

Examiners' Report
June 2019

GCSE Religious Studies 1RA0 2F

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Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies

Religious Studies A : Area of Study 2, Study of Religion Option 2F – Judaism

This paper consists of two questions: candidates must answer both questions. The detail of the assessment content is provided in the specification. Centres are to use this, rather than other published resources when planning the course content.

This paper was the second paper sat in this specification. The mean score of the paper was lower than predicted. This was partly due to a lack of appraisal on the (d) questions. However, it was also partly due to a number of candidates who confused Judaism with Christianity, with references to the teachings of Jesus and quotes from the New Testament.

However, it is good to see, the standard of Jewish knowledge increase year on year, with candidates writing confidently about Shekhinah, Pikuach Nefesh and Maimonides.

In some questions, marks are given for correct spelling and grammar, indicated by SPaG.

AO stands for Assessment Objective

Question 1 (a)

Q01(a) asked candidates to outline three ways belief in the sanctity of life is shown by Jews.

This was a more challenging question because a significant number of candidates confused the sanctity of life with Pikuach Nefesh and thus gave a definition of Pikuach Nefesh, then two examples, rather than three ways the sanctity of life is shown.

With (a) questions, it is not expected that candidates state 'some Jews', so all correct ways were accepted. The examples chosen show this.

Although the candidate has said Jews, rather than some Jews, and then said Reform Jews, when in fact many Jews of different denominations allow transplant surgery, this is acceptable for an (a) question.

1 (a) Outline **three** ways belief in the sanctity of life is shown by Jews.

(3)

Use of condoms is forbidden because sperm is sacred and prevents sacred life from occurring.
Reform Jews allow transplant surgery if it is to save a life.
Reform Jews also allow abortion, if it is to save the mother, however Orthodox Jews do not allow it, as it is killing life.



Marks were given for:

- Some Jews do not accept the use of condoms (1)
- Some Jews allow transplant surgery to save a life (1)
- Some Jews allow abortion if it is to save the mother's life (1)

3 marks



Separate sentences like this make the marking easier. It is clear to see where the candidate is making the three points

One way belief in the sanctity of life is shown by Jews is that Jews may break Shabbat rules to save a life e.g. a surgeon could work on the Sabbath.

Another way this is shown is that abortion is permissible ~~only~~ if it is to save the life of the mother.

A final way this is shown is that male seed is sacred so condoms are not allowed but they are allowed to be used to prevent transmission of HIV and save lives.



The points made here are similar to the first candidate.

Marks are given for:

- They may break shabbat rules to save a life (1)
- Abortion is permissible (1)
- Condoms are not allowed (1)

3 marks

Question 1 (b)

This (b) question requires candidates to write two developed ways the Covenant with Abraham is important.

This question was answered well by most candidates, and where marks were lost, it was because candidates confused the Covenant with Abraham for the Covenant with Moses.

Most candidates wrote about the origins of the religion, of Abraham being the Father of Israel, and of circumcision.

The development must be linked to the way given, either to extend it or further to explain it.

A third way will not receive a mark.

(b) Explain **two** ways the Covenant with Abraham is important for Jews.

(4)

It was important because Abraham is the father of Judaism - without him, there would be no Judaism.

Its also important because God promised safety and protection, in return for worshipping him, and him alone.



This candidate has not written much, but there are two developed reasons and the response has been given full marks.

1

- Abraham is the Father of Judaism (1)
- without him there would be no Judaism (1)

2

- God promised safety and protection (1)
- in return for worshipping him alone (1)

4 marks

One way the covenant with Abraham is important for Jews is that Abraham started the tradition of circumcision as a sign of this covenant. ~~Jews today~~ Male Jews today are circumcised in the Brit Milah ceremony and it is a physical mark of belief in the religion.

Another way the Covenant with Abraham is important for Jews is that one of the promises God made Abraham was that he would give his chosen people the promise land. The United Nations recognised the State of Israel in 1947 but the Palestinians did not so the idea that this area belongs to Jews has been the source of much conflict between Israel and Palestinian and Arab states in the Middle East.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This candidate has written significantly more than is necessary for 4 marks.

1

- Abraham started the tradition of circumcision (1)
- Male Jews are circumcised today (1)

2

- He would give his Chosen People the Promised Land (1)
- The United Nations recognised the State of Israel (1)

4 marks



Write as succinctly as possible. That way, you will not run out of time on the extended writing questions

Question 1 (c)

The (c) question is similar to the (b) question with the added requirement for a source of wisdom and authority.

