

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCE
Religious Studies (6RS02) Paper 1E
The Study of the Old Testament/
Jewish Bible

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6RS02 1E The Study of the Old Testament/Jewish Bible

General Comments

The 2016 examination season is a testimony to the high level of engagement with selected studies drawn from a very wide range of academic fields. Over the life of this specification there has been consistent evidence of superb research on topics that are clearly of great interest to candidates. This legacy of academic achievement has been inspirational for examiners whose privilege it is to see what can be achieved by our candidates. The new specification will provide a different assessment experience and centres will find that their excellent resources can be integrated into future schemes of work.

The high standard of work evidenced in June 2016 was no exception to historical high standards as candidates demonstrated a very high level of independent enquiry which clearly demonstrated what their chosen area of investigation had meant to them as a learning experience. Candidates showcased their knowledge of a particular academic field in the way they identified a line of enquiry, clearly expressed their view, analysed key concepts and deployed evidence with coherent understanding of their task whilst fluently evaluating a wide range of source material that they had at their disposal. The enthusiasm for, and knowledge of the chosen topic was clearly conveyed in many answers that were truly academic in their approach. A few centres continue to focus on the same or similar topics for all their candidates, whereas other centres permitted considerable choice for individual candidates. Candidates were mostly very well prepared for the examination and it was evident that centres used their specialist resources and interests to encourage candidates to research in depth a particular area of study. The 'Investigations' unit has a definite academic purpose and aims to involve students as active participants pursuing open-ended enquiries with an emphasis on independent learning. Questions were designed to be inclusive of all possible approaches to various topics and all valid answers were considered. At this stage in the life of the specification it is difficult to find new things to report because, in the main, centres possess a very high degree of expertise and this is clearly evidenced in the work that is produced on the day of the examination.

There are still a few areas for development that are reported similarly each year and once again 2016 showed evidence of a small minority of centres that need to take this on board. Centres are encouraged to review their performance in 2016 against all or some of the following points:

- Whilst most centres had entered their candidates for the correct option there were still a few entries for particular Areas of Study where consideration regarding entry for a different Area of Study may have been beneficial to the candidate. It is important to ensure candidates know which area of their investigation is the best fit for the question they answer on the paper.

- A small number of candidates were not entered by the centre for the correct paper.
- There was evidence of candidates choosing a different question on the paper to the question they had clearly prepared for before the examination. In some of these cases the candidate was using material suitable for Question 1 to answer Question 3 (or vice versa) and not really grappling fully with the demands of the question. This practice does not always work to the best effect as the candidate might end up answering neither question as fully as possible. It must be noted that each question was written for ONE of three topics within each particular Area of Study.
- Candidates were not penalised if correct entries were not made or a cross was put in a box that did not match the answer or if no box was ticked at all. However, evidence shows that candidates have decided that the question for a topic that they clearly had not prepared for looked more inviting and selected that question but that did not necessarily mean they were best prepared to answer that question. Whilst it is good to note that less candidates than 2015 attempted this approach, there were still some candidates in this session who answered a question they had not prepared for and may need to be reminded which question their material is best directed at and be advised to answer that question.
- Candidates using a pre-prepared essay inclusive of centre selected quotes often ignored the question.

Examiners were encouraged to mark positively and to credit all valid material according to the mark scheme and question paper. Centres should ensure that candidates are entered for the option that matches their Area of Study and that candidates are clear about which question they have been prepared for on the paper. There is still evidence of centres studying Papers 1B and 1F being entered for 1A. This might be an oversight regarding filling out the form – centres must choose 6RS02 and then identify which of the seven papers from 1A to 1G is the specific entry.

Variation in achievement was related to the two assessment objectives. These objectives should receive prominent attention in the process of the investigation. Importantly there must be explicit attention to both objectives in the examination answer and also to the question that is intended to focus the answer. Each question consistently referred to the assessment objectives with the trigger word 'Examine' for AO1 and 'Comment on' for AO2. These dictated the structure of the question and helped candidates to plan their answers. It would be advisable for candidates to pay regular attention to the level descriptors for these assessment objectives as a way of monitoring their development and progress during their investigations. The phrase 'with reference to the topic you have investigated' will always appear in the question to ensure that the generic question can be answered with material from any appropriate investigation. The mark scheme itself is generic to all questions but the answer itself is not necessarily generic as candidates are *expected* to use their material to *answer the question*. The purpose of the

question is to challenge candidates to adapt their material so that at the highest levels they may demonstrate a coherent understanding of the task based on the selection of their material. Widely deployed evidence/arguments/sources were evident in well-structured responses to the task whereby a clearly expressed viewpoint was supported by well-deployed evidence and reasoned argument. There was skilful deployment of religious language in many answers and the fluency of good essays showed command over the material; such command makes for high outcomes and rewards the amount of hard work done by the candidate. Many candidates had clearly learned much in the process and their overall grasp of the issues involved and command over their material was highly commendable.

