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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Religious Studies A (1RB0)
Paper 1: Area of Study 1 – Religion and Ethics
Option 1F: Judaism

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EAR report 2022 1RB0_1F

Introduction GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies Religious Studies B Paper 1F: Area of Study 1 – Religion and Ethics - Judaism

The paper contributes to 50% of the overall award.

The assessment consists of four questions and candidates must answer all questions. The details of the assessment content are provided in the specification. Centres are to use this, rather than other published resources when planning the course content.

This area of study comprises a study in-depth of Judaism as a lived religion in the United Kingdom and throughout the world.

There are four sections:

- Jewish Beliefs
- Marriage and the family
- Living the Jewish Life
- Matters of Life and Death

Candidates had studied Judaism within the context of the wider British society.

Please note:

AO stands for 'Assessment Objective'

SPaG stands for 'Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar'

Question 1 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Jewish Beliefs.

Bullet point. 1.4 The Covenant at Sinai: the nature and history of the Covenant at Sinai (the Ten Commandments), including Exodus 20; the role and significance of Moses in the Covenant at Sinai; divergent understandings of how and why the Decalogue is important in Jewish life today

The question asked was: 'Outline three of the Decalogue.'

Candidates are asked to 'Outline' on (a) items. Therefore, lists can reach a maximum of one mark.

GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a list.

An example: Outline 3 characteristics of God:

- God is creator (1 mark)
- God is creator, judge and lawgiver (1 mark for list or sentence)
- God is creator, busy and distant. (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)

- Busy, distant and God is creator, (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)
- Creator, judge, lawgiver (1 mark for list)
- Creator, busy, distant (0 Marks) (all three elements need to be correct for 1 mark)
- Creator, judge, distant (0 marks)

Most candidates were awarded 3 marks. Candidates who answered the question by defining what the Decalogue is were not awarded marks.

Some candidates wrote 'Love your neighbour' as an example and this was not credited.

Examiner advice: Candidates should write three sentences containing one piece of information in each. There is no need for development: it will not receive credit.

Question 1b

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Jewish Beliefs.

Bullet point 1.5 The covenant with Abraham and his descendants: the nature and history of the Abrahamic covenant; the role of Abraham in the covenant, including Genesis 17; why the Promised Land covenanted to Abraham and his descendants is important for Jews today.

The question, to assess the specification, asked: 'Explain two promises made by the Almighty to Abraham as part of the Covenant.'

Many candidates approached this with confidence and wrote about the Almighty providing Abraham and Sarah with a child, the Almighty giving them land, the Almighty giving Abraham as many descendants as stars in the sky.

Some candidates wrote about the sacrificing of Isaac which is not a promise made by the Almighty as part of the Covenant, or they wrote about promises Abraham made, such as circumcision.

Examiner advice: Centres should be familiar with and prepare students for all parts of the specification. Centres are advised to refer to the specification, SAMS materials and online support given by the senior examination team. Centres should not rely completely on text books or support from social media.

Question 1 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Jewish Beliefs.

Bullet point 1.1 The nature of the Almighty: how the characteristics of the Almighty are shown in the Torah, and why they are important in Jewish life today, including One, Creator, Law-Giver and Judge, including reference to Genesis 2.

The question asked was: 'Explain two of the characteristics of the Almighty which are shown in the Torah.' In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (c) items. Therefore, two characteristics are required for this question, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom a quotes or examples. The development must be of the characteristic 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.

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 markers of candidate work in centres are unsure if the quote will be accepted, 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, and the quote is not accredited to them, it is not awarded.

The majority of candidates answered this question well. Candidates typically wrote about the Almighty as Creator, seen in the Creation story in Genesis and then quoted it. They also used the Almighty as One, using the Shema as the source of wisdom. Where candidates lost marks, it was because they had tried to answer this generically rather than using specific characteristics.

Question 1 (d)

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the (d) items. The candidates are assessed on AO2, Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief. This 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 be some consideration of the arguments (appraise, judge the value of, the arguments to reach the higher levels).

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Jewish Beliefs.

