



Examiners' Report

June 2022

GCSE Religious Studies A 1RA0 2F

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Introduction

Option 2F – Judaism

This paper contributes to 25% of the overall award.

The paper includes two questions: each covers a section of the specification and candidates are expected to answer both questions. There is no element of choice on the paper.

The details of the assessment content are provided in the specification. Centres are expected to use the Edexcel specification, rather than other published resources, when planning and teaching the course content. The examination is set from the specification.

This paper allows an in-depth study of Judaism as a lived religion within the United Kingdom, and its beliefs and teachings and practices. This unit engages the interest of young people because it addresses many Jewish beliefs and teachings.

It is really encouraging to see candidates approach Jewish beliefs such as Shekhinah and the mitzvot with depth and understanding.

Please note: Some questions include assessment of Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG).

Question 1 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Jewish Beliefs

Bullet point 1.2

The question asked was 'Outline **three** beliefs about Shekhinah'

Most of the candidates understood the term 'Shekhinah' and answered it in a variety of ways. Some wrote about times in the Tenakh where Shekhinah is seen, and others wrote about Shekhinah being present when praying in a minyan.

Some candidates confused Shekhinah with the Messiah.

1 (a) Outline **three** beliefs about Shekhinah.

(3)

one belief of the Shekhinah is that God was present through wind when Moses parted the Sea.

A second belief of the Shekhinah is that God was present through the burning bush when speaking to Moses.

A third belief of the Shekhinah is that God was present through the column of fire when preventing the Egyptians getting to the Jews when escaping.



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Examiner Comments

Shekhinah was present:

- when Moses parted the Red Sea (1)
- in the Burning Bush (1)
- the column of fire (1)

Total: 3 Marks



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Examiner Tip

Lists gain a maximum of 1 mark

Write three sentences for 3 marks

1 (a) Outline **three** beliefs about Shekhinah.

(3)

One belief about Shekhinah is that Jews believe it is God's divine presence and can be studied through various ways such as through study in the Yeshiva. Another belief is that they can learn about God's divine presence through worship and how it can be seen during the exodus event. A final belief is that they can experience God's divine presence through prayer, either public or private.



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Examiner Comments

The Divine Presence can be found in:

- study (1)
- worship (1)
- prayer (1)

Total: 3 Marks

Question 1 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Jewish Beliefs

Bullet point 1.6

The question asked was:

Explain **two** ways Pikuach Nefesh is used by Jews in their everyday life.

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (b) items. Therefore, two ways are required, and both need to be developed to be awarded 4 marks.

Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, a quotation, or examples. The development must be of the way given and to the question asked.

A significant number of candidates confused Pikuach Nefesh with the wider concept of the sanctity of life. This limited the marks of those candidates.

Many understood the primacy of life, however, and there were some excellent answers that wrote about Shabbat laws, and about transplant surgery.

(b) Explain **two** ways Pikuach Nefesh is used by Jews in their everyday life.

(4)

- One way pikuach Nefesh is used in their everyday life is Jews have a moral duty to preserve life so if they can prevent someone dying it is seen as a honour (e.g. - transplant surgery)

- Another way pikuach Nefesh is used by Jews in their everyday life is Jews follow the Talmud which states: "when you save one life, it is as if you saved an entire nation" This allows Jews to break Shabbat if someone's life is at risk. Murder is also forbidden as it goes against the 10 commandments



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Examiner Comments

Marks are awarded for:

- Jews have a moral duty to preserve life (1)
- so if they can prevent someone dying it is seen as a honour (1)

The second point is upside-down:

- the way is breaking the mitzvot to save a life (1)
- developed by the quote from the Talmud (1)

Total: 4 Marks



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Examiner Tip

Separate the two points into paragraphs: this it makes it easier to mark

(b) Explain **two** ways Pikuach Nefesh is used by Jews in their everyday life.

(4)

Pikuach Nefesh is used by Jews in every day life through the sanctity of life which is the appreciation of God giving life which is a sacred thing. Jews use Pikuach Nefesh when breaking Jewish laws to do things such as save life a life: "saving the life of one is saving the life of a nation."



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Examiner Comments

This is an example where the candidate does not understand the difference between the sanctity of life and Pikuach Nefesh.