Candidates at the lower end of achievement struggled with the demands of the question. These candidates were insecure with their management of material and did not know how to best structure their content to answer the specific question. Success can be undermined by writing up a rote-learned answer which was not adapted to the question set or by answering a question that has been written for a topic they have not studied. In 2016 there was still far too much evidence of rote learned answers using the same structure and material inclusive of quotes; whilst much information was relevant to the topic and consequently was awarded in terms of AO1, there was a significant lack of engagement with the specific demands of the question and consequently marks for AO2 were low, with only generic evaluation provided. This approach is contrasted with excellent praxis whereby candidates were trained to answer the question; arguably, this is evidence of good practice but at the lower end some candidates thought it was sufficient to simply use the question stimulus at the end of each paragraph. The best answers were those which were guided by the statement as opposed to simply '*tagging it on*' to anticipated content. A balanced approach to the question that meets the highest levels of achievement according to both assessment objectives is obviously desirable and the generic question accommodates many possible routes to success whereby any valid approach to the question was credited.

Finally, there is increasing evidence of poorly written scripts that are almost illegible – scripts are scanned onto software for marking and even though the examiner can enlarge the screen many scripts were still very difficult to read. Candidates are strongly advised to develop their practical handwriting skills and then practice writing under timed conditions. Candidates who cannot achieve legible writing may need to consider accessing the facility for word processing their answers according to the regulations. Centres are assured that much time was invested in attempting to decipher illegible answers but there is always the risk that a badly written word/phrase/paragraph could be misinterpreted and it is best to avoid the chances of this occurring. Examiners understand the time constraints that candidates are writing under but this problem regarding illegible handwriting seems to be on the increase. Centres need to address this issue because the current format for examinations requires candidates' ability to sustain handwriting and academic standards under examination pressure.

That said, the excellent work of centres and candidates in 6RS02 bears testimony to the academic potential of candidates that is a joy to behold when it is fully realised.

Specific Comments

It would be good to see more entries for this paper as the Old Testament continues to have the fewest candidates of all the 6RS02 options. It is evident that candidates engage enthusiastically with this unit as there were some very insightful and detailed studies.

Question 1 - Religion and Science

The Old Testament provides rich material for the application of natural science, for example, in the creation narratives, miracles or prophecy. Very few candidates addressed, for example, how the Christian doctrine of creation could be explored by examining scientific explanations for the origins of the universe. The stronger candidates were able to discuss the creation and evolution debate in detail; other candidates extrapolated a relationship between the design argument and the Old Testament. Origins of the universe in the Old Testament were contrasted by some candidates against scientific discovery. Candidates appear to fear discussing with confidence how the study of the interface between religion and science might have real relevance for the study of the Old Testament. There is scope for examining the historical interaction between religion and science by focussing on the dialogue between Christianity and the natural sciences.

The take up for this question remains rather low and this seems a shame because the potential of this topic is not really explored by many candidates. The focus of the question was missed by a few who were unable to comment on the claim the religion and science answer different questions. The best answers adapted their material to the question, or set up their approach clearly with reference to the question. In the best essays the issues were firmly located within contemporary scholarship from within the religion and science debate and coupled with appropriate knowledge of Old Testament scholarship. Overall there was an excellent selection of material drawn from the Old Testament that supported very good essays but in some cases responses were weaker on the distinctive discipline of science. The stronger candidates were well versed in the debate from a scientific and religious perspective and were up to date with their account of it. There was good analysis of key terms and drawing out of their significance.

Weaker candidates generally struggled to relate issues within the religion and science debate to a study of the Old Testament. Some candidates were rather one-sided in their approach to the religion and science debate and opportunities to refer to the Old Testament narratives were generally missed. Scholarship in the Old Testament is extensive and is best deployed with the relevant textual extract from which the theological issues emerge; good candidates had no difficulty handling their material with this point in mind. There were a few scripts that might have fared better if they were entered for 1A Q1 because it appeared that in-depth knowledge of the Old Testament was not so secure. A few candidates managed to move beyond a purely Dawkinian critique towards a balanced reflection on the question but would have benefitted from the inclusion of commentary from other, more well known, Old Testament scholars. It is also worth noting whilst any point of

view can be argued for, it is important to be able to substantiate an individual view with balanced knowledge of both sides of the debate.

The candidate in the following essay extract engaged immediately with the question and selected from a wide range of material to support the view suggested in the question. The first paragraph is comprehensive and sets out very clearly the argument that directs the thrust of the entire essay. The discussion on the compatibility of religion and science was substantiated by a comprehensive range of biblical scholarship and appropriate scholarship. The essay narrative comments clearly on the distinctive nature of the religion and science disciplines and the choice of Creationism lent itself to a thorough study of the Old Testament. The pages are packed with fluent references to wide ranging scholarship and the final page offers a summative concluding statement that draws this very good study to a close.

