



GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2022

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

A120UC0-1

INTRODUCTION

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2022 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

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

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

GCE A LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES – COMPONENT 1 OPTION C

A STUDY OF JUDAISM

SUMMER 2022 MARK SCHEME

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

Section A

1. (a) **Explain the significance for Jews of the practices that take place at a seder meal.**

[AO1 20]

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

- The seder meal is full of symbolism and follows a set order during which Jews recall the slavery and Exodus from Egypt. The Haggadah acts as a guide to the seder meal. By following the text, Jews are reminded of each step of the story of the Jews in Egypt, the Exodus and the revelation of God. The symbolic nature of the meal emphasises Jewish teachings about redemption and hope for the future.
- Symbolic foods are set out on the seder plate and are eaten at set times during the meal. The telling of the story of the Exodus begins with the youngest child asking four questions which are an essential part of the seder. The head of the family gives answers to each question whilst pointing out the various symbols that are displayed on the seder plate. The involvement of the children is significant as it promotes a strong Jewish identity, and the sense that they are a part of a nation chosen by God.
- Each item of food is representative of something which happened at the original Pesach, and an explanation of each should be included:
 - Matzah: unleavened bread; no time to wait for the bread to rise before the escape from Egypt; connects Jews today with their ancestors as well as all other Jews who are celebrating Pesach across the world.
 - Lamb shank bone: a reminder of the blood of a lamb used to mark doorposts so that the angel of death would pass over.
 - Maror: a symbol of the bitter times of slavery in Egypt.
 - Charoset: the sweetness of redemption.
 - Karpas: symbolises the tears and sweat of slavery.
 - Roasted egg: recalls the sacrifice that would have been made in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem.
- Four cups of wine are drunk during the meal and this practice recalls the fourfold promise of redemption in Exodus 6:6-7 and which encapsulates the theme of the festival: God will 'bring out', 'free', 'redeem' and 'take' his people.
- After the symbolic food has been represented, a festive meal is eaten and grace is recited to conclude. A blessing is said over a cup of wine which is drunk whilst another cup is poured and set aside for the prophet Elijah who it is believed will come at Pesach to herald the arrival of the Messiah. The front door is opened at this point for Elijah to enter. The meal ends with the words 'Next year may we be in Jerusalem; next year may we be free.'
- Reference could also be made to the fact that whilst Jews are remembering the historical Exodus and everything it symbolises, the contemporary political implications of freedom are also significant.

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

(b) 'The notion of redemption has no relevance for Judaism today.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- Candidates may approach this question in a variety of ways, either understanding redemption as final redemption, or, redemption as a recurring theme within Jewish history and practice. The very fact that the theme of redemption is at the heart of the celebration of Pesach suggests otherwise, with the festival representing both physical and spiritual redemption: the Jews were no longer slaves in a foreign nation, and neither were they bound to pagan gods. It was in this state of freedom that Moses was able to deliver God's message to the Jewish people, and to offer them the promise of redemption.
- Furthermore, the festival of Pesach also looks forward to the redemption of the world under the rule of God. This is symbolised by the ritual of the Cup of Elijah. Both the offering of wine and the opening of the front door of the house are acts of hospitality for Elijah, the forerunner of the Messiah, in the hope that this will be the night when the world will be redeemed by God.
- However, different groups within Judaism offer different perspectives about future redemption which need to be considered in relation to this issue. Orthodox Jews believe in a personal Messiah, who will come at the time of God's choosing, and lead all humanity back to God.
- Reform Jews view redemption differently and reject the notion of a personal Messiah. They place their belief in the conviction that they have been chosen to spread the monotheistic truth and morality worldwide. This means living as an example of God's will for humankind, and as such, humanity will accomplish its own redemption.
- The mystical tradition within Judaism also highlights the relevance of redemption. Only after death can a person hope that their soul will reach a complete and permanent state of devekut, and the final state of bliss will not be achieved until the redemption, after the coming of the Messiah, when all Jews will live together eternally in the state of devekut.
- It could be wrong to suggest that the notion of redemption has no value for Jews today as it is clearly a central theme that runs throughout the history of Judaism and which is remembered within its festivals. It therefore functions as a crucial reminder of the final piece of the long saga of the Jewish people, thus making it a very relevant concept for Judaism today.