The marks here are given for:

- the second point, regarding breaking Jewish laws to save a life (1)
- developed by the reference to the source of wisdom and authority (1)

Total: 2 Marks

Question 1 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Jewish Beliefs

Bullet point 1.7

The question asked was:

Explain **two** reasons why the mitzvot are important for Jews.

Candidates are asked to 'Explain **two**' on (c) items. Therefore, two reasons were required, and both needed to be developed, for 4 marks.

Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, a quotation, or examples. The development must relate to the reason given and to the question asked.

The reasons then should be supported with a 'reference to a source of wisdom', this must support the reason given and cannot be awarded twice. Therefore, if it is used as development it does not gain a second mark for the source.

Most candidates understood this question and responded well. Where candidates lost marks, it was often due to repetition.

GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a source of wisdom

- *The candidates do not have to reference a quote or quote it word for word.*
- *If examiners are unsure they will use a search engine. Enter the gist of the paraphrase and 'Tenakh' or 'Jewish teaching'.*
- *If the candidate states that it is in Genesis 1:18 and then states another verse from Genesis – then this can be awarded. We are not holding candidate to 'verses' but it must be the correct book.*
- *If the candidate gives the paraphrase and then puts (Genesis 1:18) in brackets the paraphrase can have the mark and the bracketed reference is ignored.*
- *If a candidate quotes Moses and it was Abraham or vice versa it is not awarded.*

(c) Explain **two** reasons why the mitzvot are important for Jews.

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

(5)

One reason why the mitzvot are important for Jews is because they are the 613 Jewish laws that God had set out for the Jews, ~~because~~ ^{he} put these in place because it teaches them how to live a good life and lead by example in order to refrain from sin, for example "do not murder" or "love thy neighbour as I have loved you", these are all put in place to ensure a happy and healthy Jewish life and community.

A second reason why the mitzvot are important for Jews is because they are way to connect Jews with God and re-build or perhaps build a stronger relationship with God and strengthen in their faith.



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Examiner Comments

Marks are given for:

- they are the 613 laws (1)
- it teaches them how to live a good life (1)
- for example do not kill (1)
- they connect with God (1)
- and strengthen faith (1)

Total: 5 Marks

(c) Explain **two** reasons why the mitzvot are important for Jews.

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

(5)

One reason why the 613 mitzvot are important for many Jews, is that they are a set of positive and negative laws which test one's obedience and self control to God, so that they as individuals can live a healthier, happier and more obedient life.

Another reason why the 613 mitzvot are important for many Jews is that they outline God's demands, his trust and compassion for us to guide us as to how to live a better life, free from sin and be judged by God, by fulfilling these laws we can be looked on more favourably from God.



Marks are given for:

- they are a set of positive and negative laws (1)
- which tests obedience (1)
- they outline God's demands (1)
- to guide us how to live (1)

This candidate has not given a source of wisdom and authority and so does not receive the fifth mark.

Total: 4 Marks



Learn the sources of wisdom and be able to use them accurately and in context

Question 1 (d)

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the (d) items.

The candidates were assessed on AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including their significance and influence.

AO2 constitutes 50% of the overall mark.

The question is ' **Evaluate**' this statement **considering the arguments for and against** and reach a **justified conclusion**.

There must some consideration of the validity of the arguments used/appraisal, to gain the higher grades.

Many candidates produced excellent answers, giving reasons for and against but did not evaluate the credibility of the argument. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments, limiting candidates' progression to the higher levels.

(d) items are marked using a levels-based mark scheme.

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Jewish Beliefs

Bullet point 1.3

The question asked:

'Belief in the Messiah is important for Jews.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion

Please note: neither in the bullet point, nor in the question, are candidates required to give a non-religious response.

*(d) "Belief in the Messiah is important for Jews."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- refer to different Jewish points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

(15)

I agree with this statement as belief in the Messiah connects us closer to God on a more spiritual level and is a future role model to look up to.

Orthodox Jews believe that the Messiah has not yet come and will be a descendant of David, he will be a great political and military leader, a fair judge and the leader for the Jewish people. Jews do not believe Jesus is the Messiah, but rather as a prophet as he sinned and broke Shabbat.

This is a fairly strong argument as through belief in a Messiah, Jews can hope to be more spiritually involved with the Jewish leader.

