

External assessment 2024

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Stimulus book

# Study of Religion

## General instruction

- Work in this book will not be marked.



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## **Stimulus 1**

### **Surah al-Ma'idah 5:92–93**

<sup>92</sup> Obey God and obey the Messenger, and be cautious. If you turn away — know that the duty of Our Messenger is clear communication. <sup>93</sup> Those who believe and do righteous deeds will not be blamed for what they may have eaten, provided they obey, and believe, and do good deeds, then maintain piety and faith, then remain righteous and charitable. God loves the charitable.

**Source:** *Qur'an* 2012, translated by T Itani.

### **Context**

Surah al-Ma'idah is the fifth surah (chapter) of the *Qur'an*, known as 'The Table', and is about God providing and warning against excess.

## Stimulus 2

### Dhammapada 12:163–166

163 Easy to do are things that are bad and harmful to oneself. But exceedingly difficult to do are things that are good and beneficial.

164 Whoever, on account of perverted views, scorns the Teaching of the Perfected Ones, the Noble and Righteous Ones — that fool, like the bamboo, produces fruits only for self destruction.

165 By oneself is evil done; by oneself is one defiled. By oneself is evil left undone; by oneself is one made pure. Purity and impurity depended on oneself; no one can purify another.

166 Let one not neglect one's own welfare for the sake of another, however great. Clearly understanding one's own welfare, let one be intent upon the good.

**Source:** Buddha Dharma Education Association Incorporated 2008, 'The Dhammapada: the Buddha's path to wisdom'.

### Context

The Dhammapada (Pali) or Dharmapada (Sanskrit) is a collection of verses attributed to the Buddha. This section refers to Self.

## Stimulus 3

### Colossians 3:13–15

13 Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.

**Source:** *The Holy Bible* 1989, New Revised Standard Version.

### Context

Colossians is a letter in the New Testament to the people of Colossae, providing guidance for everyday living.

## **Stimulus 4**

### **Bhagavad Gita 2:62–64**

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### **Context**

These verses of the Bhagavad Gita refer to Sadharana dharma, which is the universally applied concept of self-control, honesty and nonviolence.

## **Stimulus 5**

### **Deuteronomy 15:7–8; 10**

<sup>7</sup> If, however, there is a needy person among you, one of your kinsmen in any of your settlements in the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not harden your heart and shut your hand against your needy kinsman. <sup>8</sup> Rather, you must open your hand and lend him sufficient for whatever he needs.

<sup>10</sup> Give to him readily and have no regrets when you do so, for in return the LORD your God will bless you in all your efforts and in all your undertakings.

**Source:** *The Jewish Study Bible: Second Edition* 2004, Oxford University Press.

### **Context**

Deuteronomy is the fifth book of the Torah. It is foundational in Judaism, as it contains the key elements of the relationship between God and the Israelites. Deuteronomy 15 is about implementing the covenantal obligation of cancelling debts.

## Stimulus 6

### Surah al-A'raf 7:31; 85

31 [Do] not be excessive. He does not love the excessive.

85 And to Median, their brother Shuaib. He said, 'O my people, worship God; you have no god other than Him. A clear proof has come to you from your Lord. Give full measure and weight, and do not cheat people out of their rights, and do not corrupt the land once it has been set right. This is better for you, if you are believers.'

Source: *Qur'an* 2012, translated by T Itani.

### Context

Surah al-A'raf is the seventh surah (chapter) of the *Qur'an*. Its main focus is on the consequences of ignoring instruction from God and His messengers.

## Stimulus 7

### Excerpt from 'Islam and the Environment — How to be an Eco-friendly Muslim!'

In the *Qur'an*, God refers to us as *Khalifas* or stewards of the Earth. As Muslims, we should see the world as our *Amanah* [trust and free will in fulfilling obligations to Allah] and therefore, take care of it in order to ensure that the balance of the Earth is maintained.

We need to try whatever little we can, to restore Allah's perfect equilibrium, protecting His *Amanah* and 'greening' up our act. We can start by thinking about minimising in everything that we do. By this, I mean in our shopping habits, transport habits, eating habits or our resource usage habits!

Source: Fatema 2021, 'Islam and the Environment — How to be an Eco-friendly Muslim!', *Balanced Bayt*.

### Context

This is an excerpt from a blog called Balanced Bayt, directed at faithful Muslims in the modern world seeking balance in their work, life and faith.

## Stimulus 8

### Summary of issues around fast fashion

It is estimated that 10–20% of the world's water is affected by textile manufacture and production.

Processing and dyeing of textiles contribute to chemical contamination, impacting vulnerable communities in developing countries, usually where regulations are limited and/or not enforced.

Australia is the second largest consumer of new textiles annually, surpassed only by the United States.