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

2. (a) **Examine the influence of the rebbe within Hasidic Judaism.**

[AO1 20]

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

- Rebbe (or tzaddik) is the name given to a leader within the Hasidic movement. The rebbe is considered to have attained the highest level of devekut and is thus spiritually superior to ordinary Jews.
- The role of the rebbe is to act as a spiritual advisor with the aim of elevating the souls of his followers to the divine light. He is also responsible for interceding with God on behalf of his community and counselling them on everyday matters such as choosing a bride or making wise financial investments.
- The rebbe must set an example of piety and lead his followers in prayer; devekut must be visible in him. A rebbe is expected to teach, preach and to train disciples.
- The role of the rebbe has been described as that of man's representative to God.
- The rebbe is very influential within Hasidic communities and is regarded as a figure of absolute authority and power. Reference can be made to two practices which demonstrate the influence of the rebbe: Kvitel, and leading a Tish.
- The Kvitel is a piece of paper on which a Hasidic Jew will have written a prayer request. This will be brought to a private meeting with the rebbe for him to read and then to pray on behalf of the petitioner.
- The Tish is when the rebbe makes his meal into a public event, usually on Shabbat or a major Jewish festival. At the Tish the rebbe will be served a large portion of food but will only eat a small amount. The rest will be divided amongst the assembled followers. This food is considered to have been blessed by the rebbe and thus regarded as having spiritual or even healing powers.
- Such is the influence of the rebbe that his followers will observe his actions very carefully and imitate them. This includes copying the way in which he eats, drinks, or even the way in which he wears his hat for example. Reference could be made to a famous story about a Hasid who travelled hundreds of miles to worship with a particular rebbe and said that his reason for doing so was to see how he tied his shoes.
- Even when a rebbe has died, his followers will often visit his grave on the anniversary of his death.

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

- (b) **‘The role of the rebbe is the most distinctive feature of Hasidic Judaism.’**

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- The role of the rebbe is certainly not one that is found in other branches of the Jewish religion, and it could be argued that it was the establishment, and influence, of this new kind of leader in the eighteenth century, that has given Hasidism its distinctive identity.
- The role of the rebbe persisted with the position becoming a hereditary one, with fathers passing on the responsibility to their sons or sons-in-law, resulting in the creation of dynasties.
- In addition, within Hasidic Judaism, the rebbe is considered to have attained the highest level of *devekut* and is considered to be spiritually superior to ordinary Jews. This has no parallel within other mainstream Jewish denominations.
- It could be argued that the strong leadership of the rebbes allowed Hasidism to retain its own particular identity even during the period of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century when many Jews were looking for ways to become assimilated into mainstream European society and culture. Against this background however, Hasidic Judaism remained constant due, it could be suggested, to the influence of the rebbes in the creation of closed, tight-knit communities where an emphasis was placed upon strict adherence to the teachings of the Torah.
- In modern times, Jonathan Sacks, former Chief Rabbi of Great Britain and the British Commonwealth acknowledged the leadership of the Lubavitcher Rebbe by stating: ‘Not only did he lead, he was a source of leadership in others.’ Furthermore, Sacks acknowledged his spiritual debt to the Lubavitcher Hasidim and regards them as an important and distinctive segment of the Jewish community.
- However, it could be argued that there are other features of Hasidic Judaism which are more obvious and more widely reported about than the role of the rebbe, and that it is those which give Hasidism its distinctiveness. Evidence can be offered in support of this by reference to dress and lifestyle; strict adherence to the requirements of the Torah; the roles of men and women; charismatic worship.

