



education

Department:
Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**NATIONAL
SENIOR CERTIFICATE**

GRADE 12

RELIGION STUDIES P2

EXEMPLAR 2007

MEMORANDUM

This memorandum consists of 6 pages.

QUESTION 1

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Discuss the following branches of Buddhism:

- 1.1.1. Theravada Buddhism. (16)**
1.1.2. Mahayan Buddhism. (16)
1.1.3. Vajran Buddhism. (18)

- Buddhism can be divided into three main branches, namely, Theravada Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism and Vajrayana Buddhism.

Theravada Buddhism.

- This is the oldest school of Buddhism.
- It is based on the Pali Canon.
- This kind/branch of Buddhism is found mainly in Thailand, Laos, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Cambodia and other parts of Vietnam and Malaysia.
- In this branch, the Buddha is not seen as a divine being, but rather as a human being who discovered the secret of enlightenment and escape from the cycle of rebirth.
- Theravada Buddhism teaches that the individual must lead a pure life, achieve calm and peace through meditation and reach supreme wisdom in order to become enlightened.
- Many monks live a life of meditation in order to become enlightened.
- They live in monasteries, beg for their food and meditate most of the day.
- The Theravada monks also assist and co-operate with laity in important life events such as weddings, funerals and births.
- Lay people in Theravada communities cannot meditate as often as monks but that does not mean that they do not have a full religious life.
- In Thailand all males have to join a monastery for some period of their lives.
- Most religious practices of Buddhism are performed in the home although there is also individual and communal meditation and chanting in temples.
- People have altar offerings of food, incense, candles and flowers at the temple, usually in front of the statue of the Buddha.

Mahayana Buddhism

- This branch of Buddhism developed because some people found the Theravada Buddhism too difficult to follow.
- The adherents see Buddha as an object of devotion
- The Mahayana Buddhists teach that many Buddhas came before Siddhartha Gautama, and many more will come in the future.
- Here such Buddhas are worshipped as divine beings who came to earth to help suffering humanity.
- Mahayana Buddhism developed the concept of the Bodhisattva.
- A Bodhisattva is a person who could on his/her own merit enter Nirvana but decides to delay it in order to assist other human beings.
- The Bodhisattva can also transfer some of their own accumulated merit voluntarily to humans who pray to them.
- They also teach that ordinary people can approach divine beings to assist them in their search for salvation.
- Mahayana Buddhism is not a homogenous group but a collection of different schools of thought and practices.

- There are different form of Mahayana which developed and extended various doctrines and beliefs.
- The best known forms in the west are Zen Buddhism and Pure Land Buddhism.
- Each group is governed by a senior monk often assisted by a council of other senior monks.

Vajrayana Buddhism

- Vajrayana Buddhism is also called the Diamond vehicle.
- It is also called Tibetan Buddhism or Mind-Only.
- It is mainly found in Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan.
- It is related to Mahayana but it is distinguished by many types of special techniques which its followers use to develop heightened states of consciousness.
- It teaches that we attain enlightenment by radical 'shock' techniques, not by the patient meditation practiced by the Theravada and some Mahayana branches.
- The advanced techniques in Vajrayana Buddhism may include seemingly strange and even anti-social ways.

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QUESTION 2

Discuss the concepts divine 'inspiration,' oral tradition and sacred books' in the contexts of different religions.

Inspiration.

- It refers originally to the breath (power, knowledge) of an extra-ordinary being or power.
- An example of the breath of an extra-ordinary power is a deity, coming into a person and taking that person's own breath.
- Inspiration refers to a state of being inspired either to write, do something or commit yourself to a particular life or experience.
- Inspiration is a very significant/important normative source in various religions.
- Various religions have figures who received inspiration from a higher power or wisdom.
- Inspiration may be referred to as the true origin of all religions.
- There are many religious figures who have inspired many generations of followers.
- Examples of figures who have inspired generations are Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ, the Buddha, Confucius, Muhammad and Baha'u'llah.
- The word 'God' is not used in some religions e.g. Buddhism and Confucianism, however these religions believe in some higher, deeper wisdom which inspired great figures.
- Inspiration still takes place in our own day. This is referred to as Contemporary inspiration.

Oral Tradition

- Original inspiration is usually spread first through oral tradition in many religions.
- The original message is passed on from one generation to another by word of mouth.
- The original message is passed on from one person to another.
- Before the invention of writing religious, traditions were carried on by word of mouth.
- It is true that these traditions do develop and change and get adapted over time.
- An example of a religion which has carried an oral tradition over many centuries is African Traditional Religion.

Sacred Books

- Writing has played a very important role in many religions.
- Many religions have developed Sacred Books e.g. The Quran, The Bible, etc.
- Oral traditions can run parallel to written traditions.
- Written scripture is found in many religions and is used greatly.
- In many cases Sacred Books do not exist as individual writings, but as parts of larger collections.
- The word canon refers to a general law, rule or principle.
- The collections of Sacred Books are generally called canons.
- There are primary and secondary sacred writings.
- Secondary writings are commentaries on the primary writings.

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QUESTION 3

Discuss the concepts 'teaching and belief,' and evaluate their roles in a variety of religions.