Contradictions, Henry Morris, Intelligent Design, Incredibly Complex
Unintelligent design, Schools, Noah, Black sea Deluge, OHELT,
Evolution, NOMA.

The areas of which science and religion cover has been a long discussion that has been talked about for years. Some believe that they are in no way, shape or form similar. Some believe that they are one of the same thing. The best way to start is by looking at science. Science is factual; it has empirical evidence to prove what it says. Religion follows a more a priori argument in that it doesn't need evidence to back up its statements. Anthony Flew developed the Verification Principle which claims a statement is meaningful if empirical evidence can be used to verify it. Science uses this methodology as experiments conducted help to provide proof of a hypothesis (but I'll get onto that later). Karl Popper then developed the falsification principle which claims a statement is meaningful if it knows what empirical evidence can count against it. Flew said that religious statements aren't meaningful because

'Christians say "God is good" no matter what.'

~~The~~ Every Religion relies on its holy scripture to provide a detailed way of living your life. For Christians it is the Bible. This is believed to be the word of God. Religious believers follow their God through their own will, despite there being no physical proof of God. They study a book whereas scientists study the world and its empirical nature. ~~to this~~

~~So~~ In the Bible though there are many contradictions. These mistakes could be down to translation errors or misinterpretation, but the following does not seem that way. In Genesis 1:26-27 it says that man and woman were created at the same time, but in Genesis 2:7, 21-22 it says that man was created first and woman some time later. In addition, in Deuteronomy 23:1 it claims a castrate will not be allowed into the kingdom of heaven, but in Matthew 19:12 it advises you to become a castrate to be allowed into God's assembly. Science can simply prove both of these wrong. Man and woman cannot be created together and separately, and one cannot be a castrate and not a castrate simultaneously.

Henry Morris was a literal creationist who believed exactly what the Bible says, from the creative narratives to the Flood accounts. Morris stated that the ^{first} two

narratives in the Bible (i.e. Genesis 1 & 2) are from the perspective of God and Adam. (That is why it could appear women were created after men from Adam's point of view, thus silencing that contradiction.) He believed that everything in the Bible was true and literal. For example, ~~24~~ a day meant 24 hours. However, ~~old~~ ^{old} Earth creationist George Stanley believed ~~that~~ the Bible from a non-literal perspective, i.e. that a day meant a long period of time. Morris was a New-Earth creationist that believed the Earth ~~was~~ is 6000 years old, but yet doesn't deny the existence of dinosaurs. In fact he claims there is reference of them in the Bible, 'look at the Behemoth.' (Behemoth means big / mythical.) However, science has proved this to be wrong because geology has proved the Earth is billions of years old, and analysis ~~of~~ ^{of} fossils have dated dinosaurs to have existed 65 million years ago.

Intelligent design was created by Professor Michael Behe which claims life is too complex for it not to have been designed. It can be argued that intelligent design looks at empirical evidence and seeks to ascertain what inferences can be found from that evidence. However, Leonard Krushkalca said that "Intelligent design is nothing but creationism in a cheap

taxedo." ~~me~~ Behe went on further to state that some systems are 'irreducibly complex' as they could have not evolved naturally. He gives the example of a mousetrap. What with its mechanical structure, if you were to remove one of its many interlocking parts, it would cease to work. Some have claimed that the eye is too complex on a molecular level to have been evolved naturally and that a designer must have created it.

The opposite of this would be unintelligent design, which is where organisms have developed qualities and features by natural selection that are detrimental to that organism. It argues against intelligent design by giving the example of the larynx. The laryngeal nerve should travel a matter of inches from the larynx to the brain. But in a giraffe this is not the case. The nerve travels down the ~~rest~~ neck of the giraffe, loops around one of the main arteries of the heart and straight back up to the brain. That's 14ft each way! It argues that it is not the design of a ~~creator~~ creator because the marginal cost is too great. ~~Unintelligent~~ Unintelligent design can be compared to ^{the} a jet engine. The very first propeller engine is improved upon by adding successful features to it that helps to improve the structure, and poorer qualities are removed and avoided. With intelligent design there is

no 'back to the drawing board':

It can be wondered as to ~~how~~ what ~~can~~ ^{should} be taught in schools if ~~the~~ science and religion have different areas of view and are not intertwined with one another?

I personally take an anti-realist opinion in that I believe both should be taught to students separately and allow them to believe in what they want to believe. This was not the case in the court case of *Kitzmiller vs Dover Area School District, 2005*.

Kitzmiller School was found teaching Intelligent Design as an alternative to evolution. The judge ruled that they violated the Establishment clause (religion not be taught in schools) and that intelligent design is a form of creationism, and that it is religious in nature.

