OUNDLE

School

2017 Academic Scholarship

Religious Studies

Time Allowed: **1 hour and 30 minutes**

- Answer Section 1 and **two** questions from Section 2

Section 1: Comprehension - 20 marks

Read the following article and answer the questions that follow.

Good religion always has a certain air of spontaneity about it, being neither greedy nor self-protective, neither exclusive nor hierarchical, but rather exceedingly lacking in discrimination, wishing to include and aid as many as possible in a loving embrace.

To do this one must lower one's standards—at least in the eyes of the excluders. But from another perspective—the perspective of the includers—one is simply opening the windows to fresh air and the doors to all comers.

One is acting as Jesus, for instance, advised in the Sermon on the Mount when he blessed the poor in spirit, the humble, the merciful, the peacemakers, and those who hunger and thirst for justice. One is acting as Mohandas Gandhi, a Hindu, advised in his repeated meditations on that sermon: "How can we, little crawling creatures, so utterly helpless as He has made us, how could we possibly measure His greatness, His boundless love, His infinite compassion … How can we measure the greatness of God who is so forgiving, so divine? Thus, though we may utter the same words [as Jesus did] they have not the same meaning for us all."

Which brings me to my ultimate and outsized assertion about these matters: good religion is necessarily mystical, affirming what is always beyond proof, likelihood or even possibility.

Just think of Job, insisting that all his supposedly comforting and quite comfortable friends are wrong, that, as Job insists in an assertion without proof: "This I know: that my Avenger lives and He, the Last of All, will take His stand upon this Earth and in my Flesh shall I see God!"*

Quite impossible, quite batty, really, and utterly necessary. For only such a reality can redeem, vindicate or avenge the innumerable injustices of history, the slaughtered, the oppressed, the tortured, the abused, the abandoned, the forgotten, the despairing

*Job is a character in the Old Testament, who underwent enormous mental and physical suffering but retained his faith in God

Extract from Thomas Cahill 'What is Religion For, Anyway?''

a) The author refers to one example of Jesus' teachings on outcasts. Give an account of another occasion when Jesus taught how outcasts should be treated. 6 marks

b) With reference to the extract, explain what qualities the author feels religious people should have. 7 marks

c) "Religious beliefs ought to be based more on faith and spirituality than proof and logic". Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer. 7 marks

Section 2: Essay writing – 10 marks each

Choose 2 questions from the following choice of 4:

1. **Religious Stories**
   With reference to any religious story that you have studied, explain how following the teaching from that story might affect how people react to issues of racism. (10)

2. **Religion in the modern world**
   "Religious ideas about the planet are helpful in approaching environmental ethics". Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion. (10)

3. **Worship**
   With reference to a religion you have studied, describe and explain in detail how followers of that religion worship their God/Gods. (10)

4. **Religion and War**
   'Pacifism is cowardly'. Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion. (10)

Section 1: 20 marks

Section 2: 20 marks (10 marks for each of the two essay questions)

Total: 40 marks