

Religious Studies

Advanced GCE

Unit **G589**: Judaism

Mark Scheme for June 2011

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1 Assess the claim that all Jews should make the Land of Israel their home. [35]

AO1

Candidates might approach this question from a variety of perspectives; answers which show depth or breadth of response are equally valid. Candidates might begin with a discussion of the significance of the Land of Israel for Judaism, and its historical context as the 'Promised Land', including eg how G-d described the land to Abraham as being a heritage to his descendants; how, in the era of the prophets, most major prophetic pronouncements referred to the importance of Zion and the ingathering of the exiles.

Some might focus on Diaspora Judaism, including eg how after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, the majority of Jews were scattered, leading to the belief that G-d's special 'presence' (shekinah) in Jerusalem was exiled along with the Jewish people; how Judaism has always looked forward to the eventual restoration of Jews to the Land of Israel, as well as the return of the shekinah, with the arrival of the Messiah. Some might choose to explain how such theological motifs developed in the Diaspora, combined with the rise of modern nationalism (spurred on by antisemitism), formed the basis for the development of the Zionist movement. They might explain the different types of Zionism that resulted, and their aims and impact, as well as Jewish opposition to Zionist philosophy.

Some might focus on ideas of peoplehood and statehood, including, for example, the question raised by modern Zionism as to whether the Jews are a nation or adherents of a religion. Some might discuss how people need a place to live and how 'land', therefore, is integral to Jewish self-understanding. They might discuss how the modern State of Israel is perceived as a safe haven for persecuted Jews. Some might choose to focus on the differences between the concept of the Land of Israel and the present day State of Israel.

AO2

It is likely that candidates will develop their argument on the basis of their AO1 discussion.

A variety of responses may be given, including that there can be no Jewish homeland until the coming of the Messiah, and only a homeland with Torah at its centre can be the fulfilment of biblical prophecy; that it is Torah observance which characterises the religious Jew, and Torah observance is not limited to, or dependent on, living in the Land of Israel; that Jewish nationalism is a betrayal of universalism ie of the hope of a humanity united in the service of G-d, and Jews should concentrate their efforts on bringing the truths of ethical monotheism to the non-Jewish world, rather than going to live in the Land of Israel.

2 'Life after death is not a Jewish concept.' Discuss.? [35]

AO1

Candidates might approach this question from a variety of perspectives; answers which show depth or breadth of response are equally valid. Candidates might begin their discussion by considering the Biblical teaching in relation to concepts of life after death, including eg the soul, retribution, Sheol, etc. They might discuss the further development of eschatological thinking in the Maccabean period and in the Talmud, and the development of interconnected doctrines such as the immortality of the soul, the doctrine of the Messiah, and the resurrection of the dead. They might discuss how these concepts remain central in Orthodox teaching, whether this is expressed as resurrection of the body, the immortality of the soul, or a combination of both.

Candidates might begin their exploration of Reform teachings by discussing the relevant statement of belief in the Philadelphia Platform (1869) which rejects the notion of bodily resurrection, and asserts that belief in immortality refers only to the after-life of the soul.

They might discuss Reform's rejection of Gehinnom and Eden (Hell and Paradise) as ideas not rooted in Judaism. They might discuss more recent thinking which views 'life after death' as a metaphor for continuing repute or influence.

AO2

In considering their argument, candidates might discuss the relevance of teachings about life after death for 21st century Judaism.

They might compare and contrast the ways in which Orthodox and Reform scholars have attempted to address philosophical issues, for example the meaning of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

How far Orthodox and Reform teachings about life after death are taken as complementary or contradictory views is for the candidate to decide.

3 'Neither Orthodox nor Progressive approaches offer a credible response to the sufferings of the Holocaust.' Discuss. [35]

AO1

Candidates might begin by providing an outline summary of the events of the Holocaust. They might discuss the impact that it has had on Jewish theology in the problem of reconciling the existence of evil and suffering with belief in an omnipotent and good G-d.

Candidates are likely to consider the contributions of both Orthodox and Progressive post-Holocaust theologians and the conclusions they reach, eg 'the G-d of Israel remained hidden in order to allow human free will' (Berkovits); 'traditional explanations of evil and suffering do not apply to the Holocaust, it is too enormous a tragedy' (Fackenheim); 'it was because the Jews of Eastern Europe (the main victims) had refused to modernise – their orthodoxy and piety were medieval' (Maybaum); 'G-d died in Auschwitz, the thread uniting G-d and humanity, Heaven and Earth, has been broken' (Rubenstein). Berkovits, Fackenheim, Maybaum and Rubenstein are the figures of post-Holocaust theology cited in the specification, although candidates are free to select the views of other scholars.

AO2

Candidates might discuss to whom, or for whom, these approaches are, or are not, credible.

They might discuss whether the approaches have anything to offer the modern mind seeking a theology which is both intellectually coherent and which corresponds with the facts.

The most important thing is that candidates analyse the ideas and compare them, thereby reaching their own developed and well-argued conclusion.

- 4 **Critically assess the factors contributing to the formation of contemporary Jewish identity.** [35]

AO1

Candidates might approach this question from a variety of perspectives; answers which show depth or breadth of response are equally valid.

Candidates might begin by outlining their understanding of the terminology of the question – ‘contemporary Jewish identity’ – and develop understanding from this.

Candidates might discuss historical factors that have contributed to the formation of contemporary Jewish identity, including eg the Enlightenment, anti-Semitism, the impact of the Holocaust, and the establishment of the State of Israel (including eg the question raised by modern Zionism as to whether the Jews are a nation or adherents of a religion). They might discuss the distinction between ‘secular’ and ‘religious’ Jewish identity. They might discuss the influence of family and community ties, and the influence of the surrounding non-Jewish culture.

Candidates might discuss the ongoing controversy relating to the Law of Return (entitling bona fide Jews to immediate and full citizenship of Israel, should they need a place of refuge), and whether only those Jews who have been born of a Jewish mother, or converted by a recognised Orthodox rabbi, qualify as ‘bona fide’ Jews... etc.

AO2

Building on their AO1 discussion, candidates might explore whether or not the identity of the individual Jew is comprised of many elements, and whether the distinctively Jewish elements constitute the whole.

They might explore whether or not new and particular forms of Jewish identity are emerging.

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