This question was answered well by many candidates, who wrote about individual commandments, and who therefore found it easy to attain the 5th mark.

Some candidates, however, did not link the quote to the point they were making.

A few candidates did not know what the Decalogue is.

(c) Explain **two** reasons why the Decalogue is important for Jews.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

One reason the Decalogue is important to Jews is that one of the 10 commandments given to God by Moses at Mount Sinai was 'Do not take the Lord's name in vain'. This is why Jews would never swear using their God's name and they only say it during worship to keep it special and sacred.

Another reason the Decalogue is important to Jews is that the Ten Commandments order the honouring of the Sabbath in recognition that this was the day God rested when he was creating the world. This gave rise to many Mitzvot regarding what Jews may or may not do on the Sabbath.



This candidate uses two different commandments to make the two reasons.

The first reason is a developed reason based on the commandment not to take the Lord's name in vain.

The second reason is based on the commandment about keeping the Sabbath holy.

5 marks



A line left in between the reasons helps the examiner see the two parts to the answer.

The Decalogue is important for Jews as it is the 10 commandments. These Decalogue highlight how a Jew must live and the Laws from God. They are located in Exodus 20 and contain laws such as "You must not murder". If a Jew breaks a law from the Decalogue, then they have gone against God and are at risk of spending eternity in Gehinnom. The Decalogue is also important as it builds the fundamental base of Judaism and forms many teachings of how to live a good life. It is also a reminder of Moses' journey to get the Decalogue.



This answer is less clearly written, and although the candidate receives the mark for the source of wisdom, the second reason is developed by a repeat of the earlier point about how a Jew must live.

The fact that it is a reminder of Moses would be a third reason, rather than a development of the second reason.

Marks are awarded for:

Reason 1

- The Decalogue highlights how a Jew must live (1)
- They are laws from God (1)
- such as 'you must not murder' (1)

Reason 2

- It builds the base of Judaism (1)

4 marks

Question 1 (d)

The standard of answers on (d) questions, extended writing, has improved this year.

The question requires candidates to analyse and appraise the religious teachings and beliefs and, as such, it requires a robust knowledge base to do this. Many candidates have attempted this year to appraise the arguments, and have written 'this is a strong argument because' or 'this is a weak argument because' and the standard is definitely higher.

The best answers seen were answers where the candidate had made an obvious attempt to answer the question, rather than follow a writing frame, which can limit them.

When answering these questions, always try to answer in the first sentence.

Make a point of showing for which side you are arguing and then use the different Jewish teachings and beliefs to make your case.

***(d) "The characteristic which best describes the Almighty is that of Creator."**

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

(15)

I agree with the statement "The characteristic which best describes the Almighty is that of Creator" because God is the creator ~~the~~ he created the universe, he created the animals and he created ~~the~~ ^{us} the humans. The whole belief in God started with he creating the world Creation is the first chapter in the torahs. Judaism would not exist ~~is~~ if God hadn't created the world therefore ~~is~~ it is the most important thing God has done so it must be the best way to describe the Almighty.

I disagree with the statement because in the Tenekha it teaches us that God is One, he is the creator, the lawgiver and the judge and that he is equally all these things. So the best way to describe him is as all of these not just one. Although he may have created the world without him giving laws to the people the world wouldn't probably be completely ruined now and then it wouldn't have mattered whether or not he created the world. The creation is a big part of Jewish beliefs however Jewish laws have an even bigger part for example the covenant at Mount Sinai plays a big part in Jewish religion as that is about how the laws and commandments were given to Moses. A lot of Jewish people often follow the rules to show their faith, strengthen their relationship with God and other members of the Jewish faith and prove that they believe, trust and follow God.

In conclusion I disagree with the statement because God ~~has~~ is equally the creator, the lawgiver and the judge and they are all a very important part of Jewish belief and treated equally not one more important than the rest. The Almighty is all three therefore the best way to describe him is with all three of them.



This candidate reaches the low end of level 3.

They make an attempt at appraising the arguments. For example, the candidate makes the point in the first paragraph that without God being the Creator then Judaism would not exist.

In the second paragraph, they point out that without the laws, the world would be ruined so creation would not matter.

This is not a high level of analysis and appraisal, but the candidate attempts to explain their reasoning.

