

A-LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES

(7062)

Example responses and commentaries

Paper 2E Judaism

See a range of student responses that demonstrate how different levels are achieved and understand how to interpret the mark scheme.

Version 1.0 Autumn 2019

EXAMPLE RESPONSES



10 mark questions: A01

Levels of response mark scheme

Level and marks	Description
Level 5 9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate, relevant and fully developed in breadth and depth with very good use of detailed and relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate• Where appropriate, good knowledge and understanding of the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion is demonstrated• Clear and coherent presentation of ideas with precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 4 7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate and mostly relevant with good development in breadth and depth shown through good use of relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate.• Where appropriate, alternative views and/or scholarly opinion are explained• Mostly clear and coherent presentation of ideas with good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 3 5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and critical understanding is generally accurate and relevant with development in breadth and/or depth shown through some use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate• Where appropriate, there is some familiarity with the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion• Some organisation of ideas and coherence with reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 2 3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and critical understanding is limited, with limited development in breadth and/or depth shown through limited use of evidence and/or examples which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate• Where appropriate, limited reference may be made to alternative views and/or scholarly opinion• Limited organisation of ideas and coherence and use of subject vocabulary
Level 1 1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and critical understanding is basic with little or no development• There may be a basic awareness of alternative views and/or scholarly opinion• Isolated elements of accurate and relevant information and basic use of appropriate subject vocabulary
0	No accurate or relevant material to credit

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Examine the changing role of the synagogue in society.

[10 marks]

The synagogue has always been one of the holiest and most important institution associates with Judaism, traditionally the role of the Synagogue was to facilitate prayer, both set and spontaneously. However, the role of the Synagogue has now evolved. One changing role of the synagogue today is to meet new Jews in your local community. Increased anti-semitism has led to Jews having to stand strong I the face of adversity. A synagogue will often bring together Jews from the local area, this could lead to friendships or even relationships being formed. The Jewish religion has placed emphasis on the idea of community, and thus through the Synagogue Jews may be able to meet new people and form special bonds which cannot be found elsewhere. Therefore a place of congregation and community may be one changing role of the Synagogue in society.

Secondly, another changing role of the Synagogue in society could be a place to consult and seek advice from a Rabbi. Rabbi's often base themselves in Synagogues in order to make themselves easily accessible to their congregation. Overtime a pattern has formed particularly in the more orthodox and religious strands of Judaism where consulting with a Rabbi becomes quite common. Nowadays, the Synagogue is often used a place to communicate and consult with a Rabbi. Traditionally with fewer Synagogues and greater congregation sizes, this level of communication has been difficult to achieve, and thus this may be a second changing role of the Synagogue in society today.

Thirdly, another way the role of the Synagogue may be changing in society today is by becoming a place of comfort and security. Traditionally, Synagogues were simply recognized as a place of worship. Yet nowadays a Synagogue has tended to become a safe haven and place of comfort for Jewish people. Firstly, the Synagogue is intended to replicate the great temple, with an everlasting light representing the 'Ner Tamid' and the 'Bimah' representing the raised alter. Through replicating this temple Jews today are likely to feel comfort and more of a connection to the previous generations as opposed to just with God. This is another way the synagogue has changed with society.

Finally, the changing role of the Synagogue has occurred as a result of the creation of progressive sects of Judaism. Reform and other progressive branches of Judaism have changed their perception of the synagogue. It has allowed men and women to sit together as well as introducing instruments to enhance prayer. In this sense, the role of the Synagogue has changed in society to become more of a please of pleasure and fun than a place of worship as it traditionally was. Therefore this is another way the role of the synagogue has changed in society.

The answer opens with the idea that the synagogue has become an important centre of the community rather than just a place of prayer. The second paragraph implies that there are more synagogues with smaller congregations today, and states that they now provide Jews with convenient access to a Rabbi. The next paragraph extends the idea from the first, but it is not made clear here how this is actually a change from previous practice, and the description of the synagogue as 'more of a place of pleasure or fun than a place of worship' in the final paragraph is not fully supported by the evidence – although the point that the role changes according to the branch of Judaism using it is perfectly valid.

The answer is relevant, accurate, and a good length, in fact it could have been more concise, and makes some good use of evidence/examples. Under examination conditions it would be unreasonable to expect much more.

Level 5, 10 marks

15 mark questions: A02

Levels of response mark scheme

Level and marks	Description
Level 5 13-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A very well-focused response to the issue(s) raised• Perceptive discussion of different views, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought with critical analysis• There is an appropriate evaluation fully supported by the reasoning• Precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 4 10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A well-focused response to the issue(s) raised• Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought, with some critical analysis• There is an appropriate evaluation supported by the reasoning• Good use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 3 7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A general response to the issue(s) raised• Different views are discussed, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought• An evaluation is made that is consistent with some of the reasoning• Reasonable use of the appropriate subject vocabulary
Level 2 4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A limited response to the issue(s) raised• Presentation of a point of view relevant to the issue with some supporting evidence and argument• Limited attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary
Level 1 1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A basic response to the issue(s) raised• A point of view is stated, with some evidence or reason(s) in support• Some attempt at the appropriate use of subject vocabulary
0	No accurate or relevant material to credit

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'Judaism's attitude to other faiths is generally positive.' Evaluate this claim.