In my opinion, ^{what we learn} it should not be forced upon us and we should be able to choose our own opinions for ourselves.

Looking back at the creation stories, one of the biggest stories was Noah and the Great Flood. God said he regretted making humans so he should wipe them from the face of the Earth. He entrusted Noah and his family to build an arc and to take two of every animal in this vessel. However another contradiction is that in the next paragraph of the Bible it says to take 7

of every animal into the arc. Such a contradiction does not help the reliability of the Bible. If this ~~was~~ story is true, there must be evidence of the Arc somewhere?

Several suggestions have been made. Firstly, the Black Sea Deluge. The Black Sea was once a ~~sea~~ freshwater lake but is now a saltwater lake. Could this be due to The Great Flood? No. Science has shown that 7000 years ago the Mediterranean Sea swelled and flooded into the Black Sea, leaving saltwater behind. Secondly, Sir Leonard Woolley found a thick layer of sediment ~~on~~ covering a valley in the City of Ur. Sediment is deposited when the sea rises. However, this area was known for flooding often so it would appear that the villagers 'whole world' was flooding and this perhaps could have been spread as the Great Flood. Science ~~is~~ has kept proving religious believers wrong and seems to somewhat oppose their ideas.

Creationism is defined as a theory, but is this technically accurate? To be defined as a theory a whole process must be undergone to prove its legitimacy. Firstly, an observation must be made to discover what you want ~~to~~ uncovering. Secondly, a hypothesis needs to be made to suggest why this observation occurs. Thirdly, an experiment must be carried out to test this hypothesis and its accuracy. Fourthly, a law is then made which is ~~is~~ a rule of what occurs and why it happens. Finally, a theory is a collection

of laws that are generally accepted by the scientific community. Creationism does not follow these steps and so its misuse of technical terminology could suggest a lack of credibility.

Evolution is a theory made by Charles Darwin ~~and~~ while he was observing finches on the Galapagos Islands. It states that characteristics develop from random mutations in the organism that help to better their survival in their environment. These successful genes and the expressed phenotype is then passed on to their offspring, and they too have the necessary characteristics to survive. Darwin here shows ~~that~~ to a literalist and those who believe in ~~is~~ ^{evolved} intelligent design that there is no creator as we have ~~developed~~ over millions of years from the very first organisms into the human beings we are today; God did not create humans.

Non-overlapping majisterium (NOMA) was created by Stephen Jay Gould who believed that science and religion had different areas of enquiry: fact vs values. He thought they existed separately and could not co-exist. Partially-overlapping majisterium (POMA) was developed by Alister McGrath who thought some areas of science and religion overlapped slightly e.g. Gravity is 'the wonderful work of God' and we study ^{the} scientific laws like this that have been put

by God himself. Completely overlapping majestrium was developed by Christian Scientist John Lennox who thought science and religion were one of the same thing. He said 'Scientific laws only help to reinforce my faith that there is a creator at work.'

In Conclusion, Science was evidence to back up its answers. Religion relies on faith and intuition to back itself up. In more ways than not the two seem to conflict with each quite apparently, but having Christian Scientists such as John Lennox shows they are compatible to an extent and can be study along side each other. It simply depends on the individual and their interpretation of science and religion as to whether ~~they~~ they are a different area of enquiry.

Question 2 - The Nature of God

Some excellent responses navigated a wide range of different Old Testament literature and explored in detail the significance of these for understanding our relationship with God. This question was very well done. This question provides scope for examining the Old Testament in order to understand the nature of God. Candidates offered a range of convincing views about the nature of God that were coupled with solid exegesis of the biblical text and appropriate scholarship. Candidates answered this question with a high level of insight and were well equipped to examine the many valid interpretations of God whilst backing up their views with a wide range of contrasting biblical quotations, both from the Law and the Prophets. The various attributes of God were understood in detail and discussed through the use of scholarly opinion backed up by the Prophets and the Psalms. Evaluation was interesting and varied in approach, from the evangelistic notions of God's embracing agape love, through pre-destination, heaven and hell to philosophical notions of free will and epistemic distance.

In the mid-range, similar to last year, there was much evidence of Dawkins' analysis of the psychotic nature of God at the expense of reference to classical Old Testament scholarship. Dawkins was too often quoted as an Old Testament scholar whilst negative issues about God were discussed in a polarised fashion. More scholarly analysis would have added a qualitatively academic edge to the discussion. At the lower end of achievement candidates concentrated on re-telling Bible stories with little scholarly analysis; or alternatively candidates in this range had little knowledge of the Old Testament.