Level 3

7 marks

SPaG: 3 marks

Total: 10 marks

Some Jews would argue this statement is correct as God made the universe and the earth for all of us to live in. This ~~statement~~ is important as it reminds Jews of ~~the~~ God's power as he created the earth out of nothing and also shows he cares for us as he designed and created a place especially for us. In the Torah in Genesis it says ~~open~~ God created heaven and earth, telling Jews that God is in fact a creator. This is a compelling argument as without ~~a~~ God creating the earth and creating us humans, he could not be a law-giver, as there is no one to give laws to, nor could he be a judge as there is no one on earth for him to be able to judge a person's behaviour. However, Reform Jews might argue this is a weak point as they believe the Tenakh writers were inspired by God, so therefore the Tenakh should not be taken literally. This means that the creation story could be metaphorical, making the fact that God is a creator less important.

since he didn't actually create earth in 6 days.

Some Jews would argue that God is best described as a law-giver. On Mount Sinai God gave Moses the 10 commandments in which all 613 mitzvot were derived from. These laws are very important to Jews as they cover all aspects of life and help give them a sense of Jewish identity. Because they are from God, disobeying them would be a sin, so following them is crucial for Jews to be able to be united in Gan Eden with God. Reform Jews ~~then~~ would argue this is a feeble argument as God gave people free will therefore it is their decision as to whether to follow the mitzvot or not. ~~Orthodox~~ Orthodox would then say this is a weak statement as in Deuteronomy it says ~~that~~ ~~the~~ choosing to follow the mitzvot is a matter between life and death. Therefore if Jews don't follow them, they will be punished ~~with~~ with eternal suffering in Gehennom.

In conclusion I agree with the statement that ~~and~~ God being a creator is the most important as without this, God ~~we~~ could not be any other of his 4 characteristics.



This candidate reaches the top of level 3.

This candidate begins with 'some Jews would argue' and then gives a reason.

They start to appraise with the sentence starting 'this is a compelling argument...' and then this becomes more impressive when the candidate continues the chain of reasoning into the point about Reform Jews and their belief in the authority of the Tenakh.

Although this response begins very well, it becomes less appraising as it continues and does not reach level 4.

Level 3

9 marks

SPaG: 3 marks

Total: 12 marks



Make sure candidates have a solid knowledge base for these questions. Although the marks are for AO2, candidates cannot appraise without knowledge

Question 2 (a)

This question was answered very well by the majority of candidates.

Most wrote about communication with God, asking for forgiveness, asking for others etc. A few candidates wrote a list, and this was unfortunate because it restricted them to 1 mark.

2 (a) Outline **three** purposes of prayer.

(3)

- to give thanks to the almighty - just praising him and thanking him for what he has done.
- to pray for other people - praying on someone else's behalf - (thinking about others)
- to ask for forgiveness - when you have committed a sin you can go to God and ask for mercy and forgiveness.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Marks are given for:

- To give thanks (1)
- To pray for other people (1)
- To ask for forgiveness (1)



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Write three clear sentences

1) To strengthen their relationship with God and have a connection to him.

2) To be able to ask God for forgiveness or support with something they need or even guidance.

3) To praise or worship God for his work and adore him.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Marks are given for:

- To strengthen the relationship with God (1)
- To ask for forgiveness (1)
- To praise or worship (1)

Question 2 (b)

This (b) question related to Brit Milah (circumcision).

The majority of candidates answered this well, making the link to the Covenant with Abraham and to tradition today.

Notably, a few candidates seemed to think circumcision is done for cleanliness, and to prevent sexual pleasure.

(b) Explain **two** reasons why Brit Milah (circumcision) ceremonies are important for many Jews.

(4)

Brit Milah ceremonies are important for Jews because it helps them to keep the Covenant of Abraham. Abraham the founder of Judaism promised that all his ancestors would be circumcised. By following this through Jews are upholding tradition and the Covenant. Secondly, Brit Milah is important for Jews because it is a mitzvot. If Jews were to break a mitzvot then they would be breaking their communion with God and they would be breaking a mitzvot which is seen as bad in Jewish worship.



Marks are given for:

Reason 1

- It helps them keep the Covenant of Abraham (1)
- who promised that all his ancestors would be circumcised (1)

Reason 2

- It is a mitzvot (1)
- which if broken breaks their communion with God which is bad (1)

Although this second point is written poorly, it is clear what the candidate is saying and it is correct, so they receive the marks accordingly.