Bullet point 1.2 The nature and importance of Shekhinah: how the divine presence is shown in the Torah and why it is important including interpretations of 2 Chronicles 7:1–

3; the divergent understandings of Shekhinah found in different forms of Orthodox Judaism and the importance of them for Jews today.

The question asked was:

“Shekhinah is the most important belief in Judaism.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against. In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Many candidates gave excellent answers citing reasons for and against but not considering the value of them or analysing/evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting candidate’s progression to the higher levels.

Many centres had attempted to introduce a writing frame to encouraged appraisal, but the candidates did not appear to understand the demands of the skill required.

Some candidates wrote 'This is a strong argument because ...' and repeated the previous point or giving another point, or reason referring to the statement not the argument given.

In other examples, Candidates wrote 'This is a weak argument because...!' and gave generic statements such as, 'it's not in the Torah' without then explaining how this would make it weak.

In some cases, students focussed on the strength/weakness of an argument but had not demonstrated any understanding of religion and belief.

In some cases, candidates compared belief in Shekhinah with belief in Pesach, or in Brit Milah, which did not work as an alternative argument. The best answers argued the Oneness of the Almighty is the best way to see the Almighty but the Almighty is the belief, Shekhinah is only part of that.

Examiner advice: centres should refer to training materials online. Candidates require the religious understanding of the diversity within the religious tradition, and the arguments for and against before they can begin to evaluate.

Question 2 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Marriage and the Family.

Bullet point 2.2 Jewish teachings about the nature and importance of sexual relationships: Jewish teachings about sexual relationships, including Genesis 1:26–31 and Song of Songs; divergent Jewish teachings and attitudes towards sexual relationships

outside of marriage and homosexuality; different non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) attitudes to sexual relationships, including the acceptance of sexual relationships outside marriage and homosexuality and Jewish responses to them.

The question asked was 'Outline three Jewish teachings about sexual relationships.'

Candidates answered this question well, they had knowledge of many Jewish teachings about sexual relationships. The majority of candidates were awarded all three marks, and where marks were lost, it was often because they had included circumcision.

Question 2 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Marriage and the Family.

Bullet point 2.3 Jewish teachings about the purpose and importance of the family: Jewish teachings about the purpose of family – procreation; security and education of children with reference to Psalm 127:3–5; divergent Jewish and non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) responses to the purpose of the family; different types of family within 21st-century society (nuclear, single parent, same-sex parents, extended and blended families)

The question asked was 'Explain two beliefs about the purpose of the family for Jews.'

In an example of a 4-mark response the candidate gives two developed beliefs. For example:

- One purpose of the family for Jews is to have children. (1) This is because children are necessary to continue the faith. (1)
- Another purpose of family for Jews is to fulfil the Almighty's teachings. (1) He said to 'be fruitful and multiply.' (1)

Many candidates answered this well, including some responses which referenced the Holocaust. Where candidates did not do so well, it was often that they wrote about roles in the family rather than the purpose of it.

Examiner advice: Refer to the specification bullet point and cover all the different parts of it. These bullet points are the basis of question setting.

Question 2 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Marriage and the Family.

Bullet point 2.8 Jewish teachings about gender prejudice and discrimination: Jewish opposition to gender prejudice and discrimination, including The Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty (1992 The Knesset); examples of gender equality in action in Judaism

The question asked was: 'Explain two examples of gender equality in action in Judaism.' In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (c) items. Therefore, two examples are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, a quote or examples. The development must be of the example given and to the question asked. The examples 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 responded well to this question. They wrote about female rabbis within Reform Judaism, men and women sitting together. Some candidates wrote about B Mitzvahs being introduced in some synagogues for children who do not wish to identify as male or female. Most used the Almighty creating male and female as their source of wisdom.

Examiner advice: Centres struggling to find sources of wisdom should refer to the specification and/or previous mark schemes.

Question 2 (d)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two. Marriage and Family Life.

