

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

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**H573**

For first teaching in 2016

**H573/05 Summer 2023 series**

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## Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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## Paper 5 series overview

The cohort who undertook this exam have had significant educational disruption; despite this a marking standard was set that mirrored previous exam sessions. There were some exceptional and very good responses which showed an excellent ability to create a highly sophisticated argument using AO1 learning. There were also some less successful responses which often did not address the question asked and/or where candidates demonstrated little to no AO1 learning from the specification content rather representing GCSE learning.

Although most candidates provided lengthy responses, many scripts could not be marked highly on the levels of response due to a lack of direct engagement with the questions. Notably, in Question 1, some candidates omitted any relevant specification content on the topic of "Rethinking women: Jewish Feminism" (p. 67 of the specification) and instead produced responses resembling general GCSE responses on marriage. Similarly, in Question 2, candidates provided prepared responses that compared covenants, deviating from the actual question asked. Consequently, a significant number of candidates remained at Level 2 AO1, demonstrating only a basic grasp of knowledge and understanding.

Examiners noted that a high proportion of responses were very similar and read like rote learnt essays. The identical content and order in many scripts resulted in lower levels of AO1 and AO2 marks since these responses did not effectively engage with the set questions. Despite this observation, the marks given covered the levels of response for both AO1 and AO2, successfully differentiating between candidates and their performance. All questions were attempted, with Question 2 and Question 4 being the most popular, and no rubric errors were found.

It was pleasing to see however that those candidates who were able to access the higher levels of response demonstrated excellent and very good knowledge of the specification content and scholarship. The best responses addressed the specific question asked, considered all aspects of the question in a relevant way and were supported with careful analysis. When candidates did not achieve higher marks, it was usually because they did not answer the question set and instead provided an answer for a question they had been pre-prepared for.

As noted by examiners in the other papers sat for the A Level Religious Studies, candidates may benefit from being taught more explicit exam skills such as recognising what area of the specification content the question is requiring, effective use of a short moment's planning before beginning to write, and moving away from rote learnt essays. The development of good handwriting should also be considered.

Some responses did try to adopt a more 'synoptic' style and attempted to use learning from across the specification to produce a sustained line of reasoning; while this is encouraged, some of the responses appeared to lack the exam skills to do this successfully and responses became unfocused and wandered from the set question. Some candidates seemed overly fixated with trying to make synoptic links or to name as many scholars as they could which in many cases resulted in a lower level response answer as the response did not show an adequate level of AO1 for the set question. While it can be very useful to approach a question synoptically, candidates should be aware that this requires the knowledge to be used to deepen evaluative discussion; the additional material should be related back to the set question in order that it does not become superfluous. Some responses performed better on the AO2 criteria; again, AO1 responses could have, in many cases, been higher if specification content had been seen in the response. For example, in Question 4 many candidates scored highly on AO1 as they were able to demonstrate rich knowledge of the specification content and beyond, however, in Q1 and Q2 many candidates did not actually mention or refer to the specification content.



Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• addressed the question set with precision and clarity</li> <li>• demonstrated a focus on the specific words in the question, avoiding tangential discussions</li> <li>• supported arguments with well-developed and pertinent knowledge from the specified content</li> <li>• displayed awareness of diverse viewpoints within Judaism, treating each perspective as valid in its own right</li> <li>• engaged effectively with the essays, showcasing meticulous planning and a clear grasp of the studied specification content.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attempted to incorporate material that was not entirely relevant to the question, leading to some inconsistencies in the response</li> <li>• diverged into tangents, delving into other areas of the specification that were not directly related to the question</li> <li>• lacked sufficient AO1 (knowledge and understanding) in their responses, resulting in incomplete or superficial responses</li> <li>• demonstrated illegible or unstructured writing, making it challenging to follow the flow of their ideas</li> <li>• presented rote essays which did not answer the set question.</li> </ul>

## Question 1\*

1\* 'Adler is right in challenging Judaism to rethink its views about the nature of marriage.' Discuss.

