



Pearson

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Religious Studies (8RS0)
Paper 4E Judaism

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Summer 2017

Publications Code 8RS0_4E_1706_ER

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Introduction

This is the first occasion for some time that such numbers of candidates have been entered for an A/S Judaism Examination at Edexcel and it is pleasing that most candidates performed competently in this new paper, whilst a number were very successful indeed, gaining marks in highest levels of the marking criteria.

Q01

Question Introduction

Question One

Candidates gaining marks in Level Three selected their material to focus on the most important contributions of Rashi, including his commentaries forming the basis for Rabbinic Judaism. Candidates were proficient in their use of terms, such as 'targum' with the aim of making the Talmud intelligible. There was evidence of a breadth of material including reference to the diaspora.

Weaker answers tended to be brief and generalised and failed to assess the most important contributions of Rashi.

SECTION A

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

1 Explore the most important contributions of Rashi to Rabbinic Judaism.

Rabbi Solomon Ben Isaac, commonly referred to by his Hebrew initials - Rashi - was a prominent ^{French} Talmudic scholar. He wrote commentaries on both Torah and Talmud, ~~contained in~~ his followers, the school of Rashi, continued to be influential throughout the Jewish community even after his death.

Rashi advocated for an interpretation of Torah close to a literal reading of the text. He was well known for his clear and concise style of writings and pupils at Jewish schools to this day will be told to "write like Rashi."

He wrote in Hebrew, unlike many other figures of Rabbinical Judaism, commenting on a version of the ~~Tora~~ Jewish scripture which had a system for writing down Hebrew vowels. In this sense he is an important figure in the preservation of the Hebrew language, while his commentaries themselves played a vital role in continuing the Jewish tradition thanks to their easily understood interpretations of Torah. That being said, while Rashi made use of clear, simple language, his conciseness means that a certain pre-existing knowledge of scripture is needed to truly access his works. #

He died shortly after the beginning of the crusades, his writings serving to preserve Jewish culture through pogroms and persecution.

(Total for Question 1 = 8 marks)



Introduction

Topic: **Sources of wisdom and authority:** 2.2a. Judaism Specification.

Trigger Word: **Explore.** Religious Studies Specification: Appendix 1: Command word definitions. Page 77

Examiner Comment

Accurate details about Rashi are given and also there is a close focus upon specific important contributions that he made to Rabbinic Judaism.

Examiner Tip

Carefully select detailed relevant material to give a full but concise answer.

PLAN YOUR ANSWER CAREFULLY. BE AWARE OF TIME CONSTRAINTS.

SECTION A

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

- 1 Explore the most important contributions of Rashi to Rabbinic Judaism.

To 'write like Rashi' is a phrase used to this day, meaning to write simply and succinctly. Rashi was key to Rabbinic Judaism primarily due to the fact that his work was written in plain sense, allowing it to be accessible to everyone. Rashi was perhaps the most important figure in Judaism for spreading Judaism to the everyman, and is largely responsible for its strength in today's world. While much of Jewish text is written so that commentaries or commentaries on commentaries are needed for even the most scholarly Jew to truly understand, Rashi wrote so that Judaism ~~could be~~ could be accessible to all. Due to Rashi's work the spirit of Jewish teachings has lived on strongly, and some even claim that one could be a good Jew simply by reading living by Rashi's work. As there was no longer a single temple that the Jews congregated and learnt at, Rashi's work was of the utmost importance after the diaspora, allowing every Jew to understand their faith.

(Total for Question 1 = 8 marks)



Introduction

Topic: **Sources of wisdom and authority:** 2.2a. Judaism Specification.

Trigger Word: **Explore.** Religious Studies Specification: Appendix 1: Command word definitions. Page 77

Examiner Comment

Accurate details about Rashi are given and also there is a close focus upon specific important contributions that he made to Rabbinic Judaism.

Examiner Tip

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PLAN YOUR ANSWER CAREFULLY. BE AWARE OF TIME CONSTRAINTS.

8RSO_4E_Q02

Question Introduction

Question Two

Answers gaining marks in Level Three clarified some ideas and views about the expression 'Jewish Identity'. For example, some analysed key ideas associated with the 'chosen people' coupled with an understanding of 'covenants'. There was evidence of reasoned judgement about Orthodoxy and Reform views about Jewish identity. Candidates assessed well selected themes on Moses, beliefs about Revelation and anti-Semitism.

Weaker answers commented upon Jewish Identity but failed to assess the importance of preserving it.

2 Assess the importance of preserving Jewish identity.

Different branches of ~~the~~ Judaism have different notions of Jewish identity and how best to preserve it. Historically, Judaism has often evolved and changed to withstand threats. Following the destruction of the temple in 70 CE and the diaspora, rabbinical Judaism preserved Jewish thought through writing down the Oral Torah in the form of the Talmud. The most important aspect of Jewish identity shifted from the temple and animal sacrifice to the Rabbis and scripture.

The leadership of the rabbis and the close-knit, insular structure of the Jewish community enabled the faith to withstand centuries of persecution. But the Jewish emancipation and Enlightenment (Haskalah) posed new challenges as Jews left the Ghettos.

Reform Jews chose to prioritise ~~the~~ certain aspects of Jewishry over others and attempt to live in a way more in keeping with modern society. Orthodox Jews reject this and believed the old ways must be preserved as entirely as possible to ensure the continuation of Jewish culture. ~~Zionists~~ Many Zionists believed Jewish identity can only be ensured through the occupation of the Holy Land and a Jewish nation.

It is important to preserve Jewish identity because Judaism has a rich culture, philosophy and history that ~~can~~ should not be lost. Anti-semitic regimes have frequently tried to destroy Jewishness as an identity, such as during the crusades or the Holocausts and it is important that both Jews and gentiles

stand against such hatred and persecution to preserve a culture that has significantly shaped global history.

(Total for Question 2 = 9 marks)



P 4 9 1 0 2 A 0 3 1 6

3 Turn over >



P 4 9 1 0 2 A 0 4 1 6

4

Introduction

Topic: **Religious beliefs, values and teachings.** Judaism Specification 1.4b.

Trigger word: **Assess.** Religious Studies Specification: Appendix 1: Command word definitions. Page 77.

Examiner Comment

A comprehensive overview. Wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology. Coherent and reasoned judgements made.

Examiner Tip

This answer requires AO1 and AO2 material.

Focus on the question and be detailed yet concise.

PLAN YOUR ANSWER CAREFULLY AND BE AWARE OF TIME CONSTRAINTS.

2 Assess the importance of preserving Jewish identity.

~~In some ways~~ it is very important to preserve ~~Judaism~~ Many Orthodox and some Reform Jewish people would argue that it is extremely important to preserve Jewish identity so the Jewish culture, for example daily rituals and festivals are not lost and forgotten about.

Leading a ~~good life~~ a good moral life, ~~is also~~ as an example for the rest of society and spreading justice and equality is also ~~one of the~~ biggest parts of Jewish identity, as it was part of the covenant with God, ~~which as a result~~ this responsibility lead to ~~the~~ Jewish people being the ~~chosen~~ chosen ones. Therefore, preserving this way of life and identity is very important as it ~~is~~ is an agreement with God himself and ~~the~~ as the heart of Judaism.

However, ~~for some~~ Reform ~~Jewish~~ Jewish people may argue ~~that~~ that it is important also to adapt with the modern

World, ~~and~~ as if trying to preserve Jewish identity may not collaborate with the modern world and new scientific ~~discoveries~~ discoveries. ~~Linking to the~~ Linking to the Rabbi Geige who created the Mitzvah movement, (adapting with modern world)

(Total for Question 2 = 9 marks)

Introduction

Topic: **Religious beliefs, values and teachings.** Judaism Specification 1.4b.

Trigger word: **Assess.** Religious Studies Specification: Appendix 1: Command word definitions. Page 77.

