

External assessment

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Stimulus book

# Study of Religion

## General instruction

- Work in this book will not be marked.

## Stimulus 1

### Extract from the writings of Maimonides

One who serves out of love will be involved in Torah and the commandments, and will pursue conduct in the gentle ways of wisdom, and not for any reason in this world, neither out of fear of punishment nor in order to gain reward. Such a person will simply engage in the truth because it is the truth, and good will result in the end.

This is an extremely high level, and not every wise person reaches it. This is the level of Abraham our Father, whom the Holy One who is Blessed called “my beloved,” because he only served out of love. This is the level that the Holy One who is Blessed commanded through Moses our Teacher, as it is written (Deuteronomy 6:5), *and you will love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might*. At the moment that a person loves God with a true love, he will immediately perform all the commandments out of love.

**Source:** Abramson, HM 2017, *Maimonides on Teshuvah: The ways of repentance*.

### Context

Maimonides was a Jewish scholar of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries who wrote numerous texts about how to interpret the Talmud.

## Stimulus 2

### *The Parable of the Saw*

Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no bitter words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, never in a mood of hate. We shall abide pervading them with a mind imbued with loving-kindness; and starting with them, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility, and without ill will.

**Source:** The Parable of the Saw — Kakacūpama Sutta (Middle Discourse 21), in Bodhi, B (ed.) 2005, *In the Buddha's Words: An anthology of discourses from the Pāli Canon*.

### Context

The Middle Discourses are part of the Buddhist Tripitaka, which includes more than 1000 teachings or suttas.

### **Stimulus 3**

#### **Extract from the *Hymn of Puruṣa***

When they divided Puruṣa how many portions did they make?

What do they call his mouth, his arms? What do they call his thighs and feet?

The Brahman [priests] was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rājanya [kings] made.

His thighs became the Vaiśya [merchants], from his feet the Śūdra [servants] was produced.

**Source:** ‘Puruṣa Verses 11–12’, *The Hymns of the Rig Veda*, translated by RT Griffith 1896.

#### **Context**

The tenth book of the Hindu Rig Veda describes the creation of the universe from a divine being. The above extract identifies how the specific roles, or *varnas*, in Hindu society were formed from Puruṣa. The system of roles in Hindu society is often referred to as the caste system.

## Stimulus 4

### Extract from the writings of Kamali

The dignity of man is manifested, perhaps more than anything else in his freedom of conscience, moral autonomy and judgement.

**Source:** Kamali, MH 2002, *The Dignity of Man: An Islamic perspective*.

### Context

Mohammad Hashim Kamali is an Islamic professor from Afghanistan who has written numerous texts about Islamic law.

## Stimulus 5

### Extract from *The Nirvana Sutra*

Good man, the buddha-nature of living beings is just like this: not all living beings are able to perceive it, just like that treasure-trove of which that poor woman was not aware. Good man, what I have now shown is the universality of buddha-nature, possessed by all living beings yet obscured by their [uncleanness], [comparable] to a poor person who possesses a treasure of pure gold that she cannot see. Today the Tathāgata has shown the universally [existing] treasure repositories of enlightenment in living beings, in other words, buddha-nature itself. When living beings do perceive this, their hearts are filled with joy and a deep reverence for the Tathāgata.

**Source:** *The Nirvana Sutra*, vol. 1, translated by ML Blum 2013.

### Context

*The Nirvana Sutra* is a collection of Mahayana Buddhist teachings attributed to the Buddha. The term *Tathāgata* means 'one who has thus gone' and is used by the Buddha in this text to refer to himself.

## **Stimulus 6**

### **A philosophical definition of 'Respect'**

In the literature of moral and political philosophy, the notion of respect for persons commonly means a kind of respect that all people are owed morally just because they are persons, regardless of social position, individual characteristics or achievements, or moral merit ... a fundamental moral right to respect simply because they are persons. And it is a commonplace that persons are owed or have a right to equal respect.

**Source:** Dillon, RS 2018, 'Respect', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

### **Context**

The concept of respect is discussed in this entry with reference to understanding human rights.

