characteristics. Similarly they may choose to consider other classifications of mystical experience rather than the work of individual scholars.
- It cannot be denied that James’ work has been a major driving force in academic studies in this field. His findings are widely held and highly respected. That adds some weight to the adequacy of his four characteristics. However, the dynamic nature of scholarly research means that we cannot package something up from years ago and say that we will not allow new findings in.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

**4. (a) Explain how religious language can be understood as a language game.**  
**[AO1 20]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Candidates may refer to the 'older' view of Wittgenstein in his 'picture theory' of language. He came to realise that this was a far too narrow view of language which did not allow for the variety of uses of language.
- The function of religious language as being non-cognitive but meaningful as its meaning is derived from the fact that it has use within a particular context. Each context is separate and contains its own rules. These rules are agreed out of convention and they must be learned and understood.
- Religious language as being particular to the 'religious form of life'. This means that religious language cannot be criticised from outside of religion as the rules in each game apply only to that game.
- Wittgenstein's 'look and see' how it is being used. He said 'don't ask for its meaning, ask for its use.' Key to understanding religion is to observe how believers are actually using that language, its function in context.
- Language as a tool. Wittgenstein's builder analogy may be referred to where builders learn the name of a tool and are able to hand that tool to another when it is asked for. Each tool has a specific function that it should be used for and should not be used for anything else.
- Wittgenstein's examples, such as 'soul.' He said that when the science game asks for proof of a soul it shows a misunderstanding of the meaning of soul in the religious language game. Religion does not play the physical language game.
- D.Z Phillips' examples of belief in God, prayer and eternal life. He questions what people really mean when they use these terms. Belief in God concerns what God means in a person's life. When praying, religious believers are not making an appeal to God. Eternal life is not about life everlasting but refers to a quality of fellowship with God now.
- The key idea is 'what do people really intend when they say or do something?' Language games suggests that their intention is not to give literal assertions. In other words language has a different function to presenting facts.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

**(b) 'The strengths of language games outweigh the weaknesses.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 30]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- A weakness of the language game theory is that it is not valid to make comparisons between religion and a game. If this analogy is denied then the whole theory cannot work. However, others would argue that the comparison is a valid one. This is because religion does display similar features and characteristics to those of a game. Games and religions do have sets of rules which apply to that one context. It accepts that there may be overlap between games and religions, such as a ball is used in many games, just as prayer is a concept within religions. Thus language games may resolve the problem of understanding religious language.
- The fact that Wittgenstein moved away from Logical Positivism, declaring those views to be wrong could be seen as a strength for language games. It was after deliberation and contemplation that he came to the views of his later works thus suggesting that these were his stronger theories after he had realised flaws with his picture theory of language.
- A key point of resolution of the problems of religious language which language games employs is that meaning is now attached to the use of language and this is something that we accept in everyday life. Emotional statements are viewed in the context of their use and have profound meaning in the context in which they are used. Language games allow religious statements to be meaningful within a particular believing community. Vitally, language games also show the error and danger of criticising one form of life from the outside.
- However, contrary to that, many would argue that this is exactly the weakness of language games showing it resolves nothing. In life we do establish criteria of meaning. We do expect to verify language from an empirical standpoint. Otherwise it leads to an 'anything goes' mentality. A commonly accepted set of criteria is a strength, which language games denies.
- Moreover, a further weakness of language games is that it is isolationist and suggests that language cannot be learned. However, it is evident that people can learn the religious language game from the outside. Indeed it may also be claimed that the strength of that is that the view from the outside is more objective. For example, myth and symbol are concepts which can be understood both from a religious and non-religious perspective.
- Although in support of language games it may be true to say that those within a game are the ones who can 'play' it best, are more acquainted with the rules of the game. Hence the view of language games which suggests that the best way to understand religion is to be in the religious language game, to 'look and see'.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

5. (a) Explain the different understandings of miracles given by:

(i) Holland

and

(ii) Swinburne.

[AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Holland suggests that:
  - laws of nature need not be broken in order for an event to be termed 'a miracle.'
  - miracles are events that are coincidences that can be of benefit to humans and are miracles if interpreted in that way by an individual. Such events can be interpreted religiously and taken as a 'sign.'
  - they can, however, be interpreted differently which is equally as justifiable. He gave an example of a child on a train track whose mother prayed for his safety. The driver fainted onto the brake lever just in time for the child to be saved. His fainting could be explained in purely natural terms but the mother declared the event as a miracle. Holland said that this coincidental event is legitimately described as a miracle by the mother even though the event could be explained in a purely naturalistic way.
- Swinburne investigated the possibility of miracles. Within this he discussed two possibilities:
  - The first is whether it can be justifiably claimed that a law of nature has been broken.
  - The second is whether this break could be attributed to God. For him a miracle does break a law of nature and it can be ascribed to the work of God. He used the phrase 'a non-repeatable counter-instance to the law of nature.' If an event (E) appears to go against all that we know of laws of nature (L) **and** if we do not expect that event to happen again, then we are perfectly justified in saying that the law of nature has been broken and a miracle has occurred.
- Against the views of scholars such as Hick, Swinburne says that to widen our definition of a law of nature to accommodate a new finding would be 'clumsy and ad hoc.'
- Swinburne says that miracles are possible because God is omnipotent. If God wanted to intervene then he could suspend laws of nature. Scientific evidence does make accepting a break in the law of nature difficult but there is evidence to suggest that God can do this. To be classed as a miracle then the event must fulfil two criteria whereby it has to have religious significance and it had to occur in a timescale not normally experienced.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

**(b) 'Different definitions of miracles are contradictory.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 30]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- It could be strongly argued that the definitions of miracles of Hume and Swinburne do not contradict each other. Both define miracles as a break in the law of nature. Swinburne's reference to a non-repeatable counter-instance does take the definition further but in essence, both definitions incorporate the idea that the law of nature has not 'held'.
- The same could be said with regard to Aquinas' definition. Ultimately he would ascribe a miracle to the work of divine agency. God does something that nature cannot do or does not conform to what is normally done by the workings of nature. He does not specifically use the terminology that would link him completely with Hume and Swinburne, but his medieval knowledge would not allow for such anyway.
- However, Hume and Swinburne's definitions are contradictory in that the conclusion of Hume which stems from his definition seems unclear. At times he seems to suggest that miracles could happen and at other times that they absolutely cannot. Swinburne is unequivocal; miracles can happen as a non-repeatable counter-instance to the law of nature performed by a god.
- It appears that there is a glaring contradiction between the definitions of the above three men and that of Holland. For Holland a miracle is an event of religious significance where no law of nature is broken. The event happens within the natural laws.
- It may be pointed out though that there is some point of contact between Holland's reference to a religiously significant event and Swinburne's reference to the same thing.
- If we say that there are different classes of miracles then of course it is permissible and understandable that definitions relating to each should differ. Holland's definition is referring to 'contingency' miracles whilst Hume, Swinburne and Aquinas are referring to 'violation' miracles.
- Having said this there are still vital contradictions that could be levelled even if they do refer to different classes of miracles. Violation miracles are objective, there for all to be witnessed by all. Contingency miracles are subjective; an event 'becomes' a miracle if that is how a believer chooses to interpret a situation. It may not be a miracle for all. So the fundamental objective vs subjective contradiction still stands.
- A different line of reasoning is that all definitions of miracles are equally valid. It is not a matter of there being contradictions. Rather, they are personal interpretations of an event. The issue may be more one of disagreement of semantics rather than a contradiction.
- Although if we have no one definition of all of the phenomena in the world then that opens interpretation up far too widely to an 'anything goes' mentality.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised**