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# **GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME**

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**SUMMER 2023**

**A LEVEL  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 1  
OPTION C: A STUDY OF JUDAISM  
A120UC0-1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2023 examination. It was finalised after detailed discussion at examiners' conferences by all the examiners involved in the assessment. The conference was held shortly after the paper was taken so that reference could be made to the full range of candidates' responses, with photocopied scripts forming the basis of discussion. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners.

It is hoped that this information will be of assistance to centres but it is recognised at the same time that, without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation.

WJEC regrets that it cannot enter into any discussion or correspondence about this marking scheme.

## **Marking guidance for examiners, please apply carefully and consistently:**

### **Positive marking**

It should be remembered that candidates are writing under examination conditions and credit should be given for what the candidate writes, rather than adopting the approach of penalising him/her for any omissions. It should be possible for a very good response to achieve full marks and a very poor one to achieve zero marks. Marks should not be deducted for a less than perfect answer if it satisfies the criteria of the mark scheme.

Exemplars in the mark scheme are only meant as helpful guides. Therefore, any other acceptable or suitable answers should be credited even though they are not actually stated in the mark scheme.

Two main phrases are deliberately placed throughout each mark scheme to remind examiners of this philosophy. They are:

- “Candidates could include some or all of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.”
- “This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.”

### **Rules for Marking**

1. Differentiation will be achieved on the basis of candidates' response.
2. No mark scheme can ever anticipate or include every possible detail or interpretation; examiners should use their professional judgement to decide whether a candidate's particular response answers the question in relation to the particular assessment objective.
3. Candidates will often express their ideas in language different from that given in any mark scheme or outline. Positive marking therefore, on the part of examiners, will recognise and credit correct statements of ideas, valid points and reasoned arguments irrespective of the language employed.

### **Banded mark schemes**

Banded mark schemes are divided so that each band has a relevant descriptor. The descriptor provides a description of the performance level for that band. Each band contains marks. Examiners should first read and annotate a candidate's answer to pick out the evidence that is being assessed in that question. Once the annotation is complete, the mark scheme can be applied. This is done as a two-stage process.

#### **Banded mark schemes stage 1 – deciding on the band**

When deciding on a band, the answer should be viewed holistically. Beginning at the lowest band, examiners should look at the candidate's answer and check whether it matches the descriptor for that band. Examiners should look at the descriptor for that band and see if it matches the qualities shown in the candidate's answer. If the descriptor at the lowest band is satisfied, examiners should move up to the next band and repeat this process for each band until the descriptor matches the answer.

If an answer covers different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band and then the candidate's response should be used to decide on the mark within the band. For instance if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content. Examiners should not seek to mark candidates down as a result of small omissions in minor areas of an answer.

### **Banded mark schemes stage 2 – deciding on the mark**

Once the band has been decided, examiners can then assign a mark. During standardising (at the Examiners' marking conference), detailed advice from the Principal Examiner on the qualities of each mark band will be given. Examiners will then receive examples of answers in each mark band that have been awarded a mark by the Principal Examiner. Examiners should mark the examples and compare their marks with those of the Principal Examiner.

When marking, examiners can use these examples to decide whether a candidate's response is of a superior, inferior or comparable standard to the example. Examiners are reminded of the need to revisit the answer as they apply the mark scheme in order to confirm that the band and the mark allocated is appropriate to the response provided. Indicative content is also provided for banded mark schemes. Indicative content is not exhaustive, and any other valid points must be credited. In order to reach the highest bands of the mark scheme a learner need not cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content, but must meet the requirements of the highest mark band.

### **Awarding no marks to a response**

Where a response is not creditworthy, that is it contains nothing of any relevance to the question, or where no response has been provided, no marks should be awarded.

## A Level Generic Band Descriptors

<p><b>Band</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions</b>    20 marks</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i></li> <li>- <i>influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</i></li> <li>- <i>cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</i></li> <li>- <i>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i></li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>5</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>17-20 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• An extensive and relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates extensive depth and/or breadth. Excellent use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Insightful connections are made between the various approaches studied.</li> <li>• An extensive range of views of scholars/schools of thought used accurately and effectively.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>13-16 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A detailed, relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Purposeful connections are made between the various approaches studied.</li> <li>• A range of scholarly views/schools of thought used largely accurately and effectively.</li> <li>• Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>9-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A satisfactory response, which generally answers the main demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth in some areas. Satisfactory use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Sensible connections made between the various approaches studied.</li> <li>• A basic range of scholarly views/schools of thought used.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>5-8 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Basic level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A basic response, addressing some of the demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates limited depth and/or breadth, including limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Some accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Makes some basic connections between the various approaches studied.</li> <li>• A limited range of scholarly views/schools of thought used.</li> <li>• Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1-4 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Low level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A very limited response, with little attempt to address the question.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates very limited depth and/or breadth. Very limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Little or no reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Little or no use of scholarly views/schools of thought.</li> <li>• Very few or no connections made between the various approaches studied.</li> <li>• Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary.</li> </ul> <p><b>N.B. A maximum of 2 marks should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>0</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant information.</li> </ul>

<b>Band</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions</b> 30 marks  <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i></p>
<b>5</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>25-30 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set.</li> <li>• Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• The views of scholars/schools of thought are used extensively, appropriately and in context.</li> <li>• Confident and perceptive analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>19-24 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed.</li> <li>• The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Views of scholars/schools of thought are used appropriately and in context.</li> <li>• Purposeful analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied.</li> <li>• Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>13-18 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed.</li> <li>• Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Views of scholars/schools of thought are generally used appropriately and in context.</li> <li>• Sensible analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed.</li> <li>• A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Basic use of the views of scholars/schools of thought appropriately and in context.</li> <li>• Makes some analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied.</li> <li>• Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1-6 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• An attempt has been made to identify and address the issues raised by the question set.</li> <li>• Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence.</li> <li>• Little or no use of the views of scholars/schools of thought.</li> <li>• Limited analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied.</li> <li>• Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary.</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant analysis or evaluation.</li> </ul>

**GCE A LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES – COMPONENT 1 OPTION C**

**A STUDY OF JUDAISM**

**SUMMER 2023 MARK SCHEME**

To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

**Section A**

Either,

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 (a) **Examine attitudes found in the Pittsburgh Platform towards liberationist thought (concern for the poor) and Tikkun Olam (repair of the world).** [AO1 20]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- The Pittsburgh Platform provided an authoritative statement that established the principles of Reform Judaism. Its role in relation to liberationist thought and Tikkun Olam is set out quite clearly in the final clause of the initial Pittsburgh Platform: ‘... we deem it our duty to participate in the great task of modern times, to solve, on the basis of justice and righteousness, the problems presented by the contrasts and evils of the present organisation of society.’
- The Pittsburgh Platform of 1999 re-emphasised social action and social justice as a central focus of Reform Judaism: ‘We bring Torah into the world when we strive to fulfil the highest ethical mandates in our relationships with others and with all of God’s creation. Partners with God in Tikkun Olam, repairing the world, we are called to help bring nearer the messianic age.’
- Reform Jews believe that they have been chosen to spread the monotheistic truth and morality over all the earth, and to be an example to others.
- The legacy of the Pittsburgh Platform statements is to be exemplified through reference to liberationist thought and Tikkun Olam. Liberationist thought describes the movement to address the problems of poverty and injustice in the world, and concern for the poor within liberationist thought lies within the broader category of Tikkun Olam.
- Tikkun Olam has its roots in classical rabbinic literature, however since the 1950s it has come to denote the concept of repairing the world through human actions and the pursuit of social justice. Social action is the means by which ethical thoughts are transformed into deeds and campaigns. The Jewish mission is to use the resources they believe God has provided in order to combat the injustices that are evident in the world, and ultimately, to bring the world closer to perfection.
- Examples of such actions can be seen within the Jewish concept of tzedakah. When a Jewish person carries out a charitable act, they are undertaking one of the most basic requirements of the mitzvot: that of providing for those who are unable to provide for themselves. As the Pittsburgh Platform (1999) states: ‘We are obligated to pursue *tzedek*, justice and righteousness, and to narrow the gap between the affluent and the poor ... In so doing, we reaffirm social action and social justice as a central prophetic focus of traditional Reform Jewish belief and practice’.