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

Section B

3. (a) Examine beliefs about the Messiah in Judaism.

[AO1 20]

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

- 'Messiah' literally means 'anointed one' and is usually understood to refer to a future leader of the Jewish people who will bring in a new age of freedom, justice, peace and goodwill, which will be established under the rule of God.
- The concept of the Messiah is not explicitly mentioned in the Torah, nevertheless it has become a distinctive idea of classical Judaism. The concept was probably introduced during the period of the prophets who wrote of a time in the future when the Jewish people will be free from subjugation to other nations. Reference to this can be found in Isaiah 2:1-4 which tells of a return to Israel; restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem; where God's presence will be felt by Jews and gentiles alike; and God's rule will be established upon the earth.
- Some prophets go further in claiming that the Messiah will be a human leader, sent by God, who will create a peaceful society. Isaiah 11:2-5 tells of a Messiah as Judge who will bring peace and goodwill to the world.
- The prophet Jeremiah says that the Messiah will be a political leader and a descendent of King David; one who is well versed in Jewish law and observant of the commandments of God. Above all he will be a great judge who will make decisions based upon righteousness (Jeremiah 33:15).
- Jews refer to the world after the Messiah has come as the Messianic Age; however, there is no unified concept of what exactly this period will be like. For some Jews, there is no hope of a future Messiah because the Messiah mentioned in the Bible came in the time of Hezekiah at the start of the seventh century BCE.
- During the Middle Ages there was agreement that there would be a personal Messiah, yet disagreement about whether or not the Messianic Age would be a natural or supernatural event. Maimonides did not believe that the course of nature would be changed with the arrival of the Messiah, nevertheless he predicts that the Messiah will restore the kingdom of David to its former glory; restore the Temple; and gather the Jews together as a nation once more.
- Orthodox Jews believe in a personal Messiah who will come at the time of God's choosing, and who will lead all humanity back to God. The Messiah will be descended from the line of King David and preceded by the return of the prophet Elijah. Under the influence of the Messiah, a new world order will be established based upon God's law, and peace will be established. Jerusalem will be rebuilt, the dead will be resurrected, re-joined with their souls and a final judgement made. All this will happen as a result of the influence of the Messiah.
- Reform Jews also believe in the Messianic era; a period of peace. However, they do not link it to a restoration of a Jewish state. They see their dispersion as a necessary thing, as they have been chosen to spread the monotheistic truth and morality worldwide by being an example to others.

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

- (b) **‘Beliefs about judgement and the afterlife are not relevant for Jews today.’**

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- There is very little to be found in the Torah relating to what Jews actually believe happens after a person has died, and this can be used to suggest agreement with the statement. However, acknowledgement could also be made of the fact that the Talmudic rabbis speak of the repose of the righteous departed in the Garden of Eden, and that this is mentioned in the memorial prayer for the dead, which seems to suggest that the souls of those who have led a good life will live on forever in peace, whilst the wicked will suffer torment in Gehinnom.
- It could be argued that Jews generally believe that it is far more important to focus on what is happening *during* life rather than being concerned about what might happen in the afterlife. Evidence for this standpoint can be found in the Mishnah which states that a person should serve God out of truth and love: ‘... be like servants who serve their masters not for the sake of receiving a reward ...’
- Some might suggest that it is the concept of judgement alone that is of more relevance for Jews today rather than what happens in the afterlife. This is based upon the belief that God will reward the good and punish sinners in this life as well as in the next. Evidence for this can be offered by referring to the practice of standing before God and confessing one’s sins at the festival of Yom Kippur, before God makes a final judgement on each individual’s fate for the coming year.
- Furthermore, the fact that Yom Kippur is a festival at which many Jews who do not normally go to the synagogue throughout the year are present, indicates a relevance for Jews today.
- Some would argue that this statement is correct based upon the fact that the concept of judgement, followed by the awarding of reward or punishment after death, actually comes from the post-biblical era of Judaism. Furthermore, there appears to be no accepted agreement amongst different groups within Judaism about what actually happens after death.
- In conclusion, it could be suggested that it is not the specific details of belief about judgement and the afterlife that are critical for followers of Judaism, but the general view of hope for the future establishment of God’s kingdom through the Messianic Age. As Maimonides argues, that is the real focus of attention. It is only when the Messianic Age is upon Jewish believers that they are free to study the Torah and truly prepare for the afterlife.