[15 marks]

Judaism's attitude to other faiths is one which often receives a lot of misunderstanding. For the most part Judaism is a religion of complete compassion, love and understanding for everyone. On the one hand, some may consider Judaism's attitude to other faiths as generally positive as many other faiths, particularly the monotheistic faiths such as Christianity and Islam share many similar customs and traditions. Rabbi Sacks once explained it as 'Judaism has given rise to many other monotheistic religions'. For this reason it would only be fair to assume that Judaism has a positive attitude towards them. Customs such as prayer, fasting, kindness and compassion are key principle in many other religions. Christianity and Islam even have some scriptural overlap with Judaism with the use of the old testament, leading many to argue that it would be unreasonable for Judaism not to have a positive attitude towards them. Furthermore these other Faiths (Christianity and Islam) both share Abraham as a forefather like Judaism. Therefore, because of the similarity between certain religions with Judaism, this may be why some people argue that Judaism's attitude to all other faiths is generally positive.

However, in response there are many religions and faiths which have nothing in common with Judaism. As the question is regarding all 'other faiths' as opposed to just monotheistic faiths this may lead some to argue that Judaism's attitude is not generally positive, and this is reflected by the difficult conversion process. Judaism often turn away orthodox converts on the grounds that Judaism is not a missionary religion. To many, this implies Judaism has a pessimistic view towards other faiths. Nathan Aviezer, Professor at Hebrew university, considers Judaism to be 'missionary inwards, not outwards' suggesting that it's a religion which wants to bring Jews closer to G-d as opposed to non-Jews. This difficult conversion process, which often contains rigorous practices such as a Brit Milah, may be the reason why some argue that Judaism attitude to other faiths is generally not positive.

However, many would argue that this is absurd and instead make the argument that Judaism prides itself on being a religion of compassion and love. Vayikra teaches to 'love your neighbour as yourself' and this applies to both Jews and non-Jews. Through obeying the 7 noachide laws, Judaism explains how non-Jews are just as able as Jews to reach Olam Habah (the world to come). Similarly, some may argue that Judaism are forever in debt to other faiths as they help Jews fulfil their role as 'the chosen people' by allowing them to be an Or la goyim, light unto the nations. For this reason, many would argue that Judaism's attitude to other faiths is generally positive and optimistic.

However, as a result of the concept of Jews being 'the chosen people' some may interpret this to mean that Jews are much better than everyone and that all other nations and faiths should be perceived negatively. This could lead some to argue that Judaism has a negative attitude towards other faiths. However, this could not be less true, the concept of the chosen people has no correlation with how other faiths are perceived. It is explained that G-d did not choose the Jews, the Jews chose G-d , and this role is one that entails major responsibilities. Rabbi Sacks explains it as the 'dignity of difference', and this role should ultimately mean that Jewish attitudes should be positive to all other faiths.

To conclude, I believe that despite common misconceptions, Jewish attitudes towards other faiths is generally very positive. This is a result of common customs with other monotheistic religions as the key Jewish principle of kindness to everyone. All people are created B'tzelem Elohim, in the image of G-d and thus this is why Jewish attitudes should be positive to everyone, regardless of faith.

The similarities between Judaism and other faiths is taken as evidence of a positive attitude toward those faiths, and this is countered with the contrast between Judaism and other faiths which, along with a difficult conversion process, is taken as evidence of a pessimistic view. This is an unusual 'take' on the meaning of 'positive' and 'pessimistic' but in its own terms is well-argued. There is, however, clear evidence of a positive view in the next paragraph and an interesting discussion of the significance of being a member of the 'chosen people'. There is clear reference to the views of scholars.

Level 5, 13 marks

25 mark questions

Target: AO1:4: Knowledge and understanding of approaches to the study of religion and belief. (10 marks)

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study. (15 marks)

Material related to AO1 and AO2 may be presented discretely or holistically within the answer. Markers must read the whole of the response before either mark is awarded.

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'Jewish ethics is character based.'

Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Judaism and ethical studies.