[40]

This question centred explicitly on the "Rethinking Women: Jewish Feminism" area of the specification. It was disheartening to find that some responses demonstrated little to no awareness of Rachel Adler and did not incorporate any learning from the specified content. Consequently, these responses could only achieve a maximum of Level 2, as they focused on a general topic and provided a generalised response on marriage, showing no explicit understanding of Adler. It is crucial for centres to emphasise the significance of exam skills to candidates and make sure that they prepare students to respond with knowledge specific to the specification content, rather than relying on general knowledge. While some of this general knowledge may be accurate, it does not adequately address the set question which aims to assess learning related to the specification content. For instance, some candidates produced responses about niddah and the practice of a mikveh instead of addressing Adler's work.

However, there were also several excellent responses that reached a very high level of engagement and offered critical analyses of Rachel Adler's work. These good and very good responses delved into the key specification learning, demonstrating a sophisticated and mature understanding of feminism. In particular, successful responses critically discussed the notions of acquisition or agunah, and it was gratifying to see that some candidates engaged deeply with Adler's work *Engendering Judaism. An Inclusive Theology and Ethics*, quoting relevant points that enriched their understanding.

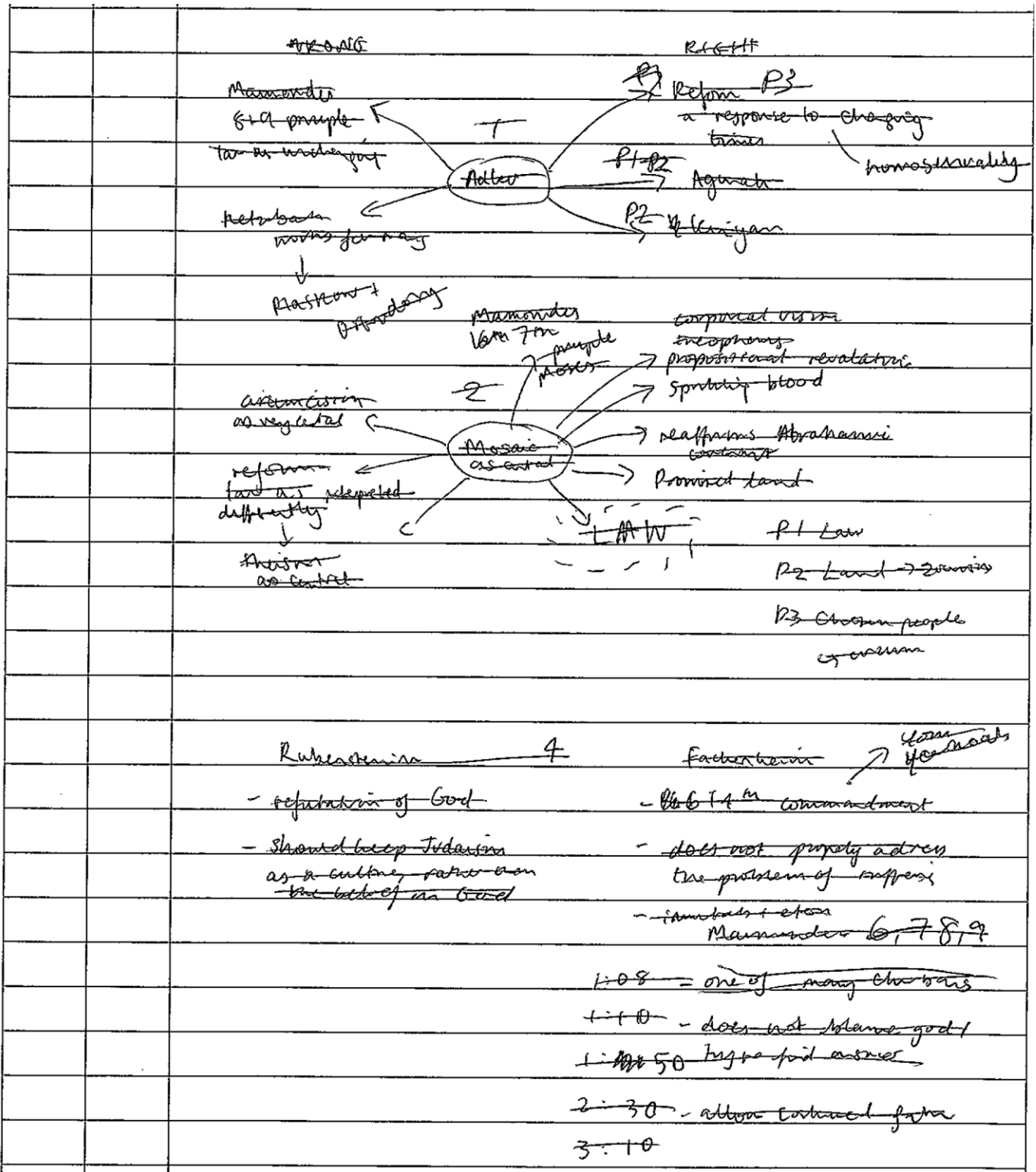
Additionally, good and very good responses explored the process of divorce/get in a critical manner. Among these responses, some stood out by making pertinent connections between the Brit Ahuvim or lovers' covenant and its relevance to discussions about same-sex relationships and challenging heteronormativity. It was noticed that some candidates adopted rather naive perspectives, dismissing the views of Adler and/or Reform or more liberal Jewish views regarding women/marriage as entirely wrong or incompatible with Judaism. To improve their responses, candidates should recognise the diversity of views within Judaism and engage in critical discussions across these viewpoints.

### Assessment for learning



To make sure that candidates answer questions accurately and draw on the correct part of the specification content being assessed, it is essential to emphasise the importance of reading and understanding the question to identify its specific requirements and scope. Reinforce knowledge of the specification to make sure that candidates are thoroughly familiar with the relevant parts of the specification content that will be assessed in the exam. Stress the significance of referencing specific concepts, theories, or scholars from the specification content when crafting responses.

Exemplar 1



1	<p>'Adler is right in challenging Judaism to rethink its views about the nature of marriage.'</p>
	<p>Rachel Adler is a Reform Rabbi, who sought to modernise the way in which Jewish people view and practise marriage traditions. She did this through <del>her</del> <sup>writing her</sup> <del>books</del> <sup>books</sup> <del>on</del> <sup>on</sup> <del>the</del> <sup>the</sup> <del>new</del> <sup>new</sup> <del>movement</del> <sup>movement</sup>, it called the Brit Ahumim.</p>
	<p>Through this, she directly addresses some of what are in her opinion issues with the traditional marriage contract -</p>
	<p>the ketubah - , such as kinyan (acquisition) and agunah (chained woman). In this essay, I will discuss those ideas alongside the Reform and Orthodox views of the Brit Ahumim, and argue why I believe that Adler is right in challenging the traditional Jewish name of marriage.</p>
	<p>The concept of agunah comes alongside a traditional Jewish marriage when the man will not allow the woman to have a get, which does mean that the couple is still religiously married - in the eyes of G-d. The problem of agunah <del>arises</del> <sup>arises</sup> directly due to the fact that in the ketubah, it clearly states that in the event of a <sup>some</sup> divorce, the man has to give his wife a get. In <del>these</del> <sup>these</sup> circumstances, he may not do this if he does not want a divorce, or if he does not have a good relationship with his wife, and does not wish her to be freed from the marriage. Some Jews do not see the imbalance of power here as a problem, as <del>to</del> <sup>to</sup> if the man is</p>

not of issuing his wife a get, there must be good reason for it, for example, in the hopes of saving the marriage. Some would argue that ~~the traditional man's~~ this may be a good thing as the marriage is more likely to be fixed, which is particularly encouraged if the couple have children. The concept of family values and community is very strong in Judaism, and so increasing the likelihood of the marriage being fixed may be seen as favorable. This being said, many, ~~would including~~ Adler, argue that this imbalance of power is unjust, and the woman should have the same rights to initiate a divorce as a man does. I would argue that ~~At~~ Adler is right to question the nature of marriage, as with her lover's covenant, the problem of agunah is erased. What is more, although divorce is not frowned upon particularly in Judaism, there is still encouragement ~~to go~~ for a couple to fix their issues, and to remain in the marriage. This helps ~~counter~~ the argument against the traditional nature of marriage, as it is not the ~~to get~~ fact that the man issues the get that will help a couple fix their problems. Adler's Bat Ahumim allows for ~~an~~ equal power in the event of a divorce, and therefore sets the marriage up as a truly equal partnership; therefore ~~she~~ is right in challenging the traditional view of marriage.