The candidate in this 12½ page essay demonstrated coherent understanding of the task; based on selection of material to demonstrate emphasis and clarity of ideas. This was a well-structured, fluent response to the task that was expressed cogently through skilful deployment of religious language. The argument was substantiated and clearly reasoned. The candidate was knowledgeable of the Old Testament and included a substantial range of biblical material and biblical scholarship. Every page is packed with different material and the conclusion closes the study by answering the question. A very impressive piece of work that shows exemplary control over the topic.

In the Old Testament, God does not demonstrate one fixed facet that remains consistent throughout, but rather he unveils a wide medley of personalities. We see him being labelled with different characteristics such as the Creator, the Laughier, the Punisher, the Father, and many others. In Exodus 33, God is described as "The Lord, a God gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." Meanwhile Bernard Anderson asserts that in the Old Testament God is described in "bold figures of speech," asserting that he has "hands and eyes and emotions comparable to human feelings." Yet, although God can be seen to inherently possess all 4 of these characteristics, J. Scullier argues that, "there is ultimately a one and only God." ^{to God's character} The components that make up the depiction of His nature, must be examined specifically and in greater detail, in order to gain a better understanding of His nature as a whole, to see whether it is possible to fully understand the depths of His nature.

One image of God that is presented in the

Old Testament is his nature as a creator. The Hebrew Bible begins with a clear distinction between God and 'not God', between creator and created. (In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1)) The writer therefore assumed that both God and his role as creator do not need validation, an idea that J. Scullion picks up on in his statement, "creation by God is simply accepted." This idea demonstrates God's superiority over all his creation. J. Miles expands on this view through the comparison that he makes between the Six Days of Creation and the Twelve Labours of Hercules, which he argued are contrastingly, "full of flexing muscle and chipping sweat." He uses this comparison as an instrument through which to illustrate God's omnipotence as creator.

This omnipotence is furthered by the way God merely needed to utter a simple command in order to create the heavens and the earth. (And God said let there be light and there was light). This once more demonstrates how he is a superior being, since humans could never have the authority or power to make such a creation. However his omnipotence here contrasts with

Genesis 2 and 3, which present a far more
immanent God, one far more directly involved
in creating his universe. We learn that God forms
man "from the dust of the ground," so there
seems to be another side to God's nature
as a creator. We gain insight into yet
another component through Genesis 3, where
we learn that God rested on the seventh day
of his creation. J. Miles finds issue with
this, asserting that "effortless sovereignty has
been his defining trait, and yet, he
rests on the seventh day - is he weaker
than he lets on?" He is challenging God's
omnipotence here, a segment to God's nature
that was just established as being an
essential part to God's nature, yet his
argument is supported by various observations
in book of Genesis. God is absent when
Adam and Eve have eaten from the
forbidden tree, and demonstrates how oblivious
he is to their sin when he asks "where
are you... have you eaten from the tree?"
Furthermore, God is presented as walking
in the Garden of Eden as Adam and Eve
do, thus demonstrating how
anthropomorphic his nature is. It is clear

that, although an omnipotent being, God is also shown to be limited in the Old Testament. These 2 components to his nature appear to be at odds with one another, supporting the idea that God's nature ^{in the Old Testament} appears to be above the comprehension of the human mind, and therefore that he is too complex to understand fully.

However, this weakness that appears to exist in the Old Testament is overridden by the reverence that the Old Testament seems to give to his name. He is called Lord, ELOHIM, YHWH, and 'Eli, and the lack of a specific name Bernard Anderson argues contributed to the ascendancy of his being. The name first given to God in the Old Testament is ELOHIM. (In the beginning God (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1)). John J. Porges argues that in traditional Jewish law, this was the name given to God as judge and creator of the whole universe. It is used exclusively in Chapter 7 of Genesis as his transcendent element of his nature that is being observed.

This contrasts with Genesis 2 and 3, where he is given the name YHWA, which reflects a far more personal relationship with God and the ethical side to God's nature. This one more seems to demonstrate that God's nature encompassed various differing personality traits, it supports the notion for God being an incredibly complex being who we are not capable of fully understanding. This is taken further by the way God calls himself 'I AM', when Moses asks him what name he should give to validate his claims to free the Israelites. In response, God replied 'I AM WHO I AM', this is my name forever. God's omnipotence is once more reflected in this answer, which is seen even more clearly in the LXX translation 'ego eimi ho on', meaning 'I am the being one / the one who is', it is clear that 'I AM' is being itself, and far beyond our understanding of him. God also calls himself the Lord in the Old Testament, once more demonstrating his nature as a ruler and master over all. He is seen to rule over his people

as King - "The Lord Almighty, he is the King of Glory" (PSALMS 24). We learn that God is a being both wholly and equally transcendent and immanent in the Old Testament, one who is an omnipotent creator - which is supported by the reverence that His name give Him - and yet one who is described with quite anthropomorphic features at areas in the Old Testament. It is clear that His nature ^{is} indeed too complex for us to understand fully.

