



# 2F JUDAISM

## SECTION 1: BELIEFS AND TEACHINGS



### 1.1 The nature of the Almighty

- The Torah shows the Almighty as:
- One** – There is only one God (Deut. 6:4)
- Creator** – God created the world (Gen. 1–2)
- LawGiver** – God gave the Torah (Ex. 20)
- Judge** – God judges fairly (Deut. 32:4)
- Genesis 2 shows God's care for creation and for humanity.

#### KEY REFERENCE



#### Genesis 2

The creation of Adam and Eve shows God's relationship with humanity.

#### WHY IMPORTANT TODAY?

These characteristics influence how Jews live:

- Trust in God
- Following the Torah
- Living ethically
- Respect for creation
- Responsibility and accountability

#### KEY VOCABULARY

#### Almighty (Hashem)

The one and only God.

#### Shekhinah

The divine presence of God in the world.

#### Messiah

A future leader who will bring peace and restore God's kingdom.

#### Covenant (Brit)

A sacred promise between God and the Jewish people.

#### Torah

The first five books of the Bible and the teachings of Judaism.

#### Mitzvot

Commandments or good deeds that Jews are commanded to do.

#### Pikuach Nefesh

The Jewish principle that saving a life comes before almost any other law.

#### Messianic Age

A future time of peace, justice and knowledge of God.

#### Decalogue (Ten Commandments)

The Ten Commandments given by God at Sinai.

#### Resurrection

The belief that the dead will be brought back to life.

#### KEY THEMES



#### Covenant

God's promises and relationships with people.



#### Responsibility

Jews are called to live a moral and ethical life.



#### Community

Living out beliefs together.



#### Hope

Belief in a better future and God's faithfulness.



### 1.2 The nature and importance of Shekhinah

- Shekhinah means God's divine presence in the world.
- 2 Chronicles 7:1–3: The glory of the Lord fills the Temple.
- Different Orthodox views:
  - Present in the world (Modern Orthodox)
  - Withdrawn after the destruction of the Temple (some)
- Shekhinah reminds Jews God is near.

#### KEY REFERENCE



#### 2 Chronicles 7:1–3

The glory of the Lord fills the Temple.

#### ORTHODOX vs REFORM

Orthodox: Shekhinah is real and central to worship and prayer.

Reform: More symbolic – God's presence is felt through community, worship and good deeds. Important as it shapes how Jews experience God today.



### 1.3 The nature and purpose of the Messiah

- Messiah means 'anointed one'.
- Jeremiah 23:5–8 speaks of a righteous King from David's line.
- The Messianic Age will bring peace, justice and knowledge of God.
- Jews have a role in bringing it about through good deeds (Tikkun Olam).

#### KEY REFERENCE



#### Jeremiah 23:5–8

The promise of a righteous leader from David's line.

#### ORTHODOX vs REFORM

Orthodox: Messiah will be a human king; the Messianic Age is future.

Reform: Messiah can be a symbol or process; the age may have already begun. Important as it gives hope and purpose to Jewish life.



### 1.4 The covenant with Abraham and his descendants

- God promises Abraham many descendants, a special relationship and the Land (Gen. 17).
- Abraham's faith and obedience are key.
- The Promised Land is a sign of God's promise and a place of spiritual connection.
- It remains important to Jews today spiritually, historically and politically.

#### KEY REFERENCE



#### Genesis 17

God's covenant with Abraham.

#### WHY IMPORTANT TODAY?

- Symbol of God's faithfulness
- Part of Jewish identity
- Connection to Israel and the Land
- Inspires belief in promises and commitment.



### 1.5 The Covenant at Sinai

- At Mount Sinai, God gives the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20).
- Moses is the leader and prophet who receives the Torah.
- The Decalogue is the foundation of Jewish law and moral life.

#### KEY REFERENCE



#### Exodus 20

The Ten Commandments.