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

4. (a) Examine the importance of tzedakah (charity) within Judaism.

[AO1 20]

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

- The literal meaning of the word 'tzedakah' is 'justice' or 'righteousness', and when a Jew 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 (Deuteronomy 15:11).
- There are a number of ways of offering tzedakah, and some Jews give a tithe on a regular basis. However, tzedakah is not just about giving money to worthy causes, and the Talmud teaches the importance of showing kindness and mercy to those in need by giving up one's time to help them. This is known as gemilut hasadim, and relevant examples can be included in order to illustrate this concept.
- Jews are also aware of the importance of respecting the dignity of those they help as set out in Leviticus 19:9-10.
- The importance of charity is such that Maimonides identified eight different stages of tzedakah with each level being higher than the other. A discussion of the different levels can be undertaken in connection with relevant scriptural references such as Deuteronomy 15:8, Leviticus 25:35, and 19:9-10.
- Examples from Jewish festivals can also illustrate the importance of tzedakah within Judaism. At Purim, for instance, there is a special feast during which everyone sends gifts of food to friends and acquaintances in order to ensure that all members of the Jewish community have enough food for the celebration. And, during the period between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, many families give donations to charity as this is a time of the year when concern for the poor is emphasised. Every person has an obligation to avoid becoming in need of tzedakah, however Jews are realistic and accept that hardship does occur, and that in such circumstances it is considered wrong to refuse help if it is offered.
- Such is the importance of tzedakah that it is also evident in the home in the form of pushkes (donation boxes or tins).
- Further emphasis can be seen in the rabbinic idea that Talmud study should be accompanied by ethical good work in everyday life.
- The importance of tzedakah is evident within Reform Judaism, whose members have historically emphasised the need to fight for social justice. This aim is set out in the final clause of the Pittsburgh Platform. Social action is the means by which one's ethical thoughts are transformed into deeds and campaigns: e.g. as seen within the aforementioned concepts of tzedakah and gemilut hasadim. Concern for the poor lies within the broader category of Tikkun Olam: repairing the world through human actions and the pursuit of social justice.

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

(b) 'Tzedakah is more important than prayer.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- It could be argued that this is the case based upon the premise that the requirement to undertake tzedakah is one of the most basic requirements of the mitzvot. Also there are numerous commandments about charitable actions to be found in the Torah. Moreover, even though prayer is an important aspect of the Jewish faith, there is no explicit commandment to do so.
- It could be argued however, that even though there is no explicit command to pray in the Torah, there are many instances of individual prayer connected with significant figures from Jewish history. For example, in Genesis 15:2-3 Abraham prayed to God for an heir; and in Deuteronomy 9:20 & 26 Moses prayed for Aaron, and for Israel to be spared. It could also be suggested that there is no explicit commandment to pray because prayer is accepted as being a normal activity for one who is in a relationship with God.
- Perhaps tzedakah could be perceived as being more important as its consequences are visible, whereas prayer is generally a private experience. Furthermore, there is no way of measuring whether prayer is meaningful or that it has merely been undertaken as a matter of ritual without kavvanah (directed intention). Nevertheless, prayer remains an important part of the Jewish faith, acting as the means by which to communicate with God. As Maimonides said: 'We are to offer up prayers to God, in order to establish firmly the true principle that God takes notice of our ways, that He can make them successful if we serve Him, or disastrous if we disobey Him ...'
- Another important point for consideration is whether or not we should be making a distinction between tzedakah and prayer as far as judging their relative importance is concerned. One could argue that time spent in prayer helps to keep life focused upon God's wishes with the consequence being that a Jew's ethical thoughts are transformed into deeds and campaigns which are connected with tzedakah. Evidence of this could be offered by reference to the concepts of liberationist thought and Tikkun Olam.

