

PHILOSOPHY TRIPOS, PART II

Thursday 02 June 2022

9am-12pm

Paper 5

PHILOSOPHY IN THE LONG MIDDLE AGES

Answer **three** questions, including at least **one** from each section. You are permitted to write on an author in section B even if you have discussed that author in section A, but you must not repeat material.

Write the number of the question at the beginning of each answer. If you are answering the either/or question, indicate the letter as well.

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS

20 Page answer book

1 Rough work pad

<p>You may not start to read the questions printed on the subsequent pages of this question paper until instructed that you may do so by the Invigilator</p>
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SECTION A

1. Identify each of the passages (i) and (ii), explain the part it plays in the argument of the text from which it is taken and supply whatever background material and interpretative comments a reader now would need in order to understand its full significance. You may also compare the two passages.

Passages (i) and (ii) – at end of paper.

2. Identify each of the passages (iii) and (iv), explain the part it plays in the argument of the text from which it is taken and supply whatever background material and interpretative comments a reader now would need in order to understand its full significance. You may also compare the two passages.

Passages (iii) and (iv) – at end of paper.

SECTION B

3. What sceptical arguments does Augustine think most serious and how does he argue against them? (You may restrict your answer to *Against the Academicians* if you wish.)
4. 'The upshot of Henry of Ghent's supposedly anti-sceptical arguments is to deny the possibility of fully scientific knowledge in this life.' Discuss.
5. Does al-Ghazali attack an Avicennian account of causation? If so, for what reasons? If not, why does he seem to do so?
6. Why does Ibn Taymiyya think that Aristotelian logic is misleading? How well does he justify his criticisms?
7. 'Christine de Pizan thought that error was inevitable, but there was no higher goal, for men and women, than the search for knowledge.' Discuss, with special reference to the *Vision of Christine*.
8. Is the *Apology for Raymond Sebond* a genuine defence of Sebond?
9. How well does Boethius coordinate these elements in answering the Problem of Prescience: the Modes of Cognition Principle, God's relationship to time, conditional necessity?
10. Given that he holds that God cannot do otherwise than he does, how does Abelard avoid necessitarianism?

TURN OVER

11. Why does Ockham think Scotus's way of upholding human freedom of choice is misguided? How successful are these arguments against Scotus's position?
12. 'Maimonides's arguments that God exercised choice in creating are so weak that they suggest he wanted the discerning reader of the *Guide* to accept the eternity of the world.' Discuss.
13. Was Crescas really a compatibilist?
14. EITHER: (a) Is Spinoza's account of finite and infinite modes consistent with his claim to be a necessitarian?

OR: (b) Compare Spinoza's treatment of God and necessity with that by Maimonides and/or Hasdai Crescas.
15. 'Sixteenth and seventeenth-century philosophers cannot be understood properly except in the light of their predecessors over the preceding millennium.' Discuss with relation to **TWO** or **THREE** of the set texts.

PASSAGES

Question 1

(i)

The second approach, with which there is deliverance from these vilifications, is for us to admit that fire is created in such a way that, if two similar pieces of cotton come into contact with it, it would burn both, making no distinction between them if they are similar in all respects. With all this, however, we allow as possible that a prophet may be cast into the fire without being burned, either by changing the quality of the fire or by changing the quality of the prophet. Thus, there would come about either from God or from the angels a quality in the fire which restricts its heat to its own body so as not to transcend it (its heat would thus remain with it, and it would [still] have the form and true nature of fire, its heat and influence, however, not going beyond it), or else there will occur in the body of the prophet a quality which will not change him from being flesh and bone [but] which will resist the influence of the fire. For we see [that] a person who covers himself with talc and sits in a fiery furnace is not affected by it. The one who has not witnessed this will deny it. Hence, the opponent's denial that [divine] power includes the ability to establish a certain quality either in the fire or in the human body that would prevent the burning is like the denial of one that has never seen talc and its influence. Among the objects lying within God's power there are strange and wondrous things, not all of which we have seen. Why, then, should we deny their possibility and judge them to be impossible?

TURN OVER

(ii)

So pure truth certainly should be sought from the senses in a certain way, as the origin of truth. For a proper sense has the most certain cognition of its proper object, unless it is impeded either in itself, by the medium, or by something else. But when every impediment is lifted, there is no chance that it will err or apprehend its proper object otherwise than as it is - though such a cognition is not stable, because of changeability on the part of either the object or the sense itself. Hence truth that is certain can't be grasped for long by depending entirely on the judgment of the senses. Nevertheless, truth that is entirely certain is grasped through the senses, by abstracting that which was apprehended by an undeceived sense and forming a judgment in intellect where what was apprehended remains as if unchanged, unable to be obscured by truthlike species of phantasms. And for us the most certain knowledge is that of sensible things when we can trace it back to sensory experience.

Question 2

(iii)

I said: That God has foreknowledge of absolutely everything and that there is any freedom of independent judgment - these things seem to me, to be set against each other, and to be at odds with each other, far too much. For if God sees all things in advance and cannot be mistaken in any way, that thing must necessarily happen that Providence foresees will happen. And for this reason, if Providence has foreknowledge from eternity not only of the actions of mortal men but of their deliberations and of their wills as well, then there would be no freedom of independent judgment. For there could exist no action, no will of any sort, other than what divine Providence, which does not know how to be mistaken, perceives beforehand. I mean, if such things could be forcibly turned aside in some other direction than they were foreseen to go, then there would now be no immovable foreknowledge of the future, but only indefinite opinion instead. And this I judge to be a wicked thing to believe about God.

TURN OVER

(iv)

The objection made above, that Someone cannot be saved by God unless it is also the case that God can save him - particularly because someone is 'saved by God' and 'God saves him' are the same - is not enough to prevent me from taking my position. It is, indeed, the same for a speaking man to be silent and for a man who is speaking to be silent, and yet it is perhaps not possible for a speaking man to be silent, whereas it *is* possible for the man who is speaking to be silent. Or, although it is the same for that which is white to be black and for whiteness and blackness to be in the same thing at the same time, it is not however possible for whiteness and blackness to be in the same thing at the same time, whereas it *is* possible for that which is white to be black. Is it a wonder then, if I consider that it is the same for someone who ought not to be saved to be saved by God and for God to save him, and none the less I do not accept that God can save him, although I grant that he can be saved by God? When we say that he can be saved by God, we refer the possibility to the capacity of human nature, as if we were to say that it does not go against the nature of man that he should be saved, because in himself he is changeable so that he might consent either to his salvation or his damnation and he might offer himself to God as one to be treated in the one way or the other. When, however, we say that God can save the man who ought not at all to be saved, we refer possibility to the very nature of the divinity: we are saying that it would not be repugnant to the nature of God for God to save him. This is entirely false. It does indeed go against the divine nature to do what detracts from its dignity, and what it is not at all fitting that he should do. In this way, indeed, when we say that (a) a voice is audible - that is, able to be heard by someone, and that (b) someone can hear a voice, or when we say (c) that a field can be tilled by someone, and that (d) someone can till a field, we refer the possibility to different things. In (a) and (c), it is to the nature of the voice or the field, in (b) and (d) to the nature or aptitude of the thing to hear a voice or to be able to till a field. And so it is not necessary that, if a voice is audible, that is to say capable in itself of being heard by someone, that someone should be at that moment capable of hearing it. Indeed, were all people deaf or even entirely non-existent, any voice would be of such a nature that it would present itself to a person as audible, and there would be nothing to be done to it in order to make it suitable for hearing, even though no person still existed who could hear it or was capable of hearing it.

END OF PAPER