Adler's Bat Ahumim also addresses the issue of *kenisah* - or ownership - that is present in a traditional marriage



ceremony. This is evident in the tradition that of the man giving the bride's father some money during the ceremony. This gives connotations of the bride being bought from the bride's parents, as if she were an object. Another way in which this can be seen is with the ~~no~~ laws laid out in the ketubah about the get, as ~~if only~~ ~~not~~ only the man has the right to 'release' the ~~man~~ woman from the marriage, again giving connotations of ownership. In Adler's *Brit Ahuvia*, however, the tradition is altered, and the couple instead interchange tokens of the marriage, for example <sup>rings</sup> ~~the~~. This again makes the marriage more equal as both parties have the same traditions, and therefore duties, within the partnership. This, however, can be rebutted by Orthodox Jews, who believe that the element of *huiyam* is in no way harmful. Instead, they see the traditions associated with it as simply different elements of each person's role, the same way in schools they view a man and woman's roles ~~is~~ ~~not~~ within a marriage as different, yet equal. They ~~to~~ sustain the use of the traditional marriage contract as it clearly lays out the ~~men~~ <sup>and</sup> the woman's roles within the marriage, and make each person's duties clear. Furthermore, some women ~~to~~ like the concept that their husband's role is ~~to~~ protect them, which is enacted through the tradition of ~~the~~ the bride being given from her father to her new husband. It seems the man's role as a protective one, and makes it clear what his duties are, which can help a marriage to be successful.

This being said, however, I believe that these differing roles in a marriage are not particularly helpful today, as the concept of ownership can be misconstrued in a way that is harmful to a partnership. I believe that the way in which Adler ensures equal partnership in her Brit Ahummi is important for a marriage that ~~has~~ <sup>is</sup> equal, and that the concept of *kenisah* does more harm than good. It can lead for women to have a less predominant role in decision making due to the culture that is cultivated in the belief that the man has more power in the relationship, which is why I believe Adler is right to challenge this view.

Lastly, there is the changing attitude to the nature of marriage that is evidently needed and fits alongside Reform Judaism. A modernised marriage contract is fitting in the way in which the Reform Jewish practices have changed by looking at Judaism ~~for~~ through a modernised lens. One way in which this is clear is through the acceptance of ~~Refo~~ homosexual marriages in Reform Judaism. The traditional *ketubah* only permits marriage between a man and a woman, however changing views on same-sex relationships require a new marriage contract to fit and reflect this. However, Orthodox Jews would not see this as a valid argument, as they do not accept ~~as~~ a homosexual marriage as *halakhi*. This is due to scriptures such as Leviticus 18 and 20, which explicitly

state that a man shall not lie with a man as he does a woman. This backs up the view that we should not change or rethink marriage, ~~or~~ and that the ketubah, which allows for a halakhic Jewish marriage, should continue to be used. This thinking is echoed in Judith Plaskow's book 'Standing at Sinai', which allows Judaism to be looked at through a feminist lens, yet does not change scripture like Adler's Brit Ahumim does. This also falls in line with Mannanides' belief that the Torah is immutable and eternal, as laid out in his 8<sup>m</sup> and 9<sup>m</sup> principles. Here we can see why challenging the traditional name of Jewish marriage may not be permitted, as it is clear that scripture, including the ketubah, is correct.

In conclusion, although there are very convincing arguments both for and against rethinking the traditional Jewish view on ~~sex~~ marriage, I believe that the issues of ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> keriyah ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> agunah make it undeniably clear that the ketubah does not ~~yet~~ result in an equal partnership. Change views on issues such as same-sex marriage back up Adler's argument to rethink the view of traditional marriage, which is why I would conclude that she is right to be able to give Jewish people the option for a more modern marriage <sup>contract</sup> ~~contract~~.



