



A-LEVEL

Religious Studies

7062/2A - Paper 2A: Study of religion and dialogues: Buddhism
Mark scheme

June 2018

Version/Stage: 1.0 Final

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 Assessment Writer.

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.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

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 on the following page 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 AS 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 Principal 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.

Levels of Response: 10 marks A-Level – AO1	
Level 5 9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No accurate or relevant material to credit

Levels of Response: 15 marks A-Level – AO2	
Level 5 13-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No accurate or relevant material to credit

Section A**Question 1**

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Examine Buddhist beliefs about the Trikaya.**[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.

The Trikaya is the belief in Mahayana Buddhism that the Buddha can be seen within three bodies. The first is called Dharmakaya. This is ultimately what makes a Buddha a Buddha; the understanding of the truth of the universe, the emptiness (sunyata) of all things. This is the great cosmic unknowable, the void or hidden reality within everything. They are called cosmic Buddhas and are thought to express the ultimate truth of life. In other words, Buddha nature is said to be the nature of life shared by all living beings.

The second is called Sambhogakaya. This refers to heavenly Buddhas and can be found in the Mahayana sutras. These are Buddhas with many powers which they can call upon to help save all beings. They live in their own Buddha lands, for eg like Amitabha in Pure Land Buddhism. They have unimaginably long lifetimes and they are the Buddhas that form the focus of devotion in Mahayana Buddhism. They are therefore depicted in many art forms, paintings and statues and are worshipped and visualised.

The third is called Nirmanakaya. This is sometimes known as transformation body and refers to the Buddha manifested in earthly form. The best known example is Gautama Buddha. Transformation bodies do not have to take the form of earthly Buddhas, they can take on any form which will be of help to living beings, including animal forms, gods or religious teachers. Their teachings are governed by skilful means, so are suited to their context and audience.

[10 marks] AO1

0 1 . 2

‘There is little agreement in Buddhism about the nature of life after death.’

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 consideration of the following specification content: Samsara: the cycle of birth, death and rebirth; the nature of karma and its role on the wheel of becoming; the realms of becoming and their significance, including literal, metaphorical and psychological interpretations; Tibetan beliefs about the 14th Dalai Lama as an expression of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara; Nirvana.

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

Theravada teaches that the person is an ever changing combination of mental and physical energies so there is no ‘self’ to live on. In contrast, there is the belief that a bodhisattva can choose rebirth so the ‘same being’ is reborn. For example, the 14th Dalai Lama is seen as the 14th expression of the same bodhisattva. However, Theravada beliefs in continuity through change mean that it is, in a sense, ‘the same person’ with the same karmic potential who is reborn, and many popular beliefs look to identify the reborn person with someone who died. The differences may be more apparent than real.

There are different understandings of Nirvana as achieved when one escapes the cycle of rebirth, including: annihilationism, a place and a state of bliss. Some separate Samsara and Nirvana, while others see them both as aspects of emptiness. However, there is general agreement that Nirvana is beyond the categories of normal thought, being neither existence nor non-existence, so the disagreements about it are only disagreements between equally inaccurate descriptions.

There are very different interpretations of the teaching about life after death and rebirth. Some take the teaching literally, others believe that the realms are psychological realities describing states of mind that people may have during this life. Some Buddhists deny or are agnostic about life after death; for others it is central to their world view. However, secular Buddhists and others who reject any metaphysical aspects of Buddhism are very much in the minority.

[15 marks] AO2

Question 2

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Examine why there are different Buddhist views about the role of women in Buddhism.

[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.

Note that answers may, but need not be, limited to consideration of the following specification content: the role of women in Theravada Buddhism.

There are different Buddhist views about the role of women in Buddhism because the scriptures are inconsistent on this matter. Buddha is thought to have said that Buddhism would die out some 500 years earlier than it should do if he allowed women to become nuns. However, he did ordain women such as his aunt Mahaprajapati and his wife Yasodhara. The Aparimitayur Sutra suggests women must be reborn as men before they can achieve enlightenment, while the Lotus Sutra teaches that men and women are equal in their abilities to practise Buddhism and attain enlightenment.