4 marks



Leave a blank line between points being made, or use phrases like first and second reason

This makes your answer clearer

one reason is because it is part of the mitzvot which is asked by G-d. This means they are fulfilling what G-d asked them to do.

A second reason is because it's a tradition for all male Jews to be circumcised as that is what Abraham did for his family.



This is a very clear answer.

Marks are given for:

Reason 1

- It is part of the mitzvot (1)
- They are fulfilling what God wants them to do (1)

Reason 2

- It is tradition (1)
- as that is what Abraham did for his family (1)

4 marks

Question 2 (c)

This (c) question caused difficulties for a number of candidates who were not clear what Pesach was.

It is worth noting that the wording in the specification will be used in the exam paper. Those candidates who answered it well, answered about the history of escaping slavery. They also noted the importance of the festival as a time for keeping the faith alive with the Seder meal and family celebrations.

The source of wisdom and authority does not need to be a quotation. Here, it is reference to the Torah story of the Exodus.

(c) Explain **two** reasons why celebrating Pesach ^{is important} is important for many Jews.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

Pesach is important to Jews as it signifies how Moses freed the Jews from Egypt in the book of Exodus. This means that ~~Moses~~ Jews reflect on Jewish history and honour how they can continue to live. ~~The book~~ Exodus also describes them as the 'Chosen people' and Pesach is a celebration to bring them closer to God and honour the one who chose them.



This candidate has written a clear answer.

Marks are given for:

Reason 1

- It signifies how Moses freed the Jews (source of wisdom and authority) (1)
- Jews reflect on Jewish history (1)
- and honour how they continue to live (1)

Reason 2

- Exodus describes them as the Chosen People (1)
- Pesach celebrations bring them closer to God who chose them (1)

5 marks

Pesach is important for many Jews as it reminds them of the passing over of the Angel of Death. This is important as it reminds Jewish people ~~that~~ ^{that} God is protecting them and chose them to be his people.

Furthermore, Pesach is important as it reminds Jewish people how their ancestors fled persecution. This is important as it ~~gives~~ connects Jewish people to their history and highlights its importance. A source of wisdom and authority to support this is in Exodus when Moses freed the Israelites from slavery.

Again, this candidate is awarded full marks. It is clear where marks can be given.

Here, the source of wisdom and authority can either be the first sentence, which is then explained coherently, or it can be the final point of the second paragraph.

Marks are given for:

Reason 1

- It reminds them of the passing over of the Angel of Death (1)
- It reminds Jewish people that God protected them (1)
- and chose them to be his people (1)

Reason 2

- It reminds Jewish people how their ancestors fled persecution (1)
- It connects Jewish people to their history (1)

5 marks

Question 2 (d)

This (d) question asked whether Jewish food laws were as important today as when they were written.

The majority of candidates had good knowledge about the food laws, although some of them wrote these out in detail and did not really address the question.

Some candidates made some excellent points about the purpose of laws, and others made some interesting points about the ethics of killing animals and fish at all.

Responses were, on the whole, interesting to read.

This is a good example of a candidate who has a lot to say, some very intelligent and interesting observances but who does not spend time explaining the food laws themselves.

The candidate answers the question.

(d) "Jewish food laws are as important today as when they were written."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

(12)

Firstly, some Jews may agree because they come from the ~~the~~ 613 mitzvot in the Torah. These rules are the ~~word~~ word of God and so must be followed. If they were not important, the teachings would not exist, so no matter their age, they should be followed as normal. This is a strong argument as it comes from the Torah, the word of God, so they must be just as important today. Secondly, some Jews may agree because it is a Jewish tradition that unites them in their faith. These kosher food laws are very old and it is only right

to continue to uphold them. However, this is a weak argument because just by them being traditional, it doesn't actually mean they hold any real importance like when they were written.

However, some Jews may argue they are not that important today because they create many inconveniences. Laws such as not eating meat and dairy together means some meals can't be had. It can be more time consuming to prepare the meals properly which is quite hard in the modern world. Therefore, they have lost importance as they

are not as important as other things in daily life. This is a strong argument because many liberal Jews feel this way and so the laws have lost support and importance.

Secondly, some Jews may disagree with the statement because it can harm relationships or even themselves. Refusing food from others could harm relationships with friends or if you're ill harm yourself. Because of this, many more liberal Jews will break kosher food laws to prevent this. Therefore, this is clearly a strong argument as many Jews have found more important things instead and therefore, the laws can't hold the same importance as when they were written.