#### ORTHODOX vs REFORM

Orthodox: The Decalogue is divine law, binding for all time.

Reform: Still important, but interpreted for today's context. Shapes how Jews live and make moral choices.



### 1.6 Sanctity of life (Pikuach Nefesh)

- Human life is holy – created in God's image (Gen. 1:27).
- Pikuach Nefesh: saving a life overrides almost all other commandments.
- Talmud Yoma 83–84: even on Yom Kippur, saving a life comes first.

#### KEY REFERENCE



#### Talmud Yoma 83–84

Saving a life takes precedence over almost everything.

#### ORTHODOX vs REFORM

Orthodox: Strict application, even if it means breaking other laws.

Reform: Same principle, applied with modern medical ethics. Shows the value Jews place on every human life.



### 1.7 Moral principles and the Mitzvot

- Mitzvot are commandments. There are 613.
- Mishneh Torah (Maimonides, Sefer Madda): purpose of the Mitzvot is to bring us closer to God and create a just society.
- We keep Mitzvot out of free will, not force.
- Mitzvot are 'between humans and God' and 'between humans'.

#### KEY REFERENCE



#### Mishneh Torah Sefer Madda

Maimonides on the purpose of the Mitzvot.

#### ORTHODOX vs REFORM

Orthodox: Mitzvot are divine obligations for all Jews.

Reform: Some Mitzvot are reinterpreted or not observed; focus on ethical values. Important in shaping Jewish identity and daily life.



### 1.8\* Jewish beliefs about life after death

- Views differ: resurrection of the body, existence of the soul, or spiritual continuity.
- Ecclesiastes 12: The soul returns to God who gave it.
- Belief in resurrection and judgement.
- Hope for reward and justice.
- Gives meaning, comfort and motivation.

#### KEY REFERENCE



#### Ecclesiastes 12

The soul returns to God.

#### ORTHODOX vs REFORM

Orthodox: Many believe in resurrection and judgement.

Reform: Many believe in continued spiritual existence or legacy. Important for hope, comfort and ethical living.

#### EXAM TIPS

- ✓ Learn key references: Know the story and message of each scripture.
- ✓ Explain why it is important: Don't just describe – link beliefs to Jewish life today.
- ✓ Compare views: Make clear differences between Orthodox and Reform.
- ✓ Use key terms: Include vocabulary in your answers.
- ✓ Structure your answer: Point, Evidence, Explanation, Link.



#### PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 1 Explain two characteristics of the Almighty shown in the Torah. (4 marks)
- 2 'The Shekhinah is important in Jewish life today.' Explain why. (5 marks)
- 3 Describe Jewish beliefs about the Messiah. Include different Jewish views in your answer. (7 marks)
- 4 'Pikuach Nefesh is the most important Jewish principle.' Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer. (12 marks)
- 5 Explain why the Mitzvot are important for Jews. (5 marks)
- 6 'Belief in life after death is important for Jews today.' Discuss. (12 marks)



# EDEXCEL GCSE JUDAISM REVISION GUIDE



## SECTION 2: PRACTICES



### 2.1 PUBLIC ACTS OF WORSHIP

#### WHAT IS WORSHIP?

Worship = showing love, respect and devotion to God

Jewish worship often takes place:

- in the synagogue
- at home
- through prayer



#### FEATURES OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

Jewish worship includes:

- prayers
- reading the Torah
- singing
- sermons
- community gathering



#### WHY PUBLIC WORSHIP IS IMPORTANT

Public worship helps Jews:

- worship together
- strengthen community
- learn about faith
- remember God's laws



#### PSALM 116:12-19

This Psalm teaches:

- thanking God
- praising God publicly



#### SYNAGOGUE SERVICES

##### WHY SYNAGOGUES MATTER

The synagogue is:

- A place of worship, learning and community



##### IMPORTANCE FOR JEWS TODAY

Synagogue services:

- bring Jews together
- keep traditions alive
- help spiritual growth



### 2.2 THE TENAKH AND THE TALMUD

#### THE TENAKH

Tenakh = Jewish holy scriptures (Written Law)

It includes:

- Torah
- Prophets
- Writings



#### THE TALMUD

Talmud = Oral Law and rabbinic teachings

It explains:

- how to follow Jewish laws
- how to live Jewish life



#### WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT

The Tenakh and Talmud guide:

- worship
- behaviour
- moral decisions



#### PIRKEI AVOT 2

Teaches:

- importance of studying Torah
- importance of good actions



#### KASHRUT (JEWISH FOOD LAWS)

Kashrut = Jewish dietary laws

##### KOSHER FOODS

Kosher = permitted foods

Examples:

- animals that chew the cud and have split hooves
- fish with fins and scales



##### TREIFAH

Treifah = forbidden foods

Examples:

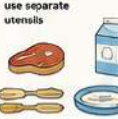
- pork
- shellfish



##### SEPARATION OF MEAT AND DAIRY

Many Jews:

- keep meat and dairy separate
- use separate utensils



#### DIFFERENT JEWISH VIEWS

Orthodox Judaism  
Strictly follows Kashrut

Reform Judaism  
May interpret laws more flexibly

### 2.3 PRAYER AT HOME AND PRIVATE PRAYER

#### DAILY PRAYER

Many Jews pray:  
Three times a day



| Prayer    | Time      |
|-----------|-----------|
| Shacharit | Morning   |
| Mincha    | Afternoon |
| Ma'ariv   | Evening   |

#### WHY PRAYER MATTERS

Prayer helps Jews:

- connect with God
- thank God
- ask for guidance



#### PSALM 55:16-23

Teaches:

- trust in God through prayer



#### DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRAYER

| Type         | Purpose      |
|--------------|--------------|
| Praise       | Worship God  |
| Thanksgiving | Thank God    |
| Petition     | Ask for help |

### 2.4 SHEMA AND AMIDAH

#### THE SHEMA

"Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One."

From: Book of Deuteronomy 6:4



#### IMPORTANCE OF THE SHEMA

The Shema reminds Jews:

- there is one God
- they should love and obey God



#### MEZUZAH

Mezuzah = small case fixed to a doorpost

Contains:

- the Shema prayer

It reminds Jews:

- of God's presence and commandments



#### THE AMIDAH

Amidah = standing prayer

Central prayer in Jewish worship.



#### PURPOSE OF THE AMIDAH

Includes:

- praise
- requests
- thanksgiving



#### WHY THESE PRAYERS MATTER

They help Jews:

- strengthen faith
- remember God daily
- connect with tradition



### 2.5 RITUALS

#### BIRTH RITUALS

##### BRIT MILAH

Brit Milah = circumcision ceremony

Usually takes place:

- 8 days after birth for boys

Shows:

- covenant with God



##### BAR AND BAT MITZVAH

| Ceremony    | Meaning                                   |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Bar Mitzvah | Boy becomes responsible for commandments  |
| Bat Mitzvah | Girl becomes responsible for commandments |

Usually celebrated at:

- age 13 (boys)
- age 12 or 13 (girls)



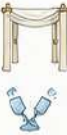
#### MARRIAGE RITUALS

Jewish weddings include:

- chuppah (canopy)
- blessings
- breaking a glass

Marriage symbolises:

- love
- covenant
- commitment



#### MOURNING RITUALS

##### FUNERAL

Shows respect for the dead.

##### SHIVA

Seven days of mourning  
Family stays home while community supports them.

##### AVELUT

Longer mourning period.

##### YAHRTZEIT

Yearly remembrance of a death.