J. Miles also argues that "In either of his names, the creator has proven to us that he is capable of being a destroyer." The Old Testament shows various incidents where God is seen to exact very harsh punishments for relatively mild offences. R. Dawkins picks up on this when he draws upon Leviticus 20, in which we learn that the crimes of adultery, cursing our parents, and homosexuality all merited the death penalty in the Old Testament. # Dawkins argued as a result that is

is wrong that "so many people today base their lives on as appalling a role model as YHWH." A. McGrath expressed a similar view through his argument, "If we were to ~~in~~ base our lives on the laws of the Old Testament, we would rank the worship of the wrong gods and the naming of graves as first and second among sins." It is difficult not to appreciate the persuasiveness of Dawkins' and McGrath's argument here, as this puzzling trademark ~~it~~ seems to exalt God's nature as lawgiver and punisher, and yet seems to go against the caring side of God's nature as a creator, and his omnibenevolence as a father. For this reason, it is clear that His nature is, ~~used~~ as being far too complicated for humans to comprehend.

^{nevertheless}
Yet Christianity worships a punishing God. Christianity views the principles of integrity and morality as being vital to

Jesus' ministry. ~~These~~ ^{These} principles can only be lived out however, if God is punish those who do bad, and reward those who do good. Proverbs 3:12 explains that, "God punishes those that he loves, as a father, the son that he delights in." Additionally, it can be seen that God's nature is reflected in his 2 commandments, "Love your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind", as well as "Love your neighbour as yourself." It is clear that, although critics have made their arguments known on how God's nature seems to contradict itself, rather than this meaning God does not exist, instead it just proves the point that God's nature is too complicated for humans to fully understand. Dawkins argues that the moral of the story of Noah is appalling, where "God wipes out all mankind (with the exception of one family) ... including all the (presumably blameless) animals as well." McGrath serves as a good example of the

argument's middle ground however, recognising Dawkins's bewilderment at some of the punishments given by God for certain crimes, yet at the same time arguing that, "it must be recognised that this ancient text was written at a time when people were trying to establish their relation to God, and trying to protect their group / national identity." It is clear that, even though we can justify ~~some~~ ^{the} individual components to God's nature as existing with each other, and supporting God's nature as a whole, ~~we~~ ^{this does} not mean that we can comprehend the full depths ~~of~~ ^{at} the nature of God as presented in the Old Testament, but rather ~~that we can see the components~~ ~~his character can exist among~~ ~~one~~ ^{instead,} ~~we~~ ^{that we} can see that God has a diverse personality, that ~~we~~ ^{we} can ^{see} as feasibly existing under the same character.

Additionally, to the ~~the~~ disciplining component

to God's nature can also be seen to be linked to his nature as a father. In Hosea 11: 4 God states, "I picked them up and held them to my cheek. I bent down to them and led them." Meanwhile, J. Drane also states that God is "a loving father to his people, who directed them in their footsteps from the very beginning of their national history." This is made clear by the relationship that God has to Israel, which is described as being that of a father-son relationship. God was a father to his people in the Old Testament by the way that he oversaw and supported the Israelites on their journey to the promised land. As the Old Testament does not frequently refer to God as father, it can ~~be~~ be seen most tangibly through this relationship that he has with Israel. This relationship is strengthened by Psalm 2; "I placed my king on the Holy Mount of Zion... thou art my son." John McEwan argues that,

"In these 2 verses, ~~both~~ ^{both} ~~Israel and~~ ^{Israel and} the begotten son of God are linked together as King." ~~Both Israel and~~
The King of Israel is also shown to be God's Chosen son by the covenant that He made with ~~Israel~~ King David, which is the first time this father-son motif with Israel is made clear. Samuel was the first king that ~~was~~ ^{reigned} under this covenant ~~as~~ ^{that} had been made previously with God, so significantly it can be seen that, as God's Chosen son, he precluded the ~~coming of~~ ~~the last~~ King of Israel that was to come, the begotten son of God, the Messiah. This strengthens the father-son motif all the more, so that it is clear that God's nature as presented in the Old Testament must extend to yet another characteristic, His nature as a Father. This proves how yet another perspective must be taken into account, when viewing God's character, that proves how ~~difficult~~

~~It is for the minds of humans~~
complete his mind is, and therefore
how the nature of God was presented
in the Old Testament is too
difficult for us to understand
fully.