In conclusion, I think that kosher laws are not very important today. Many Jews have found many reasons to disregard them, so it's clear that they are not seen as important as other laws from things such as the Decalogue. Jews have found them inconvenient in modern life and disregard them as they aren't vital in Jewish life. Therefore, they can't hold the same importance as when they were written -

(Total for Question 2 = 24 marks)



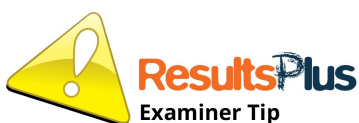
There are clear chains of reasoning and some appraisal of arguments:

- they are mitzvot
- they unite the faith
- but just because they are traditional does not mean they hold importance
- the laws have lost the support of many Jews – many Jews have found many reasons to disregard them therefore they cannot be that important

The candidate is awarded a mark in the middle of the level.

Level 3

8 marks



Candidates should answer the question in the first sentence, and again in the conclusion.

Firstly, many Jews would strongly disagree with this statement by saying that the Kashrut laws are very outdated and are hard to follow in modern society. This is a strong point because laws regarding the combination of meat and dairy, found in the Talmud create problems when instances such as when Jews want to eat out. This can be argued as a strong point as Jews may not know ~~that~~ whether food in restaurants would class as kosher, so it is less important to follow Kashrut laws now. However, many Jews would strongly counter-argue by saying that ~~rather~~ Kashrut laws are part of the Mitzvot so they should be treated exactly the same as any other ~~Mit~~ ~~of~~ the Mitzvot. This is a strong argument as the Mitzvot are regarded as God's gift from God, as seen in the Talmud, so for many Jews, it would be an act of disrespect to say that ~~some~~ the ~~Kosher~~ ^{Kashrut} laws are less important now. This would mean that because they come ~~direct~~ ^{from} ~~God~~ ^{Hashem} and it is what ~~God~~ ^{Hashem} wants vs food, it is just as important to follow them today as when they were written.

Also, many Jews would strongly disagree

with the statement by saying that the kashrut laws are ~~extremely~~ made difficult to follow due to things like industrial agriculture and the mass slaughter of animals. This is a strong argument as it is hard to find ethically slaughtered meat produce, meaning it is hard to follow ~~the~~ the kashrut law regarding ethically slaughtered meats. ~~Therefore~~ Ethically Slaughtered meat is usually extremely more expensive than mass-slaughtered, which may mean some Jews can't afford it, so it is less important to follow this kashrut today. However, some Jews would ~~not~~ counter-argue this strongly by saying that the kashrut laws are ^{important} a tradition in Judaism. This is ~~is~~ a strong point as it has always been important to avoid Treifah, ~~eg~~ such as goat meat and only eat kosher foods such as chicken. This ^{means it} is important to regard the kashrut laws as ^{with} equal importance today for many Jews as it is what ~~our~~ Jews' ancestors did, so we should too.

In conclusion, I think that Jews should regard the kashrut laws as very important to follow because they are regarded by ~~orthodox~~ Jews as being the word of Hashem, so they never lose importance. The ~~the~~ teachings found in the Torah are timeless. However I do accept that other conclusions may be justified, as Reform Jews may make a strong point by saying that society **(Total for Question 2 = 24 marks)** has changed so drastically since the kashrut were written, so some of the kashrut are less important to follow in modern society. **TOTAL FOR PAPER = 51 MARKS**



There is the basis of some very interesting arguments here, concerning the authority of the mitzvot, about what is ethically acceptable today, and there are some good chains of reasoning.

The response cannot reach a higher level, however, because there are inaccuracies, and therefore it is not 'sustained, accurate and thorough', which is required for level 4.

The conclusion is good here. The candidate argues one side whilst acknowledging the arguments of the other.

Level 3

8 marks

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Do not attach extra sheets to your examination paper, write within the scannable pages using the blank spaces
- When answering the (a) items use three separate, full sentences
- The source of wisdom offered to support answers in (c) items must be relevant to the question and support the reason given
- The (d) items ask for evaluation, after considering the evidence. Higher marks are achieved if the evidence/reasons given, is/are 'considered' or appraised for their value as an argument as part of deciding the evaluation
- On (d) items, the bullet points indicate the viewpoints that will be credited in the answer
- Candidates should read the questions carefully, and answer the question asked, fully

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