Examiner Comment

A comprehensive overview. Wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology. Coherent and reasoned judgements made.

Examiner Tip

This answer requires AO1 and AO2 material.

Focus on the question and be detailed yet concise.

PLAN YOUR ANSWER CAREFULLY AND BE AWARE OF TIME CONSTRAINTS.

8RS0_4E_Q03

Question Introduction

Question Three

Candidates gaining marks in Level Three assessed evolving religious practices within Reform Judaism. They were credited with a range of material on practices such as liturgy, language, music, ceremonies and gender issues in this context. Candidates placed their material in context by judicious reference to Orthodoxy. The higher marks were achieved by those demonstrating the breadth of evidence required for close focus upon the question.

Weaker answers gave more generalised statements without a specific assessment of the major observances within Reform Judaism. These tended to describe Reform as 'being less strict' without giving details of 'how'.

3 Assess the major religious observances within Reform Judaism

~~Some would say that the Sabbath, should be considered a major religious observance~~

Some would say that a major religious observance in Reform Judaism would be their ^{observance} of the Sabbath. This is an important religious observance because it acknowledges the idea that God rested on the 7th day after creating the world. This is an important religious observance, in which they have a seder meal, with many food items such as a Shank of lamb, salty water, bitter herbs; all to remember also their ^{exit} ~~exit~~ out of Egypt, in the book of Exodus.

Some would also argue that Rosh Hashanah is a major religious observance within Reform Judaism, because it is the celebration of the new year. In this Reform Jews would eat apple covered in honey, to symbolise ~~the~~ the sweetness of a new year, and ~~to~~ thank God, and reflect on their priorities for the new year.

However, some would argue that the Sabbath may not be an important religious observance in Reform Judaism, because ~~it conflicts with the more western~~ ^{the day it is held} it is impractical in the western world, since their day of rest, is a day that those in the western world

still work.

Some would even argue that the Yom Kippur, which is considered a major religious observance in which Jews would have a 25 hour fast, may not be a major religious observance, even though some follow it, in the ideas of wanting to ask for forgiveness for their sins that year. To conclude, I believe that Reform Jews, under the enlightenment they had, ~~may not~~ (haskeleh) may not observe all major religious observances that are considered important in Reform beliefs, this is because Reform Judaism is a diasporic movement, and ~~all~~ what I would call a major religious observance, may not be what some consider a major religious observance (Total for Question 3 = 9 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 26 MARKS

Introduction

Topic: **Practices that shape and express religious identity.** Judaism
Specification 3.2f

Trigger Word: **Assess.** Religious Studies Specification Appendix 1:
Command word definitions. Page 77

Examiner Comment

Close focus on the question. A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology used appropriately. Coherent and reasoned judgements.

Examiner Tip

AO1 and AO2 material required.

Focus closely on the question and select material carefully. Give a full but concise answer.

PLAN ANSWER CAREFULLY AND BE AWARE OF TIME CONSTRAINTS.

3 Assess the major religious observances within Reform Judaism.

P1: Kashrut/Old law, P2: ~~Intermittent~~ Ethical-M, P3: Modern Practices

Within Reform Judaism, the most important aspect of their belief is a rejection of the halakha as divinely important. Although it is still a respectable text, Reform Jews view it as divinely inspired and thus a matter of interpretation, leading laws regarding kashrut, dress codes and sexual purity to be rejected. Though some may criticise this as disobeying God, the Reform movement view their interpretation of the Halakha to be correct, and thus are able to do as they please, with a level of mindfulness regarding the Jewish laws, rather than total dedication.

Furthermore a rejection of the divine importance of the halakha and written Torah allows for an arguably more progressive religion. Unlike most Orthodox groups, Reform Jews ~~are~~ allow for female rabbis and sexual integration during prayer. This reform of Jewish gender roles clearly defines Reform Judaism, and is what makes it the most common and accessible form of the religion.