Bullet point 2.6 Jewish teachings and attitudes towards divorce and remarriage: divergent Jewish teachings about divorce and remarriage, including reference to Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Ishut 24 and arguments used to support or reject divorce; Jewish, non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) attitudes to divorce and remarriage, including the application of ethical theories, such as situation ethics, and Jewish responses to them

The question asked was "Jewish people should not get divorced."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- refer to relevant ethical arguments
- reach a justified conclusion.

This question engaged candidates of all abilities and produced a wide range of marks. All candidates should be encouraged to answer every question because every mark is important. Many candidates did not gain more than level two because they did not consider the value of the arguments given in answering the question and often candidates either wrote generic arguments, or they incorrectly argued that Orthodox

Jews do not allow divorce. The best answers really addressed the word 'should' using both Jewish teachings about divorce with the necessity for it sometimes.

Question 3 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Living the Jewish Life

Bullet point 3.2: The Tenakh and the Talmud: the nature, features, purpose and significance of the Tenakh (the written law) and Talmud (the oral law) for Jews in daily life today with reference to Perkei Avot 2; the nature and purpose of Jewish laws food laws, kashrut, including kosher and treifah and the separation of dairy and meat, including reference to Deuteronomy 14:3-10; the divergent implications of the Jewish food laws for Jews today.

The question asked was Outline three of the food laws in Judaism.

Candidates answered this question confidently, most knew about the separation of meat and dairy, the fins and scales, and the cloven hoofs.

Question 3 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Living the Jewish Life

Bullet point 3.4 The nature and importance of the Shema and the Amidah (the standing prayer); when the Shema and the Amidah might be used, how and why, including reference to the Mezuzah; the importance of having the Shema and the Amidah for Jews today, including reference to Deuteronomy 6:4

The question asked was Explain two reasons why the Amidah is important.

Candidates either knew the Amidah or they did not. Where candidates knew what it was, most were able to get the marks available. Where it was difficult to get 4 marks, it was often because they were not specific in their answer.

The first three blessings praise the Almighty (1) which is the most important prayer a Jew can make (1)

The Amidah is how a Jew can ask for help from the Almighty (1) as it includes a section for petition and intercession (1)

Question 3 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Living the Jewish Life

Bullet point 3.8 : Features of the synagogue: the nature, history and purpose of the different design of the synagogues in Liberal, Reform and Orthodox Judaism, including

facing Jerusalem, layout of seating the Ark and the bimah and with reference to Proverbs 14:28; how and why the synagogue is used by the different communities, including reference to Exodus 27:20–21; how and why objects of devotion are used within the synagogues including a yad, Torah Scroll, ner tamid and menorah

The question asked was: Explain two features of a Reform synagogue. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

Candidates wrote a variety of answers for this question, and most were credited, for example, the Ark and the Bimah were the obvious features, along with seating for men and women. Some candidates wrote very general answers, for example, there are chairs, there are toilets, and these were not accepted.

Candidates found it difficult to write a source of wisdom and authority for this question.

Examiner advice: Centres are advised to ensure candidates able to recognise key concepts and provide the relevant information.

Question 3 (d)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Living the Jewish Life

Bullet point 3.5 : The importance of ritual for Jews today: the nature, features and purpose of the birth including Brit Milah, marriage, Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies, including interpretations of Genesis 21:1–8, Genesis 17 and Leviticus 12; the nature, purpose and importance of mourning ceremonies; the distinct importance of the funeral, shiva, avelut and yahrzeit for Jews today; divergent understandings of the importance of each ritual for different forms of Orthodox and Reform Judaism today

The question asked was “Brit Milah is still important today.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Candidates often wrote well about the Covenant with Abraham and the link back to the beginning of Judaism. Where the answers were weaker was in understanding the importance of Brit Milah today. Many candidates assumed that Brit Milah was not important for Reform Jews which is not accurate. Some candidates were aware of some Jewish groups who were questioning the ethical issues of circumcision.

Examiner advice: Candidates should be reminded that the question gives all the information to answer the question. Which viewpoints are needed and if it is only Jewish teachings, it is directing them to the diversity in the interpretation of scriptures.

