# 7.12 Solutions to the Problem of Evil and Suffering: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8062 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

**Answer ALL questions.**

**1** Give three features of the free will defence as taught in many religious traditions in Theme C.

**(Total for Question 1 is 3 marks)**

**2** Evaluate the view that the free will defence successfully answers the problem of evil. In your answer you should give reasoned arguments to support this statement, give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view, refer to religious arguments and reach a justified conclusion. (Include up to 3 marks for SPaG.)

**(Total for Question 2 is 15 marks)**


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**3** Explain two criticisms that have been made of the soul-making theodicy as a response to the problem of evil and suffering.

**(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)**

**4** Explain two ways believers might understand the claim that evil and suffering will be resolved or compensated for in an afterlife, as part of Theme C responses.

**(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)**

**5** Explain two contrasting religious views about whether suffering always serves a good purpose. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority in your answer.

**(Total for Question 5 is 5 marks)**


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# Mark scheme · 7.12 Solutions to the Problem of Evil and Suffering: 30-minute Pack

## Question 1

| | |
|---|---|
| humans are given genuine moral freedom, oe | **B1** |
| some suffering is a consequence of human wrong choices rather than God causing it, oe | **B1** |
| God allows freedom so that love and moral goodness are possible, oe | **B1** |

**Answer: Any three: genuine moral freedom; suffering can result from human choices; freedom allows genuine love and moral worth.**

## Question 2

| | |
|---|---|
| **Level 4** A well-argued and balanced evaluation, showing clear understanding of the free will defence and strong engagement with reasons for and against it, including relevant religious material. The conclusion is justified and supported by the discussion. | **10-12** |
| **Level 3** A clear and relevant evaluation with at least two developed points on each side of the argument, including some religious material. The conclusion is appropriate. | **7-9** |
| **Level 2** A partially developed evaluation with some argument for and against the view, but with limited development or use of religious material. A simple conclusion is given. | **4-6** |
| **Level 1** Simple or undeveloped ideas about the free will defence, with little or no balance. Little attempt at a conclusion. | **1-3** |
| **Level 0** No relevant material. | **0** |

**Indicative content:**

- Arguments supporting the free will defence: it preserves human moral responsibility and makes sense of why God would permit moral evil rather than directly cause it.
- Supporters may cite Genesis 2:16-17 about humans given choice, and argue that genuine love requires freedom which God values.
- It can be combined with other theodicies, for example soul-making or afterlife compensation, to form a wider theodicy.
- Arguments against the free will defence: difficulty explaining natural evil such as earthquakes, tsunamis or disease which are not the result of human choices.
- The problem of horrendous suffering, for example genocide or extreme pain, may seem disproportionate and challenge the claim that free will justifies allowing such evils.
- Some philosophers argue God could create creatures who freely choose good, or that omnipotence and omnibenevolence are incompatible with the extent of suffering.
- Religious responses include appeals to mysterious divine purposes, the Fall, or emphasis on eschatological justice in an afterlife, which critics may see as unsatisfactory consolation.
- A balanced conclusion might accept that the free will defence explains some forms of evil and preserves central religious commitments, but that it is not a complete answer on its own and is best seen as part of a broader set of religious responses.

## Question 3

| | |
|---|---|
| point 1: critics argue that some suffering is so extreme, or falls on those such as very young children, that it seems to destroy rather than build good character, oe | **B1** |
| development: this suggests soul-making cannot be a complete answer if some suffering achieves nothing good at all, oe | **B1** |
| point 2: critics also argue that a loving God could achieve moral growth without allowing suffering as severe as some of what actually occurs, oe | **B1** |
| development: this raises the question of why so much apparently excessive suffering exists if a less costly path to spiritual growth was possible, oe | **B1** |

**Answer: E.g. extreme suffering can destroy rather than build character; a loving God could achieve growth without such severe suffering.**

## Question 4

| | |
|---|---|
| point 1: some believe God will make justice right in an afterlife so suffering will be compensated, oe | **B1** |
| development 1: this can mean rewards for the faithful and restoration for victims, offering hope, oe | **B1** |
| point 2: others see the afterlife as a place where suffering is healed and meaning given, e.g. the promise of new creation, oe | **B1** |
| development 2: Christian hope in resurrection and a renewed creation can be cited as a way God resolves suffering, oe | **B1** |

**Answer: E.g. afterlife as place of divine justice and compensation; afterlife as healed new creation where suffering is ended.**

## Question 5

| | |
|---|---|
| view 1: some believers argue that all suffering ultimately serves a good purpose, even where that purpose is not visible to humans at the time, trusting in God's greater wisdom, oe | **B1** |
| development: this view can draw on the Book of Job, in which God's response to Job's suffering stresses the limits of human understanding rather than giving a full explanation, oe | **B1** |
| view 2: other believers argue that some suffering appears to be genuinely pointless or excessive, and that claiming every instance has a hidden purpose can seem to trivialise real human pain, oe | **B1** |
| development: this view is sometimes supported by psalms of lament, such as Psalm 22, in which the psalmist cries out to God in suffering without being given an explanation for it, oe | **B1** |
| reference to a source of wisdom and authority made accurately, e.g. the Book of Job or Psalm 22, oe | **B1** |

**Answer: Contrast: suffering as always purposeful, even when the purpose is hidden (the Book of Job), versus suffering as sometimes genuinely without a stated purpose in scripture itself (Psalm 22).**


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