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Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Religious Studies A (1RB0)
Paper 3: Area of Study 3 – Religion, Philosophy
and Social Justice
Option 3F: Judaism

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Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies Religious Studies B Paper 3F: Area of Study 3 – Religion, Philosophy and Social Justice - 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
- Religious Experience
- Living the Jewish Life
- Equality

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. 1.8 Jewish beliefs about life after death: divergent Jewish understandings of the nature and significance of life after death, including reference to different forms of Orthodox and Reform Judaism; Jewish teachings about life after death, including interpretations of Ecclesiastes 12; the nature of resurrection and judgement; why belief in life after death may be important for Jews today.

The question asked was: 'Outline three beliefs about life after death in Judaism..'

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. Some candidates wrote about purgatory which was not credited, although marks were given for a purgatory – like place.

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 1 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Jewish Beliefs.

Bullet point 1.3 The nature and purpose of the Messiah: how messiahship is shown in the scriptures including Jeremiah 23:5–8; the nature and significance of the Messianic Age and the Jewish responsibility to bring it about; divergent understandings of the Messiah in different forms of Orthodox and Reform Judaism and the importance of them for Jewish people today

The question asked: ‘Explain two Jewish beliefs about the Messiah.’

Many candidates approached this with confidence and wrote about the Messiah bringing the Messianic Age, being a warrior, being human, bringing peace. Some candidates wrote knowledgably about the difference in understanding between the Orthodox belief and the Reform belief.

The majority of candidates wrote about the Jewish Messiah. Some, did however, write about Jesus, and some wasted time saying that Jesus was not the Jewish Messiah.

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 1.7 Moral principles and the Mitzvot: the nature and importance of the Mitzvot, including reference to the Mishneh Torah of Maimonides: Sefer Mada; the importance of the relationship between keeping the Mitzvot and free will; the Mitzvot between humans and the Almighty, and between humans; divergent understandings of

the importance of the Mitzvot between the Almighty and humans, and between humans, for Jewish life today.

The question asked was: Explain two examples of mitzvot between humans and the Almighty. 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 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 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 example 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 how the first commandment is to worship only the Almighty, and that the Almighty gave his people Shabbat.

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:

“The divine presence is the most important way of understanding the Almighty.”

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: Religious Experience.

Bullet point 2.3 Miracles as proof of the existence of the Almighty: the nature and importance of miracles in Judaism, including as ‘nes’; scriptural examples of miracles, including Exodus 16; reasons why they might lead to belief in the existence of the Almighty Jewish responses to non-religious arguments (including atheist and Humanist), which maintain that miracles can be scientifically explained and provide no proof that the

Almighty exists; divergent understandings of what miracles show about the nature of the Almighty for Jews

The question asked was 'Outline three examples of miracles in Jewish scriptures'

Some candidates answered this well, but there were a lot of the miracles of Jesus given as answers. Candidates did not have to reference the miracles to be awarded the marks.

Question 2 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Religious Experience.

Bullet point 2.1 Revelation as proof of the existence of the Almighty; revelation as shown in the Tenakh, including direct revelation in 1 Samuel 2:27 and indirect/veiled revelation in Deuteronomy 31:14–30; reasons why revelation might lead to belief in the existence of the Almighty and reasons why it might not; what revelation shows about the nature of the Almighty for Jews

The question asked was Explain two examples of revelation in the Tenakh.

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

The revelation of the Almighty to Abraham (1) gave the Jews the belief that he would protect them (1)

Moses heard the Almighty's call through a burning bush (1) and that led him to rescue the Jews from Egypt (1)

Some candidates found it difficult to develop these answers. Some knew the revelation through the burning bush, but they did not know the wider story and so could not get the second mark.

Question 2 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Religious Experience.

Bullet point 2.7 Issues raised by existence of suffering: the problems it raises for Jews about the nature of the Almighty, including Psalm 103; how the problem and its basis as a philosophical argument may lead some people to reject belief in the Almighty or cause believers to question their belief

The question asked was: Explain two problems raised by the existence of suffering for Jews. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (c) items. Therefore, two problems 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 problems given and to the question asked. The problems 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.

Some candidates confused problems raised with responses to, and therefore their answers were not credited. A number also suggested that the problems raised were that Jewish people have lost their faith in the Almighty.

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. Religious Experience.