However, despite Reform Judaism rejecting a number of Mitzvot and Orthodox beliefs, a number of their views conform to traditional belief, such as the centrality of Ethical Monotheism, dedication to study of the Torah, and following of

many mitzvot found in the Torah. This shows that although a deeply progressive movement, Reform Judaism still holds true to many traditional ideas, and is thus able to be accepted as a viable form of Judaism.

(Total for Question 3 = 9 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 26 MARKS

Introduction

Topic: **Practices that shape and express religious identity.** Judaism
Specification 3.2f

Trigger Word: **Assess.** Religious Studies Specification Appendix 1:
Command word definitions. Page 77

Examiner Comment

Close focus on the question. A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology used appropriately. Coherent and reasoned judgements.

Examiner Tip

AO1 and AO2 material required.

Focus closely on the question and select material carefully. Give a full but concise answer.

PLAN ANSWER CAREFULLY AND BE AWARE OF TIME CONSTRAINTS.

8RS0_4E_Q04

Question Introduction

Question Four

4a) The answers gaining marks in Level Three were rooted within a Jewish context, including Jewish sources and especially referring to the Ethics of the Fathers. Key contributors were mentioned such as Maimonides. Candidates were credited with material on 'love' in relation to tensions with justice but also love in relation to topics such as marriage and homosexuality.

Weaker answers tended to be generalised.

4b) Candidates gaining marks in Level 4 closely focused on the demands of the question demonstrating a wide range of knowledge, specialist language and vocabulary. Answers reflected coherent and reasoned judgements supported by evidence.

In this question there was some repetition of answers given in 4a and some described ethical monotheism without applying it to the question regarding its significance..

SECTION B

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

4 (a) Explore the main Jewish values about love and justice.

(8)

One of the Jewish values about love and justice comes from the *Cenmit* *Khasadin* and it is to ~~do~~ ^{do} acts of love such as helping/feeding the homeless, ~~g~~ donating to charities and ~~g~~ other hospitable acts because the Torah says 'do unto others as you would like done to you'

Secondly, they must follow the *Tzedekah* and do acts of kindness to other Jews. This is because ~~God~~ ^{G-d} commands them to 'love thy neighbours as thyself' and they must do good in everything.

Lastly, Jews believe that they should be loving and show justice to people because they are the Chosen People - who are supposed to go around the world making it a good place & fulfilling their duty. It is a moral obligation

(b) Analyse the claim that ethical monotheism is significant for Judaism.

(20)

Ethical monotheism is the clear belief in one God, from who Jews know what is right and wrong to do and take their values from. ~~The~~ Jews value ethical monotheism because it contains the Avot - ethics of the Fathers and ~~through~~ ^{and} thought that, ~~they~~ the Talmud and many more, they are able to follow G-d's commandments. ~~And~~

Firstly, ethical monotheism is significant for Judaism because it teaches about Abraham's covenant with God to sacrifice Isaac. Orthodox Jews believe that this was a divine test from God to test Abraham's loyalty, ~~and~~ commitment and trust in God, ~~but~~ therefore Isaac's life was spared. ~~The~~ However other sects of Judaism such as Reform Jews might ~~think~~ ^{believe} that ethical monotheism is important because they don't believe the Torah ~~was~~ ^{written} ~~was~~

the direct word of God. Also ~~the~~ rabbinic jews might find jewish mysticism and philosophy more important.

Secondly, the covenant between Moses and G-d to have the first born males circumcised was to keep the Chosen People a distinct group of people from every one else. ~~For~~ G-d therefore promised to protect the Chosen People from any harm. However, ~~the~~ some jews might disagree with this and feel like G-d didn't protect them because of events like the Holocaust and the genocide of ~~the~~ six million jews worldwide.