From the earliest times in Buddhism, women were generally seen as inferior to men. This was a cultural issue based in ancient Indian tradition. Women had a low position in society and were not allowed to participate in religious life. They had limited freedom and were not allowed to be educated. In Thailand today, traditional attitudes remain but are being challenged by modernisers.

Different views about the legitimacy of female ordination affect views about the role of women. In the Theravada tradition, women can only be ordained by ordained nuns – which to most means that female ordination is impossible because the line had died out. However, modernisers have accepted the ordination of women by nuns from a Mahayana lineage and are working to establish equality with men. Those who do not accept this limit the role of women in monastic Buddhism to non-religious roles.

Maximum Level 2 for answers that only explain different views.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that only explain the reason(s) for one point of view.

[10 marks] AO1

0 2 . 2

‘Buddhism has a negative attitude to homosexuals and transgender people.’

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 consideration of the following specification content: Different Buddhist views about homosexuality and transgender issues.

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

Homosexual relationships are forbidden under Vinaya discipline for monks, as is all sexual activity. Outside the monastic sangha, however, such relationships may be seen as acceptable if they reflect ahimsa and compassion. Same-sex marriage is supported by some Buddhist groups today and transgender people are very much a part of Thai society.

Homosexuality may be seen as a consequence of karmic inheritance outside of the control of the present individual and accepted as any other difference is accepted, however it may also be seen as wilful perversion. Both views are present in Thailand where negative views may have been influenced by the spread of AIDS among the homosexual community. For the same reason homosexual relations can be considered harmful, and so not consistent with ahimsa.

Being transgender may be seen as the result of karmic inheritance. Buddhism recognises four gender types, including intersex and those designated ‘pandakas’, which has a range of possible meanings but appears to include both homosexuals and transgender individuals. However, according to tradition, Buddha ruled out ordination for the two additional genders, possibly to prevent the Sangha coming into disrepute. On the whole, Buddhism in the West is more open to the idea of homosexual and transgender members of the monastic Sangha than Buddhism in Asia.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not cover both aspects.

[15 marks] AO2

Section B

Question 3

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‘Philosophical understandings of religious experience undermine Buddhist beliefs about the authority of the Buddha.’

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

[25 marks]

Target: AO1:4 Knowledge and understanding of 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**

Gautama Buddha’s authority depends in part on the authority of the enlightenment experience. Teachings such as the cycle of rebirths, the influence of karma on rebirth, Nirvana and the way to achieve this derive from this experience. The authority of heavenly Buddhas depends on the status of the religious experiences in which they are experienced. Some of the teachings of Buddhism derive their authority from observation of the world around us, rather than religious experience, such as aspects of Dukkha and Anicca, and teachings about some of the benefits of detachment and meditation.

Philosophy

The enlightenment experience may be classified as an imaginative vision – experienced by the ‘mind’s eye’, private and not accessible for study. The authority of such experiences relies in part on the integrity of the person claiming to have it and the likelihood that their interpretation of the experience is correct. The principles of credulity and testimony state that the onus is on those who consider the claims to be false to prove their case, otherwise the experience should be accepted at face value.

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

AO2

Claims that an experience such as Buddha’s enlightenment has happened are exceptional, and the more exceptional the claim the greater the demand for evidence to make that claim credible. Philosophers might argue that there can never be sufficient evidence to make it reasonable to believe that this experience happened as described. The possibility that the Buddha was lying about the

experience or mistaken about it (it could have been a dream) are greater than the possibility that it was as described. Buddhism may counter this with reference to the integrity of the Buddha and the fact that others have had their own enlightenment experience.

The validity of religious experiences can be challenged by alternative natural explanations, which would show that it is reasonable to believe that individuals are mistaken about the nature of their experiences. Drugs, intoxicants and temporal lobe epilepsy have all been offered as alternative explanations. The involvement of stimuli such as drugs is compatible with the claim that the experiences are genuine, eg if the drugs make the experience possible by removing barriers rather than causing them. The temporal lobe could also be involved in the experience in a similar way in which the eye is involved in seeing and not as its cause. Buddhists may also respond with the argument that a religious experience is one with religious significance for the person having it and its cause is irrelevant.