- An example of concern for the poor within Reform Judaism might include reference to the giving of money to charity on a regular basis through tithing. This is seen as the means by which a person can redress the balance between those who are fortunate and those who are not.
- Another way in which liberationist thought and Tikkun Olam can be enacted is through gemilut hasadim: the giving of one's time and effort through good deeds. This is an important aspect as it is something that anyone can do, regardless of one's personal financial situation. It is also important as it is to be done without expecting anything in return.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

**(b) 'No Jewish response to pluralism has been effective.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 30]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Candidates may refer to either 'pluralism' or 'religious pluralism' in their response.
- It could be argued that religious pluralism appears initially to present an outlook that is in contradiction to the traditional standpoint of the Jewish faith based upon the premise that it is Judaism alone that contains God's exclusive revelation to humanity. However, some have pointed out that the Torah actually begins with God creating a covenant first with Adam, and then with Noah, and that these covenants had both been universal in nature. This interpretation could therefore be used as evidence to suggest that Judaism does not hold the singular position in God's relationship with humanity.
- However, not all Jewish denominations have denied the existence of religious pluralism outright and Reform Judaism stands out in particular as being totally accepting of the validity of other religions as is evident within clause 1 of the Pittsburgh Platform which is unequivocal on this matter. It could therefore reasonably be argued that because Reform Judaism accepts the validity of other world faiths, it, amongst other Jewish groups, presents us with the best opportunity of assessing the effectiveness or otherwise of responses to pluralism.
- Some would begin by perceiving that Reform Jews have been effective in their responses to pluralism. For example, the very fact that Reform Jews accept that the Torah is simply one record amongst others leads them to accept that the sacred writings of other faiths should all be held in the same regard. Furthermore, Reform Jewish attitudes to pluralism have also been effective in bringing about a revision of the doctrine of the Jews as the chosen people of God. Instead of a 'nation', Reform Jews now regard themselves as a 'religious community.'
- It could also be claimed that it is principally Reform Judaism that has been effective in the sphere of interfaith dialogue. Evidence for this assertion can be found in the Pittsburgh Platform of 1999 which advocates that Reform Jews 'seek dialogue and joint action with people of other faiths in the hope that together we can bring peace, freedom and justice to our world.' However, perhaps the effectiveness of this declaration can only fully be judged by the actions that have emerged from it.
- It can certainly be acknowledged that the Reform Jewish community has become involved with those of the Christian faith for example, through the work of the International Council of Christians and Jews.
- Some might say that pluralism has been effective in cases where working to ensure social action in partnership with another faith has brought about discernible and positive results. However, it is also evident that attitudes are changing towards pluralism within the Orthodox tradition. For example, 30 Orthodox rabbis recently signed a public statement that recognises the need for a common mission between Jews and Christians to perfect the world under the sovereignty of God. This suggests that there is a spiritual value to pluralism which transcends religious differences. Although we all come from Adam, the Mishnah proposes that human difference testifies to God's glory. If so, then it could be argued that Jews should celebrate the human diversity that is to be found within different religious traditions.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

Or,

0 2

(a) Examine two key theological responses to the Holocaust. [AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

Responses are to be considered from two of the following:

- Richard Rubenstein (“death of God”) – It is impossible to believe in the God of the Abrahamic covenant after the events of the Holocaust. God had ‘died’ in creating the world through the process of tzimtzum, by retracting himself into a void to make space for existence. God is the Ultimate Nothing. Yet Rubenstein is not calling for atheism. Jews can still find spiritual vitality through traditional Jewish observances such as the symbolic nature of sacrifice and worship. He believes that the reason for continuing in this way is to remind people of moral failure; requires them to acknowledge guilt; and ultimately leads them to seek forgiveness.
- Elie Wiesel (“Trial of God”) – Wiesel’s theology has been described as a theology of protest. His first three novels, ‘Night’, ‘Dawn’, and ‘The Accident’ portray a narrative explanation of the Shoah. The erosion of his faith is evident in his novels through which he depicts a Godless world. Nevertheless, his opinion changes and there appears to be a call for a new start in which there is no longer anger towards God. God is put on trial and found to be guilty, and yet Wiesel doesn’t turn to atheism. Wiesel’s approach carries with it the strength of him having experienced the Holocaust first-hand.
- Ignaz Maybaum (“suffering servant” & “vicarious atonement”) – The suffering of the six million Jews in the Holocaust was the suffering of God’s faithful servant for the sake of humanity and the Holocaust was one of three major disasters (churban): the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome, and the destruction brought by the Holocaust. The survivors of the third churban, the Remnant, are compared to the redeemed at the Red Sea. There is hope for the future, with an opportunity for change and the prospect of becoming better Jews.
- Eliezer Berkovitz (“the hiding of the divine face” & free will) – He addresses the problem of God’s absence from the faithful during the Holocaust by referring to Isaiah 45:15. God is absent due to the need for people to be able to develop as moral beings. This particular justification of evil is known as the free will defence. Berkovitz appeals to the Book of Job as an example of someone who suffers great injustice, and yet who continues to believe in the providence of God. He believes that the very fact that Jews have continued to survive despite great suffering bears witness to the fact that God is present although hidden.
- Emil Fackenheim (614<sup>th</sup> commandment) - He argues that God was present in the death camps, and that out of the ashes of Auschwitz was issued the 614<sup>th</sup> commandment: ‘Jews are forbidden to hand Hitler posthumous victories.’ They are commanded to survive as Jews; to remember the victims of the Holocaust; forbidden to despair of man and his world. He rejected the notion that the Holocaust was a punishment for sin and urges the Jewish people to continue to believe despite the magnitude of the events of the Holocaust.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

**(b) 'No theological response to the Holocaust is legitimate.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 30]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- It could be argued that since the traditional understanding of suffering within Judaism is that it is a form of retribution, some might disagree with the statement in believing the tribulation of the Holocaust to be an expected outcome following disobedience to God.
- However, consideration could be given to the fact that the enormity and uniqueness of the Holocaust brings with it a completely different set of challenges: the classical biblical explanation of failing to keep the terms of the Mosaic covenant, and that God sent this punishment because of the sins of the people is impossible to accept in light of the death of six million innocent Jews.
- Responses from specific Holocaust theologians may be discussed in order to oppose the statement. Berkovitz, for instance, argued that Jews have a right to reason, and even wrestle with God rather than accept the horror of the Holocaust without question. Evidence from the Torah could be offered as a means of providing justification for this approach, for example when Abraham wrestled with God over the fate of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; and when Job struggled with God over the misfortunes that had befallen him.
- Furthermore, Berkovitz aims to address the problem of God's perceived absence from the Jews during the Holocaust by reference to biblical tradition when he talks of 'the hiding of the face' (Isaiah 45:15). Rabbinic tradition maintains that God hiding his face is not due to callousness, rather it is due to the need for God to give space in order for people to be able to develop as moral beings.
- Another theologian whose theodicy could be used in order to argue for the legitimacy of responding to the Holocaust is Wiesel. Furthermore, his response carries with it the strength that he actually experienced the Holocaust first-hand which gave him an insight, it could be argued, which is more developed than those of other Holocaust theologians who did not. Wiesel's response takes the form of protest: great anger is expressed about God; God is put on trial and declared to be guilty, thus suggesting that protest is a legitimate response to the Holocaust.
- Nevertheless, the responses of such theologians are not without criticism; furthermore, their lack of agreement regarding the reason for the Holocaust could be used to argue in favour of the statement.
- Some might argue that a response to such a dreadful occurrence is imperative no matter how weak. Also, if Holocaust theology provides hope for the future than its legitimacy is enhanced.
- Others may acknowledge that any response to such a dreadful scenario can never be adequate enough, or, 'legitimate'.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

## Section B

Either,

0 3

(a) Examine Jewish beliefs about humanity.

[AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Genesis 1:27 expresses Judaism's understanding that humanity and its relationship with God is based upon the belief that people were created for a special purpose. Humans have been given the ability to use their intellect and to be able to perceive what God wants them to do in the world. Jews believe that they have a special role to play within humanity, and that is to live lives which are holy and moral.
- The belief that life is a divine gift is evident in the notion of nefesh. Judaism teaches that body and soul are separate yet co-exist in human life. God has given humans a body in order to do God's sacred work, and the body needs to be cared for properly in order for this to happen effectively. Examples from Jewish law can be used to demonstrate the holiness of human life: for example, mitzvot concerning what to wear, what to eat, how to conduct sexual relationships. Nefesh represents the consciousness within us that is responsible for the safety and survival of the body.
- Pikuach Nefesh is a core Jewish principle which has its basis in Leviticus 19:16: 'Do not do anything that endangers your neighbour's life.' As all life comes from God it is considered to be the gift of God, and to do anything which might take away or shorten life is looked upon as murder. Indeed, Pikuach Nefesh overrides all other religious teachings if the need to save life arises. This directive can be found in the Talmud, with reference to Leviticus 18:5. Furthermore, the Talmud allows for the breaking of the laws of the Sabbath in order to save the life of another person.
- According to rabbinic tradition each individual is created with two impulses: yetzer hara (evil inclination) and yetzer hatov (good inclination). Jews believe that each person has been given free will and has a personal choice in which impulse to follow.
- Yetzer hatov influences a person to live according to the mitzvot in order to maintain the covenant relationship with God. It has been described as the conscience; the inner voice that guides an individual into making the right decision when faced with temptation. It is significant that when a boy celebrates his bar mitzvah at the age of thirteen, he is at the age at which it is considered that he knows the difference between right and wrong and can take responsibility for his own moral actions.
- The Talmud does not represent yetzer hara as essentially a bad thing. It was created by God and therefore must have a positive dimension. This can be exemplified with reference to the fact that without some desires arising out of personal need a person might never aspire to marry, buy a house, gain success in business. However, without the balancing force of yetzer hatov certain desires might be fulfilled in immoral ways. The Talmud points out that there is nothing wrong with sexual desire, but if it leads to committing rape or adultery, for example, then it is wicked.
- Nevertheless, there is an opportunity for repentance and a way in which a person who has transgressed can be brought back into the right relationship with God. Atonement allows Jews to begin again with the right attitude and actions.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

**(b) 'The Shema is the most precise guide to Jewish belief and practice.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 30]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- It could be argued that by its very nature the Shema reinforces the covenant relationship on a daily basis by reminding Jews of their responsibility to obey God by upholding the laws which God has given to them; however, on its own, it doesn't provide a precise guide to Jewish practice.
- Perhaps it is the Torah which offers a better guide due to the fact that it contains the principles which guide Jewish practice, with the Ten Commandments serving as the central rules that serve as a foundation for the remaining 603 remaining mitzvot.
- There are also other sources of information within the Jewish religion which, it could be said, offer more detailed guidance to belief and practice. For example, the religious practices of Judaism have evolved over the centuries, and it is the Oral Torah that has been the basis upon which the development has taken place. Rabbinic commentary and interpretation have followed, providing fuller explanations as to how to adhere to the commandments.
- Notwithstanding, the Shema *does* contain a number of mitzvot that Jews are required to keep as the words of the prayer are taken literally in the use of the tefillin, mezuzah, tallit and tzitzit which are all items which act as aids to faith and reminders of God's commandments. However, even in this case, the Shema is not precise about what particular form each of these must take, and current Jewish practice has evolved over many thousands of years of rabbinic interpretation.
- The Shema is important within all branches of the Jewish faith, and yet its content is not always followed in the same precise way across all groups. Nevertheless, the Shema unquestionably plays an integral and important part within the Jewish faith. Wherever Jews have found themselves in the world, it has been the Shema which has united them and which has been a constant reminder of God's love for them, and their commitment to God in return. However, rather than acting as a guide to Jewish practice, it is perhaps better seen as having been developed for the purpose of summing up the very essence of Jewish belief: that there is One God who demands total obedience from the people.
- The Shema is certainly precise in that it focuses on the essentials of Jewish belief, but its precision in directing and guiding followers of Judaism in belief and practice can be found in not what it contains but in what it points one to and provides access to: that is, the wider understanding and application of the Torah. In this understanding it is certainly a precise guide to Jewish belief and practice.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

Or,

0 4

(a) Explain the significance of the rituals that take place at Yom Kippur.