However, some people may disagree with me and say that belief in a singular Messiah is outdated and that the belief that Goyim Jews have is more pertinent, everyone should believe in the Messianic age.

and that belief in the Messiah should be carried out through the community giving grace, love and advice to those around us and how Jews bring about a great faith.

However, this could be interpreted as a fairly weak argument as God said there would be a Messiah and who are Jews to question that? Jews are the chosen people of God and should recognise that the word of God is infallible and should be respected.

You could also say about this argument, that by a combined belief in a singular Messiah we can pray and hope for someone to carry out God's work on earth and be a representative of the Jews as a symbol of Jewish identity. It can bring us closer and more connected to God more spiritually.

To conclude, it is important in my opinion as having a strong leader to look up to can show Jews how to live their lives and is a way for them to test one's obedience.



This response is at the lower end of Level 3. It comprises only knowledge and understanding, until page two.

Here, it appraises the previous argument, with the point that it is a weak argument because God has said there will be a Messiah and who are Jews to question that. This places the response into Level 3.

It does not achieve a higher level, however, because the religious reasoning is not in depth and the conclusion is not strong.

Level 3:

7 marks

3 marks for SPaG

Total: 10 Marks



Take opportunities to assess and analyse the validity of the evidence supporting the statement

*(d) "Belief in the Messiah is important for Jews."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- refer to different Jewish points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

(15)

I agree with the statement "Belief in the Messiah is important for Jews" as Jews don't see Jesus as the messiah as he was not written in the Torah, as well as Saul (he eventually disobeyed God), so they have hope for St David's family line, or anyone who God appoints. Some qualities Jews believe the messiah will have is being a military and political leader and someone who will follow the 10 commandments.

However, some people may disagree and argue that Reform Jews don't believe there is such thing as a 'messiah'; they believe everyone's collective actions come together in unity, and everyone is included in the saving of Hebrews, not just one individual.

In contrast to this, Orthodox Jews have a juxtaposed view to the Reform Jews. Orthodox Jews believe that in every generation, there is the potential for a messiah. If the Jews are worthy of redemption, God will appoint someone to rule with kindness. This

messiah will lead the Jews to the New Jerusalem, and this is the belief that keeps the Orthodox Jews waiting and preparing to welcome him in.

In conclusion, I agree with the statement: 'Belief in the messiah is important for Jews' as in every generation, Orthodox Jews believe there is the potential to be a messiah.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate argues 'for and against', with depth of knowledge. However, they do not appraise or evaluate the arguments used and therefore the response does not reach Level 3.

Level 2

6 marks

3 marks for SPaG

Total: 9 Marks

Question 2 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Jewish practices

Bullet point 2.2

The question asked was:

Outline **three** parts of the Tenakh.

The candidates needed to provide any part of the Tenakh. The most common answers were the Torah, Nevi'im and Ketuvim, although some candidates wrote the names of books, and some the Decalogue. All of these were credited.

Candidates should learn correct spellings – as well as enabling examiners to mark more easily, it is a specification requirement.

2 (a) Outline three parts of the Tenakh.

(3)

one part of the Tenakh is the Torah
A second part of the Tenakh is the Nevi'im
A third part of the Tenakh is the ketuvim.



Marks are awarded for the:

- Torah (1)
- Nevi'im (1)
- Ketuvim (1)

Total: 3 Marks



Spell key words correctly

2 (a) Outline **three** parts of the Tenakh.

(3)

One part of the Tenakh is the Torah which is the word of God and contains 5 books to be read each year and kept inside an Ark.
Another part of the Tenakh is the Neviim which contains 11 books containing 8 books.
A final part of the Tenakh is the Ketuvim which contains 11 books and is used by Jews to read poetry, stories and seek spiritual



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Examiner Comments

Marks are awarded for the:

- Torah (1)
- Nevi'im (1)
- Ketuvim (1)

This candidate has used many more words than is necessary to receive the marks.

Total: 3 Marks



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Write simple sentences for (a) questions

Question 2 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Jewish practices

Bullet point 2.3

The question asked was:

Explain **two** features of Jewish prayer in the home.

Candidates are asked to 'Explain **two**' on (b) items. Therefore, two features are required, and both need to be developed to be awarded 4 marks.

Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, a quotation or examples. The development must be of the feature given and to the question asked.