Annually, more than 2 million tonnes of textile waste is produced worldwide.

Australia exports its textile waste to developing nations where possible.



The average person purchases significantly more clothing today than twenty years ago, and fast fashion companies produce twice the volume of products.

Less than 1% of used clothing is recycled into new garments or textile products.

Toxic chemicals from fast fashion end up in landfill, waterways and oceans, and cause extensive pollution.

Volumes of discarded clothing waste are overflowing in landfill, burnt in incinerators and polluting oceans, usually in areas of high poverty and minimal regulations.

Fishing industries, particularly in poorer nations, are being adversely impacted by textile waste.

### Context

Since the end of the 20th century, the fast fashion industry has boomed. Growth in textile and clothing waste is a direct consequence of this expansion. More recently, media and environmental groups have provided public information to inform consumers of the impact this has on people and the environment.

## Context

Stimulus 9–11 refer to Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks (1948–2020), who was the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth from 1991 to 2013. In 2005, he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II. After completing his term as Chief Rabbi, Sacks took up several academic responsibilities as Professor of Judaic Thought at New York University; Professor of Jewish Thought at Yeshiva University, New York; and Professor of Law, Ethics and the Bible at King’s College, London. He was a prolific writer and social commentator, publishing numerous books, articles and newspaper columns and making regular appearances on television and radio.

### Stimulus 9

#### Jewish Repentance

God wrote forgiveness into the script. He always gives us a second chance, and more. All we have to do is to acknowledge our wrongs, apologise, make amends and resolve to behave better, and God forgives. It allows us to hold simultaneously to the highest moral aspirations while admitting honestly our deepest moral failings.

...

As we ask God to write us in the Book of Life, He asks us: what have you done with your life thus far? Have you thought about others or only about yourself? Have you brought healing to a place of human pain or hope where you found despair? You may have been a success, but have you also been a blessing? Have you written other people in the Book of Life?

**Source:** Sacks, J 2017, ‘The Challenge of Jewish Repentance: Questions to ask ourselves each new year’, *The Wall Street Journal*.

#### Context

The Book of Life is a heavenly document that identifies the righteous who have corrected their wrongdoings and sought forgiveness during the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.



## **Stimulus 10**

### **The Stranger**

I used to think that the most important line in the Bible was ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’. Then I realised that it is easy to love your neighbour because he or she is usually quite like yourself. What is hard is to love the stranger, one whose colour, culture or creed is different from yours. That is why the command, ‘Love the stranger because you were once strangers’, resonates so often throughout the Bible.

**Source:** Sacks, J 2015, ‘Refugee crisis: “Love the stranger because you were once strangers” calls us now’, *The Guardian*.

## **Stimulus 11**

### **Excerpt from an interview with Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks: ‘Life worth living and the Jewish tradition’**

[Let’s] start with the assumption of Genesis 1 that every one of us, regardless of colour, culture, creed or class, is in the image and likeness of God. So if you’re celebrating with your friends and you’re doing so in a joyous manner, in a sense, all our particular points of light join together and create a moment of an epiphany of the Divine presence. So the idea of being close to God is not opposed to being close to other people, it’s something that happens when you’re close to other people.

**Source:** Sacks, J 2015, ‘Interview with Dr Miroslav Volf’, Yale Center for Faith & Culture.

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## References

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### Stimulus 2

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[https://www.buddhanet.net/pdf\\_file/scrndhamma.pdf](https://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/scrndhamma.pdf).

### Stimulus 3

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### Stimulus 4

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### Stimulus 5

*The Jewish Study Bible: Second Edition* 2004, Micah, Oxford University Press.

### Stimulus 6

*Qur'an* 2012, 'Chapter 7: The Elevations (Surah Al-A'raf)', translated by T Itani, [www.clearquran.com/005.html](http://www.clearquran.com/005.html).  
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### Stimulus 7

Balanced Bayt 2021, *Islam and the Environment — How to be an Eco-friendly Muslim!*, <https://balancedbayt.com/how-to-be-an-eco-friendly-muslim>. Used with permission.

### Stimulus 9

Rabbi Sacks, J 2017, 'The Challenge of Jewish Repentance: Questions to ask ourselves each new year'  
<https://rabbisacks.org/archive/challenge-jewish-repentance/>. Used with permission.

### Stimulus 10

Rabbi Sacks J 2015, 'Refugee crisis: "Love the stranger because you were once strangers" calls us now', *The Guardian*, 6 September, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/sep/06/refugee-crisis-jonathan-sacks-humanitarian-generosity>. Used under terms of Guardian News & Media Ltd. open licence.

### Stimulus 11

Extracted from Yale Center for Faith and Culture, 2015, *Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks: Life Worth Living and the Jewish Tradition* (video) (timestamp 13:44-14:20), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWpQ-23OBtU>



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