God is described in many different
ways in the Old Testament. We see
him as being an omnipotent, transcendent,
and immanent Creator, whose ~~supremacy~~
superiority over humans is shown by the
names he is described by, but he
is also presented on occasions
as ~~being~~ ~~strong~~ possessing human-like
qualities / weaknesses to his nature.
He is also described as a brutal
punisher, but also one who does
this ~~for a reason~~ due to his
will for us to become the moral
beings he has in mind for us. He
is also described as a ~~fatherly~~
father, whose relationship with Israel
plays the greatest part in strengthening
this motif. J. Deane argues that *
= emphasizing too much of God's

nature leads to distortions." In other words, one should aim to view the ~~whole~~ wider perspective of God's nature before reaching any judgments on his character as a whole.³ However, we can see how at times, elements of his character seem to be at odds with one another when we try and comprehend his character and the depths of his character we seem to be far-carrying and ~~alike~~. In the end, it is fair to conclude that the human mind is not capable of accurately comprehending the true depths to God's nature. ~~He is being~~
~~to do~~

Question 3 - Job and The Problem Of Evil And Suffering

The stronger candidates had secure knowledge of the Book of Job and scholarship specific to the Book of Job such as C.S.Rodd and biblical commentary. They were also familiar with a range of other well-known Old Testament scholars. Candidates really did explore issues deeply within this question, and most answers were full of scholarship, good learning and interesting evaluation. By far, this question was the most popular with most candidates handling it really well and 2015 was no exception. Candidates were able to examine the Book of Job skilfully, with clarity and coherence; candidates discussed its relationship to the problem of evil and suffering by comparative analysis of textual narratives in the Book of Job and from elsewhere in the Old Testament, most notably the Genesis myths.

Effective use was made of material which candidates had studied in 6RS01 such as the Problem of Evil, but some centres adopted an approach that was over reliant on a model answer. Similar structure, similar introductions with the same quotes may lead to a constraining of natural and nurtured ability of candidates to produce something that is closer to the spirit of the Investigations paper that allows for something original and independent. Candidates are required to make their own response to the material studied and this is not always apparent when they arrive at similar conclusions using the same quotes.

Some weaker answers relied on 'Problem of Evil and Theodicy' type approaches without demonstrating any further knowledge of the Old Testament. This raises the question as to why candidates are not prepared for a different paper for which they might have more distinctive knowledge. It must be stressed again that the demands of the Investigations Paper are different to the Foundations Paper and this particular question is not exclusively about the problem of evil candidates must demonstrate secure knowledge of the Book of Job to secure higher levels of achievement. Many candidates examined solutions to the problem of evil, particularly the Augustinian and Irenaean Theodicies, but not so many used this material effectively to comment on the Book of Job. Some weaker candidates re-told the Job narratives and then wrote about philosophical notions, but were unable to relate the two in a very meaningful way. Some candidates tended to concentrate on the philosophical arguments concerning suffering and tended to use Job as an example (or an after-thought) – this results in some uneven answers. This question demands detailed knowledge of the Book of Job and achievement is directly related to a working knowledge of this material. It is insufficient to present an outline of the problem of evil that is not applied directly to the Book of Job because the purpose of this topic is to study the Book of Job.

This is another good example of competent scholarship coupled with fluent knowledge of the Old Testament. The candidate has very secure knowledge of Jewish theology and exploits this to the full in this piece of work. This candidate explicitly refers to the Book of Job itself and demonstrates secure knowledge. The issues related to the question are thoroughly discussed. The standard of this piece of work is high and serves to illustrate what can be achieved by hard working candidates who clearly have researched their topic.

The Book of Job is a didactic (meaning teaching) poem and wisdom book from the Old Testament. There ~~many~~ are several interpretations of the meaning to this book and whether it offers a convincing solution to the problem of evil. The problem of suffering is known by David Hume as 'the rock of atheism' as it is one of the biggest theological issues. There are two types of evil; moral and natural. Moral evil is manmade evil such as murder, war and cruelty. It is demonstrated in the Book of Job when 'Sabeans' fell upon them and took them and struck down his servants with the edge of the sword'. Natural evil is uncontrollable by humans like volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and tsunamis. Natural evil is placed upon Job when 'Fire of was sent from God and burnt the cattle and servants and consumed them.' We

are left to question why an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God would leave the world this way and not prevent evil.

The problem of evil is a huge theological issue and to say that the Book of Job can solve it does not seem convincing enough. Job suffers evil due to a bet between God and Satan, which only appears to test God rather than offer a solution to the problem of evil. This issue is not given a clear answer in the Book of Job but ~~it~~ does give other possible interpretations.

Augustine offers a solution to the problem of evil that it is part of God's greater plan of love. Augustine believes that because of 'The Fall' in Genesis and Adam's ~~sin~~ creation of original sin, it is seminally present in all of us, including Job. He has sin within him and so deserves to be punished because of this. Job believes in the Retribution

principle, that 'fools suffer and wise prosper.' This means that bad things will come to bad people and good things will come to those who are good. In the Sitz-in-leben, there was no belief in the afterlife. Only belief in 'Sonnun bonnum' - Immanuel Kant. This is the idea of reaching moral perfection to get to the place of God. Augustine believes that the Book of Job is used to tell us that we are all seminally present of sin due to Adam in Genesis 'For you will be like God, knowing both good and evil' - Genesis.