It may be argued that it is impossible to examine or verify a personal experience and so impossible to provide any reason to believe that it, and the teachings it led to, are genuine. It is, however, impossible to examine or verify the subjective dimension of any experience, but that does not make it unreasonable to believe it.

There is no possibility of examining the enlightenment experience itself, only descriptions of that experience. Since descriptions can be wholly inadequate, that makes it very difficult to make a reasoned judgement about the experience either way. The authority of the Buddha's teaching only depends in part on the enlightenment experience, since he tells all his followers to test his teachings through their own experience and reason. Some Buddhists reject the 'supernatural' elements of Buddha's teaching partly because they accept that they are undermined by reason.

[25 marks] AO1/AO2

Question 4

0	4	.	1
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'Miracles do not happen.'**Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and philosophy.****[25 marks]****Target:** AO1:4 Knowledge and understanding of 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**Miracles in Buddhist thought**

Miracles are attributed to the historical Buddha in some traditions, ie the ability to do some things normally considered supernatural, and similar modern miracles are reported. The ability to perform miracles is believed to be developed through meditation, these include levitation and teleportation. Sharing of merit and reaping the benefit of good karma can also be considered miraculous if the effects are believed to have been brought about by a spiritual power. There are diverse views about miracles in Buddhism including those of secular Buddhism which challenges the 'supernatural' nature of these events.

Philosophy

There are realist and anti-realist views of miracles. Hume defined a miracle as a transgression of a law of nature by a deity or an invisible agent. He argues that the laws of science are based on the firmest evidence from experience possible, and that it is not reasonable to believe reports that something that contradicts them has happened, since such reports are always less reliable. The reasons for the unreliability of the reports include: the 'love of wonder' of the witnesses, the possibility of error and ignorance, and the possibility of deceit.

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

AO2

Hume is right in saying that witnesses may be lying or mistaken, but arguably a point may be reached where dismissing the evidence of expert witnesses, who have no self interest in supporting the claim that a miracle has happened, is less reasonable than accepting the claim. However, accepting the claim that the event has happened is not the same as accepting that it is miraculous.

Hume is right in saying that a natural explanation may be found for an event explained as 'supernatural' or miraculous: this has happened many times in the

past. The absence of a natural explanation is not proof that the explanation must be the operation of a natural spiritual power or a supernatural power; it is only evidence that there are unexplained events. The argument that an event must have been caused by spiritual or supernatural force because it is 'impossible', ie something that nature cannot do on its own, is not valid because the laws of nature are descriptive of the regularities observed to this point: they do not define the possible and so do not define events that contradict them as impossible. However, the inability to identify 'supernatural' events does not mean that they do not happen, nor that the religious explanation for such events is not more complete than a scientific one.

Buddhism may identify the cause of the 'miracle' as a heavenly Buddha or bodhisattva but the existence of such beings is unproven. However, calling an event miraculous may only mean that it is an event which is seen as having religious significance, which means that it is interpreted within the faith framework rather than an empirical / scientific framework. A fantastic sunset could be 'miraculous' on this count. The claim does not speculate about the cause of the event. An amazing coincidence, such as worship or a merit-making activity which is followed by the desired pregnancy, inheritance of money etc, would be seen as miraculous. This anti-realist view makes no claims about events in the physical world. The interpretive framework that explains events in terms of karma can be wholly consistent with an interpretation in an empirical framework.

[25 marks] AO1/AO2

Section C**Question 5**

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‘Buddhist attitudes to animals are consistent with the views of natural moral law.’

Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and natural moral law.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1:4 Knowledge and understanding of 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**

The principle of ahimsa is ‘do not harm any living thing’ but that is often interpreted as do not actively harm or kill rather than conserve and prevent suffering. For example a dying animal could be left to die rather than be euthanized which, through inaction, could lead to greater suffering. An animal rebirth is seen as inferior to a human rebirth, and a reflection of bad karma. This leads some to believe that animals have fewer rights, and deserve less respect, than humans. Many Buddhists are vegetarian, but some eat meat as long as the animal has not been killed specifically to feed them, and has been painlessly killed. Animal experimentation is generally condemned but accepted if it benefits humanity and animal suffering is minimised.