[AO1 20]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- The day before Yom Kippur is a time of preparation when many Jewish families give donations to charity as this is a time of the year when concern for the poor is emphasised. It occurs in place of the ceremony of the scapegoat at the time of the Temple when a goat was driven out of Jerusalem after the sins of the people had been symbolically transferred to it leaving a clean slate for the New Year.
- There is a 25-hour fast which has been interpreted in a number of ways. For example, the discomfort that one feels during the fast atones for every sin committed that hasn't been atoned for in another way. However, it could be that the fast takes a person's mind off physical needs so that they are able to concentrate on spiritual matters. Fasting also shows sincerity in asking for forgiveness. It also encourages self-discipline which is much needed at the New Year when thinking about resolutions that need to be kept.
- Many Jews do not wear leather shoes at this time as this is a symbol of luxury. The men might wear a white garment called a kittel which symbolises purity and repentance in reference to Isaiah 1:18, 'Even if your sins will be as red as scarlet, they will become white as snow.' Women will wear white clothes and any gold jewellery will be removed.
- Kol Nidrei is the first of five services that are held at the synagogue on this day. It is a declaration that all religious vows that will be uttered in the coming year are to be declared null and void. This has its background in history when many Jews had been forced to live outwardly as Christians by swearing vows to be faithful to the church. Nowadays it acts as an acknowledgement that a person can't always keep their promises to God. It also acts as a reminder that there have been many times in Jewish history when Jews have taken great risks by living as Jews. The prayers act as a review of Jewish history and the hope for the messianic future.
- One of the additional services on this day is Musaf which aims to release people from feeling guilty for the past so that they can feel free to start again by focusing on the ritual involving the scapegoat.
- The afternoon service includes the reading of the Book of Jonah with its powerful theme of repentance.
- The day's worship concludes with Neilah, 'the closing of the gates'. It is unique to Yom Kippur and is the final service before the decrees made by God on Rosh Hashanah are sealed. The doors of the Ark, symbolising the gates of heaven, remain open. At the end of the Neilah, each person makes three declarations of faith before the gates are finally shut.
- When nightfall comes there is a single blast on the shofar announcing the end of the fast. At home, the havdalah ceremony is performed and the fast is broken.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

- (b) **‘Regular acknowledgement of sins and penitence is not an admission of failure in spiritual development.’**

**Evaluate this view with reference to Judaism.**

**[AO2 30]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- It could be considered that acknowledgement of sins and penitence reflects a need that can be found in human life in general, and that it is good to have the opportunity to reflect upon one’s misdeeds; to put things right; to wipe the slate clean; to start again. Why should this be any different for followers of the Jewish faith?
- Attention could be drawn to the fact that the festivals of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur make time on a regular yearly basis for Jews to reflect specifically upon their deeds of the past year, and to be awarded the opportunity to acknowledge their sins and to seek penitence.
- Furthermore, the liturgy in preparation for High Holy Days is also designed specifically in order to provide the means by which a Jew’s spiritual awareness can be raised through self-examination. This surely acknowledges that the need for regular opportunities to admit personal sin, and to undertake repentance does not constitute an admission of failure.
- The focus on sins and penitence could also serve another purpose which is that of bringing a person closer to God in the quest for tikkun olam. Hasidic Jews, for example, would agree with the statement as they believe that it is a good habit to cultivate in order to maintain an attachment to God so that God is at the forefront of their minds in whatever task they are undertaking. For Hasidic Jews, it would be the *lack* of an expression of regret that would be considered a failure in spiritual development.
- There might be a consideration of what is meant by the term ‘regular’. For example, it might well be regarded as meaningless if there was never any true intention to pay anything other than lip service to the acknowledgement of sin. And if penitence were not truly sought after then that indeed might be considered to be a failure in spiritual development.
- Spiritual development can take many forms, and it could be argued that regular acknowledgement of sins and penitence within Judaism is not meant to focus ultimately on failure. Rather, such practices develop humility within a follower of Judaism that enables the greater picture of the maintenance of the Jewish covenant relationship with God to be recognised and celebrated.
- Indeed, regular acknowledgement of sins and penitence could be argued to be a clear and positive sign that highlights and evidences spiritual development.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

Or,

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- (a) **Compare the views of Bleich and Tendler in response to the ethical debate within Judaism about embryo research.** [AO1 20]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