John Walton argues that the Book of Job is a test of God policies, rather than a convincing reason for the problem of evil. It is to teach us then we should always place our wisdom and trust in God. Job puts his faith in God by remaining a faithful servant of him and asking him why he is suffering. ~~the~~ According to Walton we should learn from the

Book of Job to always place trust in God for he has divine cosmic wisdom.

Irenaeus also offers a solution to the problem of evil in that we are given freewill to grow into 'the image and likeness of God.' Therefore, in the Book of Job, Job has freewill to learn from his mistakes and grow to be like God and reach 'summum bonum.' Job is given freewill when he is suffering to make his own choices and remains with his trust in God. In this respect, the book does not offer a convincing solution but teaches that we should be like Job and learn from our mistakes. We are encouraged to use our freewill wisely and not to turn our back on God.

The Satan is called 'the Challenger' by John Walton as he puts God on trial, almost like a legal metaphor. Here, Satan asks for God's permission to place evil on Job and so he is not

viewed as inherently evil, but is instead quite dubious to God and Job. The Satan is also known as 'the accuser' in placing evil on Job. This also gives to us a different view on God, that even with omniscience he allows Satan to pursue evil. 'Either God cannot abolish evil or he will not; if he cannot then he is not all powerful; if he will not then he is not all good' - Augustine. As God allows this evil, we are left to question his power and love for us. He inflicted pain on Job to prove a point to Satan. This does not give a convincing solution to the problem of evil but leaves questions about God and the role of Satan. However, it could be interpreted that Satan heavily influences the use of evil in the world 'suffering produces character, perseverance and hope' - Romans 5:3. This suggests that suffering is used for people to emerge greater and could suggest that God allowed evil to be placed on Job because it would

develop him as a person in the end.

Job is visited by three comforters. The first is Eliphaz who comments that 'the teeth of the great lion are broken'. This suggests that God is angered by something Job has done. He must have sinned ~~for~~ for evil to be placed upon him this way. The loss of his family, home and cattle must be punishment from God for turning his back on him at some point in his life. Bildad, a second comforter, tells Job that his family and ancestors must have sinned, which has led to his punishments and losses. A third comforter, Zophar, also offers the explanation that God must have sinned for evil to be dwelt on him. Job is unaware of what he has done for we know that he is innocent of all their charges. Elihu is also a comforter who believes he knows all God's ways. He is self righteous and pretentious and claims to know God's teaching, when he cannot as a contingent being.

At this point in Job 39 we hear from God, who uses the examples of

mythical creatures - Behemoth and Leviathan to portray to ~~God~~ Job who is in control of the world, God explains to Job how he is the creator of all the world and everything he does is done for a reason. We are contingent beings who cannot understand God's ways. We are not given a convincing solution to the problem of evil from God but an explanation of how we cannot understand him as it is outside human comprehension.

Job is speechless to God's response and overwhelmed. He repents to God as he has learnt ~~that~~ to not believe in the Retribution principle and changes his ways to grow to be like God.

Three conclusions can be drawn from the Book of Job. The first is that our sufferings are subject to God's wisdom. He is omnipotent and knows all about the world. The second conclusion is that by suffering physical pain, we learn to grow

Spiritually to be like God and become worthy of a place in heaven. The third conclusion is that of Augustine. ~~Job~~ Job ~~deser~~ deserved to suffer because he has Adam's sin seminally present within him. As a result of Adam's original sin, the world became out of balance and natural evil began. 'Natural evil is ultimately from human actions... in disease, earthquakes and storms' - John Hick.

In my opinion, the Book of Job does not offer a convincing solution to the problem of evil and suffering. I agree with Walton in that the book is open to many different interpretations. John Hick states that we cannot grow in a static environment. To grow spiritually we need guidance from God to become more like him. The ambiguity of the Book of Job is too vague to be classed to give a specific convincing solution to the problem of evil. An interpretation could not be a solution but to learn of the

~~otto~~ meanings behind the actions of God, 'Fear of the Lord produces wisdom, fools spend knowledge and discipline.'

Paper Summary

Key Points to Remember:

- Do not ignore the question.
- A generic question is not best answered with a generic answer. The question is made up of two parts. The question itself and the generic phrase 'Examine and comment with reference to the topic you have investigated.' Answer the question.
- Use appropriate sources and, if possible, include recent scholarship.
- Well deployed material will show how well you understand your topic and how you are using your material to answer the question.
- Do not forget to comment on your material in relation to the question.
- Use your evidence to substantiate your argument.
- Comment on alternative views if you know them.
- Express your viewpoint clearly.
- Practice writing under timed conditions as part of your preparation.
- Do not spend too much time on your essay plan to the detriment of the essay itself.
- Write legibly.

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