[25 marks]

Jewish Ethics is based on a moral ethical code presented in the Torah, yet other sources of morality for Jews also help to create a Jewish ethical code. A character-based ethical theory is one which does not focus on a duty or a purpose but rather a person. Aristotle's virtue ethics is an example of a character based theory. Jewish ethics has a combination of teleological, deontological and character based aspects to it. One the one had some may argue that Jewish ethics is primarily character based because of the emphasis on repenting and being a good person as well as the blessings and prayers which are used in the Jewish religion. For example, every Friday night a Father will directly bless his children praying for their protection and spiritual growth and for many this is the pillar of what it means to be Jewish. There prayers are intended to improve the characters of these children, which leads many to the belief that Jewish ethics is primarily character based.

This shares many similarities with the character based ethical theory of Aristotle known as virtue ethics. Aristotle places great emphasis on virtues and this becoming a virtuous person. Aristotle emphasises, justice, friendship and fortitude as cardinal virtues, which must always be fulfilled. As Judaism place great emphasis on the ideas of friendship and kindness, as Vayikra teaches one should 'love your neighbour', this could be a reason why some consider Jewish ethics to be character based.

Similarly, some may consider Jewish ethics to be character based on the grounds that Jews are often trying to emulate virtuous beings. This is a feature of a character based ethical theory. To imitate a virtuous man which translates to a 'phronimos'. In Judaism, Jews are often emulating G-d through our kind actions, emulating G-d's angels through wearing white on Shabbat and Yom Kippur and emulating the Messiah through compassion and love. Jewish ethics produces certain key similarities with other character based ethical theories, and for this reason, some may argue that Jewish ethics is in fact character based.

However, there are many who would believe that although there are character based aspects to Jewish ethics, for the most part Jewish ethics is deontological. A deontological theory is one which follows an absolute set of morals and has the objective of fulfilling a set of duties. This is exemplified by Aquinas deontological natural moral law theory which follows a set of manualist, primary and secondary precepts to try and become a moral being. Judaisms set of moral duties resides in the Torah, which was divinely dictated to Moses. It consists of 5 books which together contain stories and instructions that Jews must obey. In total there are 613

mitzvot for Jews to follow, which many suggesting that this is the primary purpose of life. For this reason whilst many will agree that there are character based aspects to Jewish ethics, for the most part it is deontological.

However, in response many are likely to argue that whilst Jewish ethics is characters based and deontological it also contains teleological aspects to it as well. A teleological theory is one which has the objective of fulfilling a particular purpose. Fletcher's situation ethics is an example of teleological theory, and many would argue that certain aspects of Fletcher's situation ethics are resembled in Jewish ethics, suggesting a teleological form of ethics. In particular, just like Fletcher's purpose was to achieve Agapaeic love, Judaism want to reach Olom Habah and Gan Eden, the world to come and heaven. This is the purpose of the religion Olam Habah is suggested to be a place of spiritual reward and one can only reach there if they act morally in the current physical world. They are judged by G-d after waiting in Sheol, the waiting place. Therefore, some may suggest that whilst Jewish ethics is partly character based there are certainly aspects which suggest it is a deontological and teleological ethical theory.

In response to arguments suggesting Jewish ethics is teleological or deontological some may point to the emphasis of the soul in Judaism. The soul is a character based personal entity. Judaism place extreme emphasis on the soul referring to it as the Neshama. There are a wide array of beliefs about the Neshama but ultimately it is a part of G-d B'Tzelem Elohim. The soul is designed to fulfil all 613 Mitzvot before fleeing back to the spiritual world. Just as Judaism places emphasis on the soul, so too does Aristotle's character based theory, who suggests virtues come innately from the existence of the soul. Therefore, some may argue that although there are teleological and deontological aspects to Jewish ethics, the emphasis on the soul in Judaism implies that Jewish ethics is character based.

To conclude, ultimately Jewish ethics is not character based, deontological or teleological. It is simply a combination of all three of those as it incorporates important aspects from each type of ethical theory. The deontological nature is found in the duty of mitzvot, the teleological aspects are found in the Jewish purpose in the afterlife, whilst the character based influences reside in the importance of the soul, the need to imitate virtuous beings in the religion and the individual prayers and blessings. Therefore, this is why I believe that Jewish Ethics is a combination of teleological, deontological and character based.

There is a very clear opening paragraph, and the three that follow give arguments in favour of Jewish ethics being character based. This type of essay structure does not always encourage critical analysis since it presents rather than analyses or debates those arguments and could have resulted in a Level 3 response which simply summarises arguments 'for' and 'against'.

At first, this is what seems to happen because the paragraphs are followed by paragraphs in favour of it being deontological or teleological rather than character based, however, there is then a counter to both these views in the paragraph that deals with the soul and a conclusion that draws all the elements of the argument together.

The answer is a good length (estimated at around 900 words) focused, well-argued, and clearly expressed. It shows a very good understanding of different ethical systems and their place in Judaism. It reaches and justifies a conclusion based on the reasoning presented.

AO1 = 10 marks, AO2 = 15 marks.

Get help and support

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E: religiousstudies@aca.org.uk

T: 0161 957 3881