Question 4 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Matters of Life and Death

Bullet point: 4.3 Jewish responses to scientific and non-religious explanations about the origins of human life, such as evolution and survival of the fittest, including Genesis 1: 26–31; the significance of the responses to scientific and non-religious explanations, such as evolution and survival of the fittest, for Jews today

The question asked was Outline three Jewish responses to scientific explanations about the origins of human life.

The specification separates the scientific explanations of the world, and the scientific explanations of human life. This question was asking specifically about the latter.

There were a significant number of candidates who answered about the Big Bang and the creation of the world, and these were not credited.

Question 4 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Matters of Life and Death

Bullet point 4.7 Implications of the value and sanctity of life for the issue of euthanasia: the nature of euthanasia; different Jewish teachings about euthanasia, including different interpretations of Judges 9:51–57; divergent Jewish, non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) arguments surrounding its use, including the application of ethical theories, such as situation ethics, and Jewish responses to them, including support for hospice care.

The question asked was: Explain two Jewish beliefs about euthanasia.

This question was answered well by a large number of candidates who wrote that Jews do not allow euthanasia, because of the sanctity of life, but that there are teachings which prevent Jews from keeping people alive unnecessarily, so they can be taken off life support machines. Candidates who wrote that some Jews allow euthanasia were not credited, as this is not a recognised Jewish belief.

Question 4c

Candidates were assessed on Section Four : Matters of Life and Death

Bullet point 4.6: Jewish responses to non-religious arguments against life after death: why Jews may reject arguments against belief in life after death (including as a source of comfort, lack of evidence, fraudulent accounts, social control), including Isaiah 25

The question asked was: Explain two reasons why Jews might reject arguments against life after death. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

Candidates mostly understood what this question was asking and there were some good answers. Some candidates struggled with the negatives.

Some Jews believe their bodies will be resurrected (1) even though when a person is buried their body rots (1) 'Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to eternal life, others to reproaches, to everlasting abhorrence' (1)

Belief in the messianic age centres on the earth rather than a heaven (1), so it is irrelevant that humans have travelled into space and not found heaven (1) Isaiah teaches that the Messiah will come and create a government in Israel (1).

Examiner advice: Centres should unpick the bullet points with candidates to prepare them for the questions that may be set. This wording is taken from the specification.

Question 4 (d)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Matters of Life and Death

Bullet point 4.8: Jewish responses to issues in the natural world: Jewish responses to threats to the world, including pollution, global warming and the use of natural resources; Jewish teachings about environmental care, specifically stewardship and humanity's role as stewards, including reference to Psalm 24:1–3 and The Jewish Declaration on Nature – Assisi 1986; divergent Jewish responses to animal rights, including animal experimentation and the use of animals for food, including the application of ethical theories such as utilitarianism.

The question asked was

"Jewish people should support animal rights."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

There was a huge variety of answers here, some really excellent ones with religious teachings, appraisal and an understanding of how the change of time has made some practices less acceptable now than in previous times.

Where candidates struggled were those who wrote solely about the food laws, and those candidates who wrote about animal rights in general, rather than making any religious points.

Key advice from examiner.

- Centres must teach to the specification, making sure candidates are prepared for all parts of the bullet points in preparation for the questions
- For a) questions, candidates should write three sentences containing one piece of information in each. There is no need for development: it will not receive credit.
- The explain questions require two developed points, however, students should also be prepared to describe where indicated on the specification.
- The (d) items need an understanding of religion and belief, as well as the ability to evaluate the arguments to reach a conclusion. Centres may wish to consider the differentiation of teaching to enable some students of different abilities to concentrate on learning the information needed before embarking on the evaluation. To get a level 4, candidates need to have a wide range of teachings and beliefs to be able to analyse, appraise and evaluate.
- Candidates should be directed to read the bullet points in the (d) question and understand that they guide them to which viewpoints they should be providing. Centres may wish to consider identifying on the specification the different traditions/viewpoints within Judaism identified that could be used to answer these questions. The diversity within the religion is the key factor in appraising the arguments. Why do they not all agree?