~~Moreover~~ ^{orthodox jews believe} Moreover, Jews believe ~~ethi~~ ^{cal} that ethical monotheism is important because ~~the~~ it ~~is~~ contains the Avot which ~~is~~ also contains the Ethics of the Fathers. The Ethics of the

Fathers contain the Noachide Laws, which are universal laws which were for non Jews. The Ethics of the Fathers is useful to ~~Orthodox~~ Jews as they know the standard by which they should live. It also helps them follow the mitzvot ~~and~~ closely. However, some sects of Judaism like the Orthodox Jews might argue that that because the Avot contains the Noachide Laws which are universal and apply to non jews for them to get ~~to~~ ^{to} place in heaven - they ~~might~~ ^{might} see ethical monotheism as less important in Orthodox Judaism.

Ethical monotheism helps jews follow the Halakah (jewish law) closely ~~and~~ ^{which} ~~helps~~ ^{helps} them live a closer life with G-d. Also Orthodox jews may use the mezuzah and tefillin and put it on their doors ~~to~~ ^{as} a way of following the mitzvot

strictly. ~~to~~ This would help establish a closer relationship with God. However ~~to~~ reform Jews might not see rituals performed using the mezuzah and Keffiyeh and important to their sect of religion. Therefore they might not see ethical monotheism as ~~as~~ significant as orthodox Jews would.

In conclusion, ~~an~~ ethical monotheism is ~~the~~ very significant to Orthodox Jews as it is a means of following the Halakah and mitzvot (613 commandments) closely. Also Orthodox Jews may value ethical monotheism because they take the fact that they are the chosen people, very seriously. However, ethical monotheism might not be as important to reform or ~~even Hasidic~~ Jews. ~~to~~ This is because reform Jews wouldn't follow

their religion as strictly as orthodox Jews.

Introduction

Topic: **Religious beliefs, values and teachings** 1.1 : Judaism Specification .

Religion and Society. 6.2 : Judaism Specification.

Trigger Words: **Explore (4a) and Analyse (4b).** Appendix 1 : Command word definitions.

Religious Studies Specification Page 77.

Examiner Comment

4a) Sound knowledge and focus on the question.

4b) Close focus upon the question and discussion relating to beliefs about ethical monotheism within Reform and Orthodox Judaism; value of ethical monotheism; the Covenant with Moses and problems in relating the Covenant to the Holocaust and significance of the Ethics of the Fathers.

Examiner Tip

4a) requires AO1 material only.

4b) requires AO1 and AO2 material. This is a longer question for 20 marks and requires close focus upon the question, full knowledge and discussion.

PLAN YOUR ANSWER CAREFULLY AND BE AWARE OF TIMING ISSUES.(ALLOW ENOUGH TIME FOR THIS QUESTION)

SECTION B

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

4 (a) Explore the main Jewish values about love and justice.

ladder of charity (B)

Jewish values about love would arguably derive from the teachings of the Torah, in which Jews are told in Leviticus to love their neighbour as themselves. This commandment from God is important to Jews because it teaches them to care for their community, whether a person is rich or poor.

Another value about love and justice, would derive from their beliefs in Gemilut Chasadim, in which Jews strive to perform acts of loving kindness. They seek to provide justice for the poor, which George Robinson would argue is done in remembrance of the fact that Jews were once slaves to Egyptians, and so must seek justice for those in need.

Another value about love and justice, would derive from Moses Maimonides' ladder of charity, in which he says that at the top of the ladder are those who give to charity liberally, and not out of obligation, as those at the bottom of the ladder would feel. This is an important part of Jewish values about love, because it emphasises on providing help to those who are in need, out of the kindness of your heart. They also believe everyone was created in the image of God, and so deserve love and justice.