Teaching

- Teaching comes from the word 'to teach', which means to impart knowledge.
- In the context of religion, it means to give systematic information about a subject.
- The significance of religious teachings differs from religion to religion.
- Teaching is highly significant in some religions and less important in others.
- Teachings communicate the deeper meanings of the world and how life operates.
- Teachings explain why humans are in the world.
- Teachings also cover issues such as the nature of God, the nature and an origin of evil, the good life and the origin of the world.
- They also provide explanations for human concerns.
- The human concerns that people are often taught about, include issues of death and life after death.
- In other religions teachings do not feature at all.
- Teachings are very significant, in the religions that developed during the thousand years or so BCE.
- Teachings are also very important mainly in religions that developed during the first thousand years or so in CE.
- Generally, the religions that use teachings tend to stress clear, rational and systematic thinking.
- Examples of religions that emphasize teachings include Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity and Baha'i.
- Teachings presented in a systematic way do not play exactly the same role in all religions.

- In some religions e.g. Christianity, particularly within the conservative Reformed Christianity groups, systematic teachings are regarded as extremely important.
- In other groups e.g. Charismatic groups, there is less emphasis on systematic teachings.
- In African Traditional Religion, teaching in the sense of strongly structured systematization does not play a central role.
- In a general sense Buddhism is less inclined to stress systematic teachings than are most Christian groups.
- In the religions of hunter-gatherer societies, teaching in the formal systematic sense played no role at all.
- Teaching may be used to advocate ideas.
- Teaching is an approach that is used to make it clear to people what they should and should not do and think. In other words, it has an educational function.

Belief

- The word 'belief' is sometimes used as a synonym of the word 'religion'.
- Belief may refer to a firm opinion.
- The concept 'belief' may also refer to the acceptance of the teachings of a particular faith in the religious context.
- Belief includes normative (prescriptive) acceptance of the teachings.
- Belief in the sense of a view of the world, God and humanity plays an essential role in all religions.

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QUESTION 4

Develop a strategy towards solving a major social problem in South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

- ***[The candidate may choose any major social problem]***
- The social problem that will be tackled in this memorandum is poverty.
- It will be representative of all other social problems.
- There are different social problems that can be discussed.

Identifying and analyzing the problem.

- The people who are unable to meet their family basic needs for food, shelter, clothing and medical care are classified as poor.
- In South Africa the black women and children are most vulnerable to poverty.
- South Africa is one of the countries where there is unequal distribution of wealth.
- This is partly caused by the legacy of apartheid.
- The apartheid regime enforced the economic subjugation of the Black people.
- Most of the land was taken away from the Blacks and they were only left with 13% of it.
- The Blacks could not do certain jobs since those jobs were reserved for other racial groups.
- The Black people were also restricted to live in certain areas only due to apartheid laws.
- The Black people were given poor education.

- The above named factors contributed to the economic disparity between Blacks and whites.
- It is very easy to be trapped in the cycle of poverty.
- The children of a poor family are likely to receive poor- quality education.
- Poor-quality education may lead to difficulty in finding decent jobs.

Outlining and considering the religious sources available.

- Most religions try to promote action to alleviate the problem of poverty.
- Many religious people believe it is their moral responsibility to fight against poverty.

African Traditional Religion

- In the African Traditional Religion the philosophy of *ubuntu* encourages people to help those in need and share what they have so that others do not go without.
- A Mandika saying from West Africa would read: “ If you have no business with anybody, no-one will have any business with you either.”

Hinduism

- In the Hindu faith a person's sufferings are usually blamed on Karma as they are perceived as paying for the moral failures in his or her previous life.
- Some Hindu people use this argument as a reason for not helping the poor.
- In spite of this, Hindus do give charity throughout the year and also during the times of certain festivals.
- The Hindu religious texts on fighting poverty e.g. “He who gives liberally goes straight to the gods; on the high ridge of heaven he stands exalted.” Rig Veda 1. 125.5

Judaism

- In the Jewish faith charity is encouraged.
- In the Jewish homes there are collection boxes where adults and children are encouraged to deposit money before spending on themselves.
- “And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humble with your God?” - Micah 6:8.
- “Blessed is he who considers the poor; the Lord delivers him in the day of trouble.” – Psalm 41:2

Christianity

- In the Christian faith, Jesus sets an example of how to live a life of giving to others.
- While on earth Jesus showed his concern for the disadvantaged people.
- “Give and it will be given to you...for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.” -Luke 6:38.

Buddhism

- To the Buddhist, generosity to the needy is very important.
- The Buddhists are encouraged to give to the poor.
- “.....The wise man rejoices in giving and thereby becomes happy thereafter.” -Dhammapada 177.
- ‘The Buddha said, When you see someone practicing the way of giving, aid him joyously, and you will obtain vast and great blessings.” -Sutra of Forty two sections 10.

The practical steps to be taken towards a solution

- The problem can be tackled at different levels.
- It could be at a national, provincial and local level.
- The National government can pass policies which address poverty.
- The government can work with different religious bodies to fight poverty.
- It can support poverty alleviation programs.
- The Provincial governments can also initiate programs that may address poverty.
- The Provincial governments can make policies that will tackle poverty.
- They can work with religious communities to fight poverty.
- It can allocate funds to train people to acquire skills that can make them to be self supporting or to be employable.
- The local government can work with faith communities to fight poverty.
- The religious communities can also work with Non-Governmental Organizations to fight poverty.
- The faith communities should cater for both the spiritual and physical needs of their members.
- They can also develop skills training programs and poverty alleviation programs.
- They can help the children who qualify for the government grants.
- The faith communities can work with the business people to establish community projects to help the poor.

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GRAND TOTAL 150