



# Religious Studies

**GCE AS G579 JUDAISM**

**Religious Studies**

Teacher Support Booklet

Version 1 September 2012



**The purpose of this teacher support booklet is to provide clarity of scope for unit content in G579: AS Judaism. It is hoped that the guide will be of particular assistance to teachers who are new to the specification. The guide itself is not exhaustive of content and teachers should refer to the specification as the primary document.**

**At the end of each section a list of useful books is given, and teachers are directed to chapters of relevance. Clearly, schools will have access to other resources and many teachers will have developed their own teaching materials. However, all relevant responses to questions will be credited in the examination.**

## Importance of Scripture

The aim is to provide candidates with some understanding of the nature and functions of the writings comprising the Tenakh and Talmud. Candidates should understand why the Pentateuch is referred to as Torah, and be aware of the use of the word 'Torah' in its broader senses. They should understand the relationship between the Written and Oral Torah, and the continuing importance of both for Jewish belief and life today. With regard to the making of the Talmuds, candidates should understand why Judah the Prince undertook the codification of mishnaic halakhah. They should be aware of the leading scholars involved in producing the two Gemaras, and the academies in which they worked. They should have some knowledge of the contents of the Mishnah, and be able to explain how the Gemaras differ in style and content. They should be aware of the continuing interpretation of Jewish Law in codes and responsa following the close of the Talmudic period in the 6th century CE.

### Reading:

Close, Brian E., *Judaism: A Student's Approach* (chapters 1-4). ISBN 0-340-54693-X

Epstein, Isidore, *Judaism* (chapters 3,12,13). ISBN 0-14-020440-7

Hoffman, C.M., *Teach Yourself Judaism* (chapters 2,3). ISBN 978-0-340-96881-9

Unterman, Alan, *The Jews: their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (chapter 7). ISBN 1-898723-41-9

## Beliefs

Candidates should be familiar with two central affirmations of Judaism: ethical monotheism, and the belief that G-d has chosen the Jews out of all peoples of the world to be the recipients of His revelation. Candidates should show awareness of early monotheistic tendencies in the ancient Near East and be able to contrast these with the Israelite awareness of G-d. They should understand the beginnings of ethical monotheism in Abram's providential deliverance from Ur, and the Abrahamic covenant. They should understand the importance of the Exodus from Egypt for Israel's recognition of G-d as the only true god, and the distinctive features of Israelite religion appearing with Moses. They should understand how the concept of covenant is fundamental to the 'chosen people' idea. They should understand the nature of a monotheistic G-d, and be able to support their discussion with reference to G-d's activity in the world. They should understand how Judaism emphasises conduct rather than belief, although there are certain basic convictions that most Jews share. They should be able to discuss the implications of ethical monotheism and the 'chosen people' idea for Jews today.

### Reading:

Ahluwalia, Libby, *Foundation for the Study of Religion* (chapter 8). ISBN 0-340-79959-5

Anderson, Bernhard, *The Living World of the Old Testament* (chapters 1,3). ISBN 0-582-48598-3

Epstein, Isidore, *Judaism* (chapters 1,2). ISBN 0-14-020440-7

Jacobs, Louis, *A Jewish Theology* (chapter 19). ISBN 0-874-41226-9



## Practices

Candidates should understand that Law is central to life within the Jewish community as a means of expressing the existing covenant relationship between G-d and His chosen people. They should be aware that the Hebrew word Torah means 'instruction', and that every religious practice is a means of instruction in the sense of learning by doing. They should understand that the 613 mitzvot cover every area of human life and have their origins in the Written Torah, and that the Halakhah shows how they should be applied in daily living. They should understand that if situations arose for which the Law did not seem to provide, then the Law was interpreted to cover the particular difficulty. They should be aware of the basic laws of kashrut, and understand the reasons why many Progressive Jews no longer count some laws as significant.

### Reading:

Donin, Hayim Halevy, *To Be a Jew* (chapters 2,3,4,6).

ISBN 0-465-08624-1

Hoffman, C.M., *Teach Yourself Judaism* (chapter 6).

Jacobs, Louis, *A Jewish Theology* (chapter 15).

Fishman, Isidore, *Introduction to Judaism* (chapters 14,15,19).

ISBN 0-85303-091-X

## Worship

Candidates should understand the close relationship between home and synagogue as institutions for worship. They should understand the reasons for the traditional pattern of praying three times a day, and why prayer at the synagogue is encouraged. They should be aware that the siddur contains prayers for every eventuality, and understand the significance of kippah, tzitzit and tefillin as aids to worship. They should be aware that the liturgy focuses on the Shema and the Amidah and understand the importance of the two prayers. They should understand the variations in practice between Orthodox and Progressive synagogues.

Candidates should understand the significance of holy days in Judaism, and how modern attitudes towards the festivals vary considerably. With regard to Tishah B'av, candidates should understand why the fast has become identified with calamities in Jewish history other than the destruction of the Temple.

Candidates should be able to explain the different roles given to men and women in traditional religious Jewish families. They should be able to debate whether Orthodoxy denies women equality with men. They should understand why traditional Judaism affirms the laws of family purity as the key to marital happiness. They should be aware of differing attitudes to the laws within Progressive groups.

### Reading:

Cohn-Sherbok, Dan, *Judaism* (chapter 4). ISBN 0-415-21164-6

Donin, Hayim Halevy, *To Be a Jew* (chapters 5, 7-15).

Hoffman, C.M., *Teach Yourself Judaism* (chapters 9-15).

Solomon, Norman, *Judaism: A Very Short Introduction* (chapter 8). ISBN 978-0-19-285390-5

Steinsaltz, Adin, *The Essential Talmud* (chapter 20). ISBN 978-1-59264-298-4

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