In Exemplar 1, the candidate has demonstrated a highly focused and well-structured response that directly addresses the question at hand. The introduction immediately sets the direction of the assignment, paving the way for a comprehensive discussion of Agunah and Get. The candidate skilfully delves into the concept, offering a thoughtful analysis that includes various perspectives, highlighting issues such as power imbalances and their impact on family values.

Moving on, the candidate explores the topic of Kinyan or ownership, providing a concise and effective AO1 paragraph that is further developed through insightful AO2 analysis. The discussion encompasses different viewpoints, revealing the candidate's adeptness in handling complex arguments.

Moreover, the candidate ventures into the evolving nature of marriage, expertly navigating the complexities of same-sex relationships and diverse opinions on the subject. To bolster their argument, they draw on the works of Plaskow, a feminist scholar studied in the course. This exemplifies how responses should remain tightly focused on the specific question, utilising the acquired learning to enhance the analysis.

Overall, this response stands as an exemplary model of how candidates should approach essay questions—clear, focused, and leveraging the course content to provide a comprehensive and insightful analysis.

## Question 2\*

2\* Evaluate the extent to which the Mosaic Covenant remains central in modern Judaism. [40]

This question focused specifically on the Mosaic Covenant; many responses, however, were unable to move past Level 2 or 3 for AO1 'basic and general topic' or 'generally addresses the question' as the responses given by many were a pre-prepared comparison of the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenant. While there is no set way to answer a question and candidates can bring in content and arguments to support AO2, it was expected that candidates would make reference to the specification content learning as this is what is being examined. To provide a comprehensive response, candidates were encouraged to reference the specified content and themes within the covenant, accurately citing relevant scriptures.

A significant number of responses lacked scholarly views, academic approaches, and the use of authoritative sources from the suggested readings. In some cases, responses resembled those one might expect at a GCSE level. It's important to remember that although discussions about the festival of Pesach/Passover are relevant, they were not part of the specified content and should have been utilised to elevate the analysis and evaluation (AO2) to an A Level standard.

However, there were some outstanding responses that stayed closely focused on the set question. When comparing the Mosaic Covenant to the Abrahamic Covenant, these responses demonstrated critical analysis and evaluation rather than merely presenting an overview of the two covenants.

The exceptional responses centred on the covenant's themes as outlined in the specification and skilfully analysed them within the context of modern Judaism. These responses also showcased an understanding of different viewpoints within Judaism, allowing for well-constructed arguments and analyses from various perspectives instead of presenting a single viewpoint.

### Assessment for learning



While it can be beneficial to draw on other areas of the topic or syllabus to develop responses, the main focus should always be on addressing the set question and demonstrating analysis (AO2) related to that specific topic. It is entirely acceptable for candidates to concentrate solely on the set question and explore the one covenant in-depth without the need for additional comparisons or discussions.

By staying focused on the main theme, candidates can provide more in-depth analysis and evaluation, exploring the nuances and intricacies of the covenant under examination. This approach allows for a more thorough understanding of the subject matter and the ability to demonstrate a higher level of critical thinking.

Ultimately, the goal is to address the set question in a comprehensive and insightful manner, drawing on relevant content, scriptures, and themes specified in the specification.

### Exemplar 2

2		The mosaic covenant occurred at Mount
		Sinai where <del>G-d</del> <sup>G-d</sup> gave both the oral law
		(Torah) and the written law (Talmud) to
		moses. He <del>ated</del> <sup>ated</sup> it takes place within