## **Stimulus 7**

### **A summary of the novel *The Circle***

Dave Eggers's novel *The Circle* explores the idea of allowing all people to experience the lives of others through the internet. In order for this to happen, all people would have a camera implanted that would capture all of their experiences — both public and private — to be live-streamed to the internet. Some characters in the novel argue that this would allow people with disability or disadvantage to experience these activities. In fact, it is argued that access to these experiences is a human right, but the question remains — does this in fact infringe on a person's right to privacy?

### **Context**

This is a summary of viewpoints expressed in Dave Eggers's novel *The Circle*.

## **Stimulus 8**

### **An aspect of Kant's ethical approach**

Now I say that man and every reasonable agent exists as an end in himself, and not as a mere mean or instrumental to be employed by any will whatsoever, not even by his own, but must in every action regard his existence, and that of every other Intelligent, as an end in itself.

**Source:** Kant, I, *The Metaphysics of Ethics*, translated by JW Semple 1886.

### **Context**

Immanuel Kant was an 18th century Christian philosopher.

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### **Stimulus 9**

#### **Extract from Wiesel's *Night***

This stimulus has not been published for copyright reasons.

**Source:** Wiesel, E 2006, 'Preface', *Night*, translated by M Wiesel.

### **Stimulus 10**

#### **Extract from Wiesel's acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize**

This stimulus has not been published for copyright reasons.

**Source:** Wiesel, E 1986, *Nobel Acceptance Speech*, delivered on 10 December in Oslo, Norway.



## Stimulus 11

### Extract from Wiesel's lecture given after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize

Let us remember Job who, having lost everything — his children, his friends, his possessions, and even his argument with God — still found the strength to begin again, to rebuild his life. Job was determined not to repudiate the creation, however imperfect, that God had entrusted to him.

Job, our ancestor. Job, our contemporary. His ordeal concerns all humanity. Did he ever lose his faith? If so, he rediscovered it within his rebellion. He demonstrated that faith is essential to rebellion, and that hope is possible beyond despair. The source of his hope was memory, as it must be ours. Because I remember, I despair. Because I remember, I have the duty to reject despair. I remember the killers, I remember the victims, even as I struggle to invent a thousand and one reasons to hope.

There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest. The Talmud tells us that by saving a single human being, man can save the world. We may be powerless to open all the jails and free all the prisoners, but by declaring our solidarity with one prisoner, we indict all jailers. None of us is in a position to eliminate war, but it is our obligation to denounce it and expose it in all its hideousness. War leaves no victors, only victims. I began with the story of the Besht. And, like the Besht, mankind needs to remember more than ever. Mankind needs peace more than ever, for our entire planet, threatened by nuclear war, is in danger of total destruction. A destruction only man can provoke, only man can prevent. Mankind must remember that peace is not God's gift to his creatures, it is our gift to each other.

**Source:** Wiesel, E 1986, *Nobel Lecture*, delivered on 11 December in Oslo, Norway.

## Context

Stimulus 9, 10 and 11 refer to Elie Wiesel, who was a Jewish Holocaust survivor. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986 for his humanitarian work in advocating for an end to human rights violations.

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## References

### Stimulus 1

Abramson, H. M. 2017, *Maimonides on Teshuvah: The Ways of Repentance*.  
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### Stimulus 2

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### Stimulus 3

Griffith, RT (trans.) 1896, *The Hymns of the Rigveda*, Kessinger Publishing, Whitefish, Montana, [www.sacred-texts.com/hin/rigveda/rv10090.htm](http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/rigveda/rv10090.htm).

### Stimulus 4

Kamali, MH 2002, *The Dignity of Man: An Islamic perspective*, Islamic Texts Society, Cambridge.

### Stimulus 5

Blum, ML (trans.) 2013, *The Nirvana Sutra*, vol. 1, BDK America, Moraga, California, [www.bdkamerica.org/system/files/pdf/dBET\\_T0374\\_NirvanaSutra1\\_2013\\_0.pdf](http://www.bdkamerica.org/system/files/pdf/dBET_T0374_NirvanaSutra1_2013_0.pdf), p. 227.

### Stimulus 6

Dillon, RS 2018, 'Respect', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Spring 2018 edn, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/respect> Used with permission

### Stimulus 8

Kant, I, *The Metaphysics of Ethics*, 3rd edn, JW Semple (trans.), T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1886, p. 34.

### Stimulus 9

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