Bullet point 2.6 Cosmological argument: the cosmological argument for the existence of the Almighty and its use by Jews as a philosophical argument for the existence of God; divergent understandings of the nature and importance of what the cosmological argument shows about the nature of the Almighty, including interpretations of Psalm 33 and Isaiah 45; Jewish responses to non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) arguments against the cosmological argument as evidence for the existence of the Almighty

The question asked was "The cosmological argument is evidence for the existence of the Almighty."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

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

This question was not answered well by a significant number of candidates, who had little knowledge of what it is, and who wrote about the Creation story. There were few who addressed whether the cosmological argument provided evidence for the existence of the Almighty. Where it was answered well, the candidates gave strengths and weaknesses of the argument and came to a conclusion.

Question 3 (a)

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 Outline three occasions when the Shema might be said.

Candidates answered this question confidently, most gave an answer which said: The Shema is said in the morning, the Shema is said in the afternoon, the Shema is said in the evening.

This gave them the marks. Where marks were not given, it was because the candidate did not know what the Shema was, but this was not common.

Question 3 (b)

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 Explain two parts of the Tenakh.

Candidates either knew the Tenakh 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 had forgotten which parts were which.

The Torah is the first five books in the Tenakh (1) which contains the Jewish law (1)

The Nevi'im is the books of the Prophets (1). These trace the Jewish history (1)

Question 3 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Living the Jewish Life

Bullet point 3.1 : The nature and purpose of Jewish public acts of worship: the nature, features and purpose of Jewish public worship, including interpretations of Psalm 116:12–19; the nature, features and importance of synagogue services for the Jewish community and the individual.

The question asked was: Explain two reasons why public acts of worship are important for Jews. 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, Jews are expected to pray in the synagogue, some prayers require a minyan and some festivals are communal.

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 “All Jewish boys should have a Bar Mitzvah.”

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 traditions involved in a Bar Mitzvah, alongside the religious significance. There were some good responses although there was little appraisal and evaluation on this question. Few candidates addressed the times in history where Bar Mitzvahs had not been possible, or that there is no reference to them in the Torah. Some candidates confused it with Brit Milah or with Bat Mitzvah and these answers were not credited.

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: Equality

Bullet point: 4.3 Jewish attitudes towards religious freedom: Jewish teachings and responses to the nature of religious freedom, including reference to the story of Esther, including chapter 8; the response of Jews to a multi-faith society; the benefits and

challenges for Jews living in a multi-faith society; Jewish responses to non-religious arguments (including atheist and Humanist) against aspects of religious freedom.

The question asked was Outline three benefits of living in a multi-faith society for Jews.

This was answered well by the majority of the candidates, who understood that harmony between religions is a good thing.

Question 4 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Equality

Bullet point 4.6 Jewish attitudes towards racial discrimination: Jewish teachings and responses to racial discrimination, including interpretations of Genesis 3:16–24, how and why racial discrimination causes problems in society

The question asked was: Explain two Jewish responses to racial discrimination.

This question led to a lot of candidates getting 2 marks, for saying that everyone is created by the Almighty, and that therefore no-one should racially discriminate. The best answers used examples of the Holocaust Educational Trust and the Jewish Trust for Racial Equality.

Question 4 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four : Equality

Bullet point 4.1: Jewish teaching on human rights: Jewish teachings and responses to the nature, history and purpose of human rights; the importance of human rights and why Jews might support them, including Proverbs 14:31; divergent Jewish responses to the need for and application of individual human rights, including the support offered by situation ethics; Jewish responses to non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) arguments about human rights

The question asked was: Explain two reasons why human rights are important for Jews. 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 phrase human rights.

Jews believe in freedom of speech (1) but this comes with the responsibility not to lie. (1) 'You must not carry false rumours.' (Exodus 23:1) (1)

Jews have suffered persecution (1) and this means they believe people should not stir up hatred. (1) 'Guard your tongue from evil, your lips from deceitful speech.' (Psalm 34:14) (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: Equality

Bullet point 4.2: Jewish attitude towards equality: Jewish teachings and responses to the causes of inequality and problems caused by inequality in the world; Jewish teaching about equality, including ahavat ha-beriot and Leviticus 19:13–18 possible solutions and the reasons for them.

The question asked was

“All problems in the world are caused by inequality.”

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 inequality affects so much in society, and whether Jews have a responsibility to address this, compared to religious equality and whether inequality in society really matters spiritually.

Where candidates struggled were where they wrote very generic answers with little Jewish teaching.

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?