		<p>Exodus and involves the handing over of the 10 commandments in Exodus 20. It is argued to be central in modern Judaism as although not all denominations follow all 613 mitzvot strictly, all abide by the 10 commandments which form the basis of the Jewish faith. However, it can be argued that the Mosaic covenant is not as central as it once was as there have been reinterpretations of its meaning and arguably the Abrahamic covenant has continuous relevance and is more central in modern Judaism. <del>Then</del></p> <p><del>ef)</del> <del>Although there may be less</del> Therefore, it will be argued that the Mosaic covenant remains somewhat central in modern Judaism.</p> <p>To begin, as mentioned, the Mosaic covenant has great importance to the entirety of the Jewish nation as it involved G-d directly handing over the laws to Moses and in doing so, to his chosen people. <del>At</del> The action of handing over his laws to Moses highlights the continuous importance of the covenant as this personal act allows <del>for</del> all Jews to want to obtain their personal relationship with G-d, therefore keeping the Mosaic covenant central both in <del>the</del> ancient and modern Judaism. However, it is argued that <del>the</del> the Mosaic covenant does not</p>
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		<p>remain as central in modern Judaism as it used to, as <del>these</del> <del>are</del> with societies progressive views and acceptances of homosexual relationships etc, some denominations (such as Progressive Judaism), have adopted <del>and</del> and chosen laws to follow and ones to be more lenient on. E.g. Deuteronomy 14 talks about the food laws which Reform are not so strict on as they may use the same chopping board to cut dairy and meat (unlike Orthodox). The direct ignorance towards strict laws, highlighted by the previous example, reflects this idea that the mosaic covenant doesn't remain entirely central to all Jewish denominations. Therefore, it can be <del>see</del> argued that the Mosaic covenant is only somewhat <del>relevant</del> central in modern Judaism.</p> <p>On the otherhand, <del>the</del> although <del>some</del> <del>of</del> <del>the</del> <del>613</del> mitzvot have been disregarded or adopted by Progressive Jews, the 10 commandments remain central to all denominations. This highlights how the mosaic covenant still remains central in modern Judaism as although the entirety of the laws may not be followed strictly by all, the most important ones that are vital to Jewish life, are. These 10 commandments are <del>not</del></p>
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followed to ensure the security of the Jewish faith ~~and~~ and they allow for all Jews, regardless of denomination, to know that they can come together as a community and agree on 10 fundamental laws. ~~The~~ The mosaic covenant almost acts as a beacon and something that connects the Jewish people together, thus highlighting how central it is to modern Judaism, as although views on controversial topics such as Jewish feminism, premarital sex, homosexual relationships etc, may be increasing the gap between denominations, one thing that will always be able to bring them together and force denominations to put differences aside, are the 10 commandments from the Mosaic covenant.

However, this argument can also be made for other covenants, such as the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12, 15, 17). Arguably, the Abrahamic covenant can be seen to be ~~of~~ more central to modern Judaism as it relates to Brit Milah, influences conversion requirements and actively has an influence on the modern day state of Israel. ~~The~~ ~~and~~ The fact that the 10 commandments brings all Jews together ~~and~~ should not



		<p>be seen as a special case just for the Mosaic covenant as Brit Milah seals the Abrahamic covenant and can also be seen to bring all Jews together. In fact, this can be seen as more central to <sup>modern</sup> Judaism as it allows <sup>the</sup> Jewish community to be identified and it <del>is</del> actively shows their devotion to being <sup>G-d's</sup> God's chosen people. Furthermore, <del>Brit Milah</del> circumcision is a requirement for any male convert, thus highlighting the continuous relevance and importance to the Abrahamic covenant which in turn <del>is</del> portrays the limits to the Mosaic covenants relevance to modern day Judaism. Therefore, it can be argued that the Mosaic covenant does not remain central in modern Judaism as it has less relevance in today's society in comparison to <del>modern</del> <del>society</del> society in the past.</p> <p>Moreover, it is argued that many of the mitzvot <del>is</del> (regarding the food laws) <del>is</del> may have been adapted to fit with Jewish society in the past. For example, the food laws may have been added in order to prevent Jewish people getting parasites and helping them obtain prime health. As the written law (Talmud), was written from memory, it is entirely possible that human errors may have occurred and that the</p>
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		<p>texts are not entirely the word of G-d. There is no way to prove this which is why in modern society, the mosaic covenant may be seen as only somewhat central in modern Judaism as there is no empirical evidence to prove its validity and thus allows room for denominations (such as Reform) to disregard some laws, whilst following others. Therefore, it is argued that the mosaic covenant <del>is</del> <del>and</del> remains only somewhat central in modern Judaism.</p> <p>In conclusion, <del>is</del> I believe it is entirely dependent on the denomination to determine how central the mosaic covenant is in modern Judaism. Whilst Orthodox Jews argue all 613 mitzvot are just as important as one another and thus <del>is</del> the mosaic covenant remains central to modern Judaism, <del>is</del> Progressive Jews argue <del>is</del> to oppose this view and place varying importances on the mitzvot, therefore highlighting the limitations as to how central the mosaic covenant is in modern Judaism.</p>
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The response shown in Exemplar 2 commences by contextualising the Mosaic Covenant, highlighting its focus on law, and briefly touching on different denominational views. While the candidate presents relevant material, there is a missed opportunity to strengthen the argument by directly focusing on the set text that was studied, and there is also a lack of exploration of scholarly sources and authoritative wisdom.