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

5. (a) Examine the contribution of Judith Plaskow to Jewish feminism.

[AO1 20]

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

- Plaskow published what is considered to be the first book of Jewish feminist theology, 'Standing Again at Sinai – Judaism from a feminine perspective' which has made a considerable contribution to Jewish women's theological discussions.
- She describes a defining moment in her life as a Jew and a feminist when she was unable to make up part of the minyan even though her husband, a relative newcomer to the congregation, was invited. She came to the conclusion that women were excluded from the heart and soul of traditional Judaism.
- For Plaskow, feminism was more than merely attaining equal rights for women in the faith, it was about the affirmation of women being mirrored in religious and social institutions.
- She explores the concept of creating a community in which women would be present, equal and responsible when considering the Torah, and argued for the use of feminine historical methodologies to uncover Jewish women's history.
- She discusses the traditional images of God and argues that if God is viewed as a dominating male then human institutions are likely to use this as a model and become male-dominated too.
- It has been noted that since the publication of 'Standing Again at Sinai' women have gained a more active role within even Orthodox Jewish communities, such as in 'partnership minyanim', for example.
- She writes of the challenge facing women who want a more active role in Jewish religious life, and, it has been claimed, her work has enabled the changes in scholarship and liturgy that have brought about a growth in women's Torah exegesis.
- Plaskow also highlighted the fact that liturgy and ritual have been particularly important areas for what she terms as 'Jewish feminist inventiveness'. For example, the rediscovery of elements of worship such as the ceremonies for the festival of Rosh Chodesh can be discussed. There has also been the development of a feminist liturgy for Passover that puts women's liberation at the centre of the festival.
- Another area of note, according to Plaskow, has been the creation of a liturgy for the birth ceremonies of girls which, although not rooted in historical nor current ritual, has come about due to the desire to celebrate the value of daughters by welcoming them into the community with a ceremony parallel to brit milah.

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

- (b) **Evaluate the view that equality exists between women and men in Judaism.**

[AO2 30]

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

- Restrictions imposed within certain Jewish groups suggest that equality does not exist for women as long as practices such as the following still prevail: divorced women not being able to re-marry; the status of agunah; women not being able to count towards the minyan; not allowed to lead public worship. These suggest a subordinate role and a lack of equality with men.
- However, practices from the Reform movement may be presented as evidence that equality does exist. Women perform many rituals that have traditionally been reserved for men: reading the Torah in public; counting towards the minyan; serving as cantor; serving as rabbi. This is based upon the belief that the various differences between men and women in traditional Jewish law are not relevant to modern-day society and therefore are not applicable today.
- In addition, the development of the Jewish feminist movement suggests that women have been taking action to bring about equality. For example, the development of small worship groups, led by lay people rather than rabbis, allows women to take an active role in worship. This is an evolutionary process that exists even within the Orthodox tradition.
- Evidence also shows an increase in women attending yeshivot; this is in contrast to the traditional view that prohibits women from Talmud and Torah study.
- Another line of argument may suggest that in Orthodox Judaism women are not regarded as unequal, but that they hold a different, but equally important role within the Jewish family. Jews follow matrilineal descent and therefore Jewish mothers have a high status. Some would argue that modest dress and time for women during their menstrual cycle are examples of women being respected and honoured within the religion.
- Treating men and women differently is natural and not an example of lack of respect or honour. Orthodox Jews believe that the woman is being honoured by being treated in this way.
- It could also be argued that it depends upon whether or not the customs of some Jewish groups are regarded as being out of line with the expectations of the roles of men and women in secular society – should we be comparing them?

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