This was generally answered well. The word 'feature' was interpreted widely and included names of prayers as well as prayer objects such as Tefillin. Typically, candidates lost marks where they had written about prayer in general, rather than in the home.

This is a very generic answer but nonetheless, it receives the marks.

Candidates should write an answer that divides into two paragraphs, each containing a reason and a development.

(b) Explain **two** features of Jewish prayer in the home.

(4)

One feature of Jewish prayer ~~is~~ in the home is that it can be one on one to God. Some Jews ~~being~~ believe this would help to form a deeper connection with God.

Another feature of Jewish prayer in the home is that Jews can talk about anything to God and he can forgive in a private space so nobody else has to hear your issues.



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Examiner Comments

Marks are awarded for:

- It can be one to one with God (1)
- helping to form a deeper connection (1)
- He can talk about anything (1)
- as nobody can hear you (1)

Total: 4 Marks



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Examiner Tip

Set out your answer so that the two paragraphs are clear

(b) Explain **two** features of Jewish prayer in the home.

(4)

One feature of Jewish prayer in the home is Shabbat. It lasts from Friday evening to Saturday evening and consists of prayer at home.

Another feature of Jewish prayer in the home is the morning, midday and evening prayers. These ask God for forgiveness, thanks and mercy and are the base for Jewish prayer in the home.



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Examiner Comments

Marks are awarded for:

- Shabbat (1)
- consists of prayer at home (1)
- Morning, midday and evening prayers (1)
- ask God for forgiveness (1)

There is much information here. The points were given at these words but could have been given in other places.

Total: 4 Marks



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Examiner Tip

A source of wisdom can be accepted as a development of a reason

Question 2 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Jewish practices

Bullet point 2.8

The question asked was:

Explain **two** ways that synagogues are used by Jewish communities.

Candidates needed to answer giving **ways** they are used, not reasons why they are used.

Candidates are asked to 'Explain **two**' on (c) items. Therefore, two ways are required, and both need to be developed to be awarded 4 marks. They must also correctly use a source of wisdom in their answer which must be identifiable, relevant and linked to the way given in the answer .

This question was generally answered well, although candidates found it difficult to add a source of wisdom and authority.

Candidates must be prepared for the whole breadth and depth of the specification, in order to achieve higher grades.

It is best to check that materials used in school cover the specification.

(c) Explain **two** ways that synagogues are used by Jewish communities.

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

(5)

one way the synagogue is used by Jewish families is it can be used during festivals such as Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, Pesach, Sukkot. They can pray to God and ask for forgiveness.

Another way the synagogue is used by Jewish communities is for Bar/Bat Mitzvahs. This is when the son and daughter become responsible for following the commandments themselves.



Marks are awarded for:

- Used during festivals (1)
- such as Yom Kippur (1)
- For Bar Mitzvah (1)
- when the son becomes responsible for following the commandments (1)

Total: 4 Marks

The source must be relevant and used as part of the candidate's reasoning.

(c) Explain **two** ways that synagogues are used by Jewish communities.

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

(5)

One way that synagogues are used by Jewish communities is for public prayer. Jews can pray in a minyan (10 people) as ~~the~~ God wanted Jews to participate in public prayer, as ~~seen~~ seen in psalm 116: "in the presence of his entire people".

Another way that synagogues are used by Jewish communities is for ~~the~~ shabbat from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. ~~the~~ The Jews welcome it in like a bride, and all pray together as well as worship ~~the~~ God.



Marks are awarded for:

- for public prayer (1)
- Jews can pray in a minyan (1)
- 'in the presence of his people ' (1)
- for Shabbat (1)
- all pray together (1)

Total: 5 Marks

Question 2 (d)

The focus of the marking is AO2 on the (d) items. As explained in the specification this means:

Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including their significance and influence.

AO2 constitutes 50% of the overall mark.

The question asks candidates to '**Evaluate**' this statement **considering the arguments for and against** and reach a **justified conclusion**. There must be some consideration of the validity of the arguments used/appraisal to gain the higher grades.

Many candidates produced excellent answers giving reasons for and against but did not evaluate the credibility of the argument. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments limiting candidates' progression to the higher levels.

(d) items are marked using a levels-based mark scheme.