(b) Analyse the claim that ethical monotheism is significant for Judaism. - ^{Centre of} ^{the} ^{faith} (20)

Ethical monotheism is the belief in one God, who is the standard of morality for those who believe in ^{that} one God. Some would argue such as ~~Some~~ Some would say it is significant for Judaism based upon the 3 principles of faith by Moses Maimonides, and the views that Dan Shestov would have. Others would ~~argue~~ continue to believe it is of ~~no~~ significance to Judaism because it was a commandment from God in the Torah (the 5 books of Moses) that was given to Moses at Mt Sinai (Mount Sinai). However, some would argue it is ~~not~~ of ~~no~~ ~~major~~ importance for Judaism, because

It could be argued that ethical monotheism is significant for Judaism because the topic of acknowledging the power of God, ~~the~~ ~~power~~ of God and God being the only one God, is highlighted in Moses Maimonides 3 principles of faith ~~in his~~ ~~principles~~ of faith. This is significant to Judaism because it highlights the idea that the God of Judaism is the only God they must follow, and so therefore, this God, who created everything, must be their ~~ethical~~ standard of morality.

Dan Shebek ~~wrote~~ says that ethical monotheism is the center of Judaism, which implies that it has a large significance for Jewish beliefs in God. This also implies that it is the foundation of Judaism, and so it fundamentally makes up the Jewish faith.

Some would continue to say that ~~it is~~ ethical monotheism is significant for Judaism because it is ~~the~~ ~~aspect~~ part of the covenant that God made with Abraham (in Genesis) and Moses of Mount Sinai. It was to follow God's commandments, and acknowledge God as their only God they shall serve. This is explicitly highlighted in the 613 mitot, in which God says in the 10 commandments, they Jews must have no other God except him.

God also says they must obey all his commandments, which therefore implies that ethical monotheism, as an important part of Judaism, as it highlights ~~the~~ ^{an} obedience to God.

~~So~~ The Talmud also highlights the ^{significance} ~~importance~~ of ethical monotheism, which is ~~at~~ ^{at the heart} of the Rabbinic teachings in Judaism. This points to the

idea that ethical monotheism ~~was~~ is significant for Rabbinic Judaism, because Rabbi's such as Rashi, elaborates on this topic in the Mishnah, which can be found in the Talmud.

It could, ^{be} further shown that ethical monotheism is significant for Judaism based upon ~~the~~ how much they acknowledge the Shema prayer (Deuteronomy 6:4) this is the This is an important aspect of ~~Rabbinic~~ Judaism, because it is the constant reminder of the ~~oneness~~ ^{oneness} of God, who is their only God, and ~~that~~ which they must remember and serve. This is significant for Judaism in the idea that it is written on the Mezuzah, and ^{in the} Tefillin.

However, others would argue it is not of significance for Judaism, because Judaism has become a ~~pluralistic~~ ^{pluralistic} movement, in which different denominations follow what they please. Some would treasure ethical monotheism, which others would follow of their own belief in God which they feel would make the ~~world~~ ^{world} a better place.

Some would even say it's not important, because it is based upon historic values that are inapplicable today's world, ~~so that~~ because ~~some~~ of the ethics of this one God, is outdated, according to some Jews who have ~~been~~ being through Jewish enlightenment (Haskalah) this is the idea that ~~the~~ ^{some} halakha is inapplicable to day, so therefore ethical monotheism isn't too significant.

To conclude, I believe ethical monotheism is significant for Judaism, because it is at the heart of the religion, and why Orthodox Judaism, and conservative, follow it so deeply.

Introduction

Topic: **Religious beliefs, values and teachings** 1.1 : Judaism Specification .

Religion and Society. 6.2 : Judaism Specification.

Trigger Words: **Explore (4a) and Analyse (4b).** Appendix 1 : Command word definitions.

Religious Studies Specification Page 77.

Examiner Comment

4a) Sound knowledge and focus on the question.

4b) Close focus upon the question and discussion relating to beliefs about ethical monotheism within Reform and Orthodox Judaism; value of ethical monotheism; the Covenant with Moses and problems in relating the Covenant to the Holocaust and significance of the Ethics of the Fathers.

Examiner Tip

4a) requires AO1 material only.

4b) requires AO1 and AO2 material. This is a longer question for 20 marks and requires close focus upon the question, full knowledge and discussion.

PLAN YOUR ANSWER CAREFULLY AND BE AWARE OF TIMING ISSUES.(ALLOW ENOUGH TIME FOR THIS QUESTION!)