Although the response raises some interesting points, it falls short in terms of the rigour and sophistication expected in higher-grade responses. The candidate then shifts to the Abrahamic covenant and utilises it for some satisfactory evaluative insights. The response receives a satisfactory level in AO1 as it generally addresses the question with a mostly sound selection of relevant material and also a satisfactory L3 for AO2.

For a higher mark, the response would have benefited from a tighter focus on relevant specification material and scholarly sources, as well as a more rigorous and critically analytical approach. Nonetheless, this response represents an above-average performance for this question, as the candidate successfully concentrates on the specific question instead of merely comparing the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants.



### Question 3\*

- 3\* Evaluate the view that the gemara is more important than the mishnah in understanding the Talmud. [40]

This question had the lowest response rate, with only a few candidates attempting it. The responses received varied in quality; those that scored lower marks often appeared confused or limited in their approach. However, the majority of candidates managed to navigate the question successfully. They provided an overview of both the gemara and the mishnah, along with sufficient analysis to argue which is considered more important for understanding. The responses here seemed less formulaic and prepared which in some cases supported candidates to reach the higher levels of response.

### Question 4\*

- 4\* 'Rubenstein offers a more convincing post-Holocaust theology than Fackenheim.' Discuss. [40]

This question proved to be the most popular, and overall, candidates tackled it with a good level of success. Many were able to discuss the post-Holocaust theologies of Rubenstein and Fackenheim, engaging in critical analysis to determine which was more convincing. The strongest responses remained focused on Fackenheim and Rubenstein, incorporating views of other scholars within the specification to enhance their critical analysis of the set question and the set scholars. On the other hand, weaker responses tended to drift into a general post-Holocaust theology approach, briefly discussing each scholar studied separately and as such not remaining focused on the set question.

Among the good and very good responses, candidates displayed a high level of engagement with the theology of Fackenheim and Rubenstein, adeptly comparing and contrasting their perspectives. Very good responses went further, exploring the nuanced meaning of "convincing" and for whom it holds weight. Some candidates also made connections to theodicy or the problem of evil, drawing on their studies from H573\_01. The most sophisticated responses, additionally, demonstrated an understanding that Rubenstein's view is not outright atheistic, but rather a rejection of the traditional God of Scripture, given the challenging events of the Holocaust. While certain responses exhibited a commendable level of engagement with the views of the set scholars, as gleaned from the contextual reference reading, it was evident that some candidates had only a superficial and limited grasp of the core content that should have been studied. Additionally, some approached their responses in a simplistic manner, lacking the depth and nuance expected in their responses.

## Exemplar 3

4.	<p>The Holocaust was of great pain to Jews worldwide, through those who suffered directly, and those who lost family, as well as the intergenerational trauma. The Shoah, and the fundamental theological questions it triggered is a scar on the psyche of all Jewish people today. Richard Rubenstein responded to the Holocaust by benchmarking to the Nietzschean claim that 'god is dead'. The only Judaism that can rationally be followed is that which exists for psychological and cultural reasons. Fackenheim did not reject god post-Shoah, rather, claiming that the Holocaust brought about a 614<sup>th</sup> mitzvah to keep Judaism alive. He also thought of the Holocaust as an epoch event. I will write in support of the proposition that Rubenstein offers a more convincing post-Holocaust theology than Fackenheim.</p>
	<p>Firstly, Fackenheim's response is unsatisfactory to the problem of evil. Eliezer's inconsistent friend states that god cannot be omnibenevolent and omnipotent, yet allow suffering to exist. Fackenheim fails to resolve this conflict beyond stating that the evil of the Shoah was purposeful to arise a new commandment. Eliezer Wiesel opposes this point, believing that though it creates cognitive dissonance, it is not necessary to resolve the problem of evil in order to have faith. He writes in <i>Night</i> that, despite putting god on 'trial' and proving him</p>