#### **Bleich**

- Bleich is generally opposed to the destruction of pre-embryos and their use in stem-cell research due to his belief that such a course of action is tantamount to killing the embryo. His standpoint is based upon his belief that ensoulment happens at the moment of conception, and therefore to destroy an embryo is killing.
- He is also opposed to the use of stem cells which have been sourced from aborted fetuses explaining that if government funding were made available for such a practice, then it might put pressure on some women who were wavering over whether or not to have an abortion to go ahead with the procedure in the hope that she could be helping humanity. He therefore recommended against foetal tissue research for this reason.
- However, Bleich does not rule out the process entirely as he considers the use of embryos created via parthenogenesis to be acceptable. Such embryos are not able to survive, even if returned to the womb, and because they are not viable from the moment of inception, their destruction does not constitute the destruction of a foetus or of a potential human.
- Bleich is also not opposed to the use of embryos, fertilised in vitro, that are non-viable due to abnormalities which have become apparent. Such embryos are routinely discarded as it is highly unlikely that they would survive if transferred to a woman's uterus. Scientists have shown that extracted cells from non-viable embryos have developed, and thus stem cells can be grown in a laboratory.

#### **Tendler**

- Tendler calls stem-cell research 'the hope of mankind,' and argues strongly in favour of the use of pre-embryos for stem-cell research. His standpoint is based upon the belief that the soul doesn't enter the embryo at conception, but only after forty days have passed, and for this reason he doesn't consider the destruction of an embryo as homicide.
- Tendler makes a strong case for stem-cell research and therapy based upon the Jewish obligation to save life wherever possible (Pikuach Nefesh). Furthermore, he rules out concerns about human cloning by claiming that those on the leading edge of stem-cell research know that the greater contribution to human welfare will come from replacement of damaged cells and organs by fresh stem cell products, and not from cloning.
- Although Tendler accepts that an important part of Jewish law consists of what is known as 'building a fence around the law' in order to keep people as far away from sinning as possible, he sums up the issue of protective enactment by reference to the Judeo-biblical legislative tradition which states that a fence that causes pain and suffering is to be dismantled. Even biblical law is superseded by the duty to save lives. He is strongly of the belief that mastery of nature for the benefit of those suffering from vital organ failure is an obligation; and in his opinion, human embryonic stem-research holds that promise.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

**(b) 'Pikuach nefesh is totally compatible with embryo research.'**

**Evaluate this view with reference to Judaism.**

**[AO2 30]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Pikuach nefesh could be considered to be totally compatible with embryo research in that it represents the teaching of Judaism about the sanctity of life: all life comes from God; therefore, all life is the gift of God, and to do anything which might take away or shorten a life is looked upon as murder.
- A logical step would be to consider that any new medical procedures which are able to bring about improvement to life, or even to save a life, should be accepted under the principle of pikuach nefesh.
- The *extent* to which pikuach nefesh is compatible with embryo research is to be considered as questions and debate surrounding the use of stem cells have been raised within Judaism. For example, is it ethical to use stem cells that have come from discarded embryos?
- Objections surrounding the issue of whether a very early embryo may be sacrificed for stem cells could be considered based upon halakhic terms. If the pre-embryo is to be destroyed, then it might as well be used for research purposes and life-saving work which is in accordance with the principle of pikuach nefesh. The stance of Rabbi Tendler is useful in evidence for this particular argument.
- The question as to whether the principle of pikuach nefesh extends as far as allowing the creation of embryos specifically as a source of stem cells could also be considered. Is it morally justifiable? Or should the value placed upon the sanctity of human life within Judaism take precedence?
- Most Jewish ethicists approve of therapeutic cloning as it has the potential to find new treatments for many debilitating and life-threatening conditions. The Union for Reform Jews in the USA passed a resolution supporting research using somatic gene therapy, basing its reasoning on the principle of pikuach nefesh.
- The possibility of cloning humans however, is not accepted by many in the Jewish tradition based upon the premise that even though it might bring about the means by which life could be improved, it could also bring with it psychological distress which would be entirely at odds with the principle of pikuach nefesh.
- It would seem to appear that the majority Jewish position is generally that pikuach nefesh is compatible with embryo research. However, any new medical technology is bound to raise ethical questions, and as the number and availability of new genetic techniques is likely to increase in the future, the means by which to measure their appropriateness will be to apply the principle of pikuach nefesh.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**