



# education

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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**