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Jewish practices

Bullet point 2.5

The question asked was:

'Marriage is the most important Jewish ritual.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Please note that candidates were not required to give a non-religious response.

The statement was designed to evaluate different understandings about marriage and whether it is more important than other rituals. The best answers compared it with Brit Milah, Bar and Bat Mitzvah and funeral rituals. Some candidates, however, did not understand the word 'ritual' and compared marriage to festivals, which limited their marks.

There are many different ways to answer (d) items and gain marks, however, a 'template' will not assure high marks.

(d) "Marriage is the most important Jewish ritual." - Furedi - bitterly
Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

(12)

I agree to a certain extent with this statement.

Marriage is the most important Jewish ritual because it pairs a couple with each other forever, therefore it can be celebrated because it highlights the growth of the religion in comparison to the times of slavery.

Another reason why some Jews will agree with marriage being the most important Jewish ritual is because through marriage comes children, who will eventually be Jewish. ~~it can be~~ Therefore, it can be celebrated in terms of collectiveness, Jews can establish a family that worships God, leading ~~them to~~ God into blessing them.

In critique of this opinion, the children from the ritual of marriage may not grow up to be Jewish, this defects the point.

On the other hand, some might say the Funeral ritual is the most important ritual because it celebrates the full life of the person and how they will be with God. This promotes worship and building a relationship with God, to ensure you do not go to hell.

Furthermore, another reason some Jews might disagree with the statement is because the circumcision ritual is more important, it celebrates Abraham's devotion to God by circumcision and offering God his son. This promotes devotion to God.

In conclusion, I believe that marriage is the most important Jewish ritual because it celebrates life to come such as children and having a family pleases God.



This candidate gives reasons why marriage is important, followed by reasons why funerals are important, followed by reasons why circumcision is important.

Their knowledge and understanding is there but they do not explain why marriage (or any of the other rituals mentioned) is more important than the others.

There is no appraisal nor evaluation, therefore the response cannot reach Level 3.

Level 2

Total: 6 marks



There are many different ways to answer d) items and gain marks; a template will not assure good marks.

Candidates not try to use short points for (d) answers, which need to be written in prose.

~~I~~ I disagree with this statement firstly because the ~~Bar~~ Bar or Bat Mitzvah could be more important than marriage, as this ritual marks the day when a Jewish child becomes responsible for their own sins and takes on the great responsibility of following God's laws independently. This ritual is incredibly important for the development of a person's faith and is therefore more important than marriage.

~~Secondly~~ Secondly, ~~the Jewish funeral rite could be more important than~~ Brit Milah ~~is more~~ could be a more important Jewish ritual than marriage because it is when a baby boy ~~receives~~ receives his name and is circumcised to represent the Covenant between God and Abraham. This ritual is so important to the continuation of this ~~covenant~~ covenant that a chair is set aside for the Prophet Elijah so he can oversee the procedure, making Brit Milah more important than marriage.

These arguments are strong because they are supported by

Some may disagree with me though, as marriage allows a Jewish couple to fulfil the command in Genesis to 'be fruitful and multiply', so marriage helps people to follow God's Laws and pass on their faith to their children.

Some may also disagree with me because part of marriage is ~~Ketuvim~~, ~~or~~ betrothal, which has legal status in Judaism and outlines important aspects of life in marriage depending on whether the couple is Orthodox or Reformed, such as support for the wife ~~to~~ and children in the event of the husband's death and promises related to faith.

These arguments are weak though, as ~~at~~ many other rituals in the Jewish faith have legal status, including Brit Milah, and all help ~~to~~ Jews to follow God's laws, making marriage no more important.

In conclusion, marriage is not the most important Jewish ritual because ~~it~~ other rituals such as Bar Mitzvah and Brit Milah hold more importance for a person's personal development in faith and hold legal status just as much as Jewish marriage.



This candidate opens with a judgment and says why they believe Bar Mitzvah is more important than marriage.

Many of the points they make do not really explain why one ritual is more important than another, however, until the second page. Here, they point out that other rituals also have legal status within the religion.

Their conclusion is good, making the point that Bar Mitzvah and Brit Milah hold more importance for a person's personal development.

Although there is some appraisal, it is brief. Generally, the candidate gives only reasons.

Level 3

Total: 7 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 if necessary
- 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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