Natural moral law

Humans are superior to animals in the hierarchy of being. Animals are provided for the benefit of human beings – that is their purpose. They may be used in any way that benefits humanity. Biblical teaching can be offered in support of this, particularly the idea of human dominion over animals. Using animals for food is explicitly permitted; saving human life by using animals in scientific procedures fulfils the first primary precept. Cruelty to an animal is wrong, because of the effects that this has on the cruel person and those they may go on to harm. This is not using animals to benefit humans.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and natural moral law.

AO2

The teaching of ahimsa seems to be opposite to the idea in Aquinas’ natural moral

law that animals may be used in any way that benefits human beings. Specifically many Buddhists are vegetarian to avoid harm to animals. However, some Buddhists believe that meat can be eaten as long as the animal has not been killed specifically for them and that this extends to eating meat from a supermarket. The emphasis then is on the reduction of animal suffering to a minimum which Aquinas could also support.

Both Buddhism and natural moral law regard animals as in some ways inferior to human beings, on the cycle of life or the hierarchy of being. This justifies the use of animals for human benefit, for example in scientific procedures under strict conditions, including necessity and minimising of pain. However, some Buddhists would completely rule out harming animals on the basis of their belief in rebirth.

Both Buddhism and natural moral law reject animal cruelty. In Buddhism, that is because it would be motivated by a desire to harm which results in negative karma; in natural moral law because of the effect on those who carry it out, which could lead to harm to other human beings. In both cases cruelty is seen as sub-human: in Buddhism it lacks compassion so is not an expression of Buddha-nature; in natural moral law it is not a reflection of the nature of God within humanity. However, natural moral law is taken by some to permit blood sports as a source of human pleasure and Buddhist teaching on ahimsa forbids this.

[25 marks] AO1/AO2

Question 6

0 6 . 1

‘There should be no limits on freedom of religious expression.’

Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Buddhism and Bentham’s approach to moral decision making.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1:4 Knowledge and understanding of 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

In Buddhism, religious expression takes many forms, including lifestyle and responses to the moral conduct or beliefs of others. The example of the Buddha in dealing with opposition and intolerance, and the principle of ahimsa, may limit their freedom of expression and / or affect their response to the way others express themselves. Buddhist attitudes to religious pluralism, and to diversity within Buddhism, may also have implications for this issue. Examples of Buddhist responses to freedom of religious expression may be used.

Ethics

Bentham’s utilitarianism makes happiness the highest goal. A good action is one that leads to happiness, which may be immediate or longer term. The ‘right’ action may vary depending on circumstances, so the consequences of allowing freedom of religious expression will have to be determined in each situation, using the hedonic calculus.

Examples of the consequences of freedom of religious expression may be used.

Maximum Level 3 for answers that do not include both Buddhism and Bentham’s approach to moral decision-making.

AO2

Some understandings of Buddhist teaching suggest that it should be completely tolerant and passive when confronted by forms of religious expression that lead to hatred, violence or exploitation. The teaching of ahimsa and right speech requires that Buddhists should not harm anyone and speech should be constructive, not lead to harm, and spoken with the right intention. Buddhist expressions of religious identity and responses to the way others express their religious identity should conform to this teaching. This is the example set by the Buddha. Whether this can be justified by its consequences is open to discussion.

Bentham justifies actions according to their consequences, so would see freedom of religious expression as justified only in circumstances where the consequences are happiness. Buddhism also takes consequences into account, because of the principle of ahimsa, so where freedom of religious expression leads to violence or hatred may condemn it. The issue for Buddhism, however, is how individuals control their response to events rather than what events actually happen, so preventing or allowing freedom of expression may be considered irrelevant.

Bentham makes decisions about individual situations rather than general laws, so there would not be a rule either against or for freedom of expression, but he is interested in long term consequences as well as immediate effects. Various arguments may be offered about whether unlimited freedom of religious expression is 'good' in the long run. For those Buddhists with a pluralistic view of religion, arguments allowing freedom of expression to Buddhists would, through natural justice, apply to other faiths as well.

The consequences of limiting freedom of religious expression could lead to unacceptable limits on other forms of expression because many forms of religious expression are cultural, eg related to food, dress and lifestyle. This is a form of the 'slippery slope' argument, which both Buddhism and consequential ethics may use to support unlimited freedom of religious expression.

[25 marks] AO1/AO2