

Religious Studies

Advanced Subsidiary GCE

Unit **G579**: Judaism

Mark Scheme for January 2011

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- 1 (a) **Explain the use of the Torah in daily life and worship.** [25]
A01

Candidates might begin by discussing the meaning of the term Torah. They are likely to explain that Torah is applied most frequently to the Written Torah, the Five Books of Moses, although it is sometimes extended to include the whole Tenakh as divinely revealed instructions and traditions. Candidates might include discussion of the Oral Torah as the elucidation and application of the Written Torah.

Candidates might explain that the Torah is the guide to all aspects of daily living for observant Jews, and they might be able to give examples in support eg the observance of the 613 mitzvot. They might explain that the Torah is the focus of Sabbath worship as well as being used in both public and private prayer. Candidates might include study of the Talmud as an example of using the Torah in daily life.

Candidates might explain that for Progressive Jews only the moral commandments in the Torah are binding, and that ritual laws have sometimes been abandoned in modern circumstances. They might be able to give examples of this.

- (b) **'The only valid interpretation of Judaism is one which accepts that the Torah was dictated by G-d to Moses.'** Discuss. [10]
A02

Some candidates might agree with the statement, perhaps arguing that if the Torah contains a human element then there is nothing eternal about it, and they might discuss the implications of this for the binding character of the mitzvot.

Others might argue from the work of Biblical scholars who maintain that the Torah is a composite work, and they might explore the implications of this for Jewish belief and practice. It is important that candidates offer reasoned argument to their conclusion.

- 2 (a) **Explain the significance of the 'chosen people' concept for Judaism.** [25]
A01

Candidates are likely to explain the meaning of the phrase 'chosen people' as referring to the Jews' special and unique relationship with G-d. They might go on to discuss the foundation of the concept and G-d's covenantal relationship with the Jewish people. They might explain that the term 'chosen people' refers to the Jewish community for all time, ie not merely to individuals present at Sinai.

Some candidates might explore the relationship between the role of the Jews as a 'chosen people' and the concept of a royal priesthood. They might argue that the standards set for Jews are more demanding than for other nations, and perhaps discuss what is expected of the Jews.

Some might explain that the phrase 'chosen people' is often understood in an elitist sense. Candidates could explain that the choice of the Jewish people is G-d's act alone, ie the choice is not made because of any inherent merit in the Jewish people.

- (b) **'The 'chosen people' concept is difficult to reconcile with the idea of G-d's justice.'** Discuss. [10]

A02

Some candidates might agree with the statement, perhaps arguing that the phrase 'chosen people' suggests divine favouritism. They might, for example, wish to discuss why the descendants of those present at Sinai should be singled out for privilege merely because they are born Jews, and not through any merit of their own.

Others might argue that the covenant relationship between G-d and the Jews is fundamental to a right understanding of the 'chosen people' concept. They might argue that it is precisely because G-d chose the Jews, and they chose G-d, that the idea of the One G-d of righteousness has become known throughout the world. Some might argue that the implication that the Jews are G-d's favourites is at odds with the universalistic doctrine of Judaism that G-d is the Father of all humanity.

- 3 (a) **Explain the purpose of the 613 mitzvot.** [25]

A01

Candidates might begin their response by explaining that in Judaism a mitzvah is a particular commandment relating to individual or communal conduct or ritual. They might explain that the rabbis counted 613 mitzvot in the Torah, of which 248 are positive and 365 negative. They are likely to explain that the mitzvot cover every area of human behaviour, and perhaps be able to give examples.

Candidates might explain that although the Torah does not give specific reasons for many of the mitzvot, it nevertheless provides Jews with an overall reason for obeying them ie the people are called to be holy as G-d is holy. They might discuss how the life of holiness is illustrated in the Torah by mitzvot concerned with the sanctity of the person, the sanctity of time, and the sanctity of place – and perhaps be able to give examples in support.

They might discuss how the mitzvot are both a gift as well as an obligation.

- (b) **'The mitzvot are a blessing not a burden.'** Discuss. [10]

A02

The statement can be supported or contested in a fairly equal way. Some candidates might argue that the mitzvot are a blessing because they enable Jews to know how G-d wishes them to behave, and provide an opportunity of doing G-d's will.

Others might argue that the mitzvot are anything but a blessing; they take away freedom of choice and encourage Jews, who cannot convincingly answer the question why they should keep eg the dietary laws, to drift away from Judaism.

- 4 (a) **Explain the role of men and women within the Jewish family.** [25]
A01

Candidates might begin by discussing the importance of home and family as the basic unit of Jewish ritual and the core of Jewish society. They might explain that Orthodoxy has traditionally regarded the father as head of the household, and they might discuss reasons for this including eg the patriarchal nature of Biblical society. They might discuss the father's responsibilities towards his family including that of providing and caring for his wife and children, and fulfilling his religious responsibilities

Candidates might explain that Orthodoxy has traditionally maintained the woman's G-d-given role in the home as wife, mother and homemaker, and they might discuss some of her religious responsibilities including her dominant role in the upbringing and education of the children. They might explain that women must keep all of the negative mitzvot but are exempt from the positive mitzvot which are bound to specific times, and they might discuss reasons for this. They might discuss women's ritual roles within the home, eg the woman welcoming the Sabbath.

Candidates might explain that Progressive Judaism takes a different stance on these matters, and they might discuss the reasons for this.

- (b) **'Jewish tradition discriminates against women.'** Discuss. [10]
A02

Candidates might argue either way. Some might disagree, arguing that differences in practice between men and women simply reflect a difference in role and not inferiority. Some might argue that modern society should not dictate the terms for Jewish living; rather, contemporary trends must always be examined carefully in the light of halakhic principles.

Others might argue that Jewish tradition does discriminate against women, not least eg by their exclusion from public ritual. They might argue that Jewish women should not feel themselves constrained by traditions which earlier generations of rabbis imposed upon the people, and for reasons which no longer have relevance.

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