#### DIFFERENT JEWISH VIEWS

Orthodox and Reform Jews:

- may practise rituals differently
- but rituals remain important for identity and tradition



### 2.6 SHABBAT

#### WHAT IS SHABBAT?

Shabbat = Jewish holy day of rest

From: Book of Exodus 31:12-18  
From Friday evening to Saturday evening



#### ORIGINS OF SHABBAT

Is Book of Exodus 31:12-18:  
• God rested on the seventh day



#### HOW SHABBAT IS CELEBRATED

##### AT HOME

Includes:

- candles lit
- prayers said
- special meals eaten



##### IN SYNAGOGUE

Includes:

- worship services
- Torah readings



#### WHY SHABBAT MATTERS

Shabbat helps Jews:

- rest
- worship God
- spend time with family
- remember creation



### 2.7 JEWISH FESTIVALS

#### ROSH HASHANAH

Jewish New Year

Focus:

- reflection
- repentance
- judgement



#### YOM KIPPUR

Day of Atonement  
Most holy day in Judaism.

Jews:

- fast
- pray
- ask forgiveness



#### PESACH (PASSOVER)

Celebrates:  
Exodus from Egypt

Includes:

- Seder meal
- remembering freedom



#### SHAVUOT

Celebrates:  
God giving the Torah at Mount Sinai



#### SUKKOT

Festival remembering:  
Israelites living in shelters in the wilderness

Families may eat in:  
Sukkah = temporary shelter



#### WHY FESTIVALS MATTER

Festivals help Jews:

- remember history
- worship together
- strengthen identity



#### DIFFERENT JEWISH VIEWS

Orthodox Jews  
• often observe festivals strictly

Reform Jews  
• may adapt celebrations

### 2.8 FEATURES OF THE SYNAGOGUE

#### FACING JERUSALEM

Synagogues usually:

Face Jerusalem

Showing connection to the Holy City.



#### IMPORTANT FEATURES

| Feature   | Purpose                         |
|-----------|---------------------------------|
| Ark       | Holds Torah scrolls             |
| Bimah     | Platform for reading Torah      |
| Ner Tamah | Eternal light symbolising God   |
| Menorah   | Seven-branched lampstand        |
| Yad       | Pointer used when reading Torah |

#### SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

##### ORTHODOX SYNAGOGUES

men and women often sit separately



##### REFORM/LIBERAL SYNAGOGUES

mixed seating



#### EXODUS 27:20-21

The eternal lamp reminds Jews:

• God is always present



#### WHY THE SYNAGOGUE IS IMPORTANT

The synagogue is used for:

- worship
- study
- festivals
- community events

### KEY VOCABULARY

| Word    | Meaning                 |
|---------|-------------------------|
| Tenakh  | Jewish scriptures       |
| Talmud  | Oral law                |
| Kashrut | Jewish food laws        |
| Kosher  | Permitted foods         |
| Treifah | Forbidden foods         |
| Shema   | Declaration of faith    |
| Amidah  | Standing prayer         |
| Shabbat | Day of rest             |
| Mezuzah | Prayer case on doorpost |



### EXAM TIPS

#### GOOD ANSWERS SHOULD:

- ✓ Use key Jewish terms
- ✓ Include references to scripture
- ✓ Explain why practices matter today
- ✓ Compare Orthodox and Reform views



#### COMMON EXAM QUESTIONS

1. Explain why Shabbat is important.
2. "Jewish festivals are the most important part of Jewish life." Discuss.
3. Explain the importance of prayer in Judaism.
4. Compare Orthodox and Reform views on food laws.
5. Explain the importance of the synagogue.



### QUICK REVISION SUMMARY

#### WORSHIP

public and private prayer important

#### TENAKH AND TALMUD

guide Jewish life and law

#### KASHRUT

food laws shape daily life

#### SHEMA AND AMIDAH

key Jewish prayers

#### RITUALS

birth, marriage and mourning

#### SHABBAT

holy day of rest and worship

#### FESTIVALS

remember Jewish history and laws

#### SYNAGOGUE

centre of worship and community