guilty, he still essentially sustained faith. Kierkegaard supports this point, arguing that the problem of evil needn't be resolved in order to have faith - this is the importance of faith. However, in a theological sense, the philosophical approach of faith that Fackenheim relies upon is not sound. Beyond this, it can be viewed as unsatisfactory to maintain a belief in a God who allowed the holocaust. Rubenstein, in ejecting G-d can be seen as having greater theological validity, and so his view is more convincing.

The arguments that Fackenheim presents may be somewhat tenuous. The idea of a 614<sup>th</sup> commandment is disaligned with Maimonides' principle that the Torah is immutable. For Fackenheim to add a law implies that the Torah is not perfect and is incomplete. Furthermore, it seems apparent that survival already does exist in the Torah, with concepts such as pikuach nefesh, valuing life above all. However, it seems Fackenheim was aware of these objections, and only meant his 614<sup>th</sup> commandment in a metaphorical sense. Moreover, though the commandment of survival already exists scripturally, Fackenheim wanted to relate it specifically to the holocaust. Whilst I understand the rationale behind Fackenheim's thought, I do not think of it as necessary, nor does it resolve the issues raised by the holocaust. Though Rubenstein is also

heathen in his approach (more so, even), he is not attempting to create a theology grounded in Jewish law. The response Rubenstein gives is more satisfactory, as Fackenheim's approach, despite being ostensibly grounded in Judaism, ultimately goes against Judaism.

A third reason why Fackenheim's response is unconvincing is because allowing Judaism to die is not a posthumous victory to Hitler, as he claims. The dissolution of Jewish faith would not satisfy Hitler, as Fackenheim seems to imply, for Hitler wanted the abolition of Jewish race, not religion. In my view, Fackenheim's approach does little more than guilt Jews into remaining religious out of fear of being in support of Hitler. This is a great injustice that Fackenheim commits. Whilst it can be argued that Rubenstein's psychological approach is not satisfactory either in portraying why Judaism is important, I believe it would be better to be an atheistic Jew by choice than a theistic Jew by guilt. Thus, Rubenstein's approach is superior.

The final reason why I believe Rubenstein's theology to be more convincing is that I can see no sound way in which god could've existed in a world where the Holocaust occurred. Maybaum's argument that the Jews suffered on behalf of the world's sins makes god appear

unjust. Berkowitz's argument that god's face was hidden (to stop pain) and the shock resulted from free will is unsatisfactory, as an all-good god would not have created a world in which the holocaust could've occurred (in my view). There is no theology which can resolve the conflict. Above this, ~~any~~ theologies which explain that god was there ~~is~~ usually are unsympathetic, or even harmful, towards those who suffered. Fackenheim's framing that the holocaust may have brought about a positive new opportunity is abhorrent. The only acceptable theologically valid view in response to the holocaust is to say that god cannot exist. Overall, since Rubenstein admits this, his approach is far more convincing.

Overall, I believe Rubenstein is far more convincing in his approach. Fackenheim makes theological errors opposing his religion, inexcusably misinterprets Hitler's goal to erase guilt and fails to explain how god can have been present during the shock. Though the grounding for Rubenstein's psychological Judaism is questionable, his rejection of god and philosophical and theological soundness makes his approach far more convincing.



The response shown in Exemplar 3 sets an excellent precedent with its focused introduction, promptly providing a synopsis of the two scholars to be investigated. Moving swiftly, the candidate delves into an exploration of Fackenheim, skilfully situating it within the broader philosophical context of the problem of evil and inconsistent triad. Wisel and Kierkegaard are brought into the analysis effectively, bolstering the argument, although exploring AO1 Fackenheim content before this AO2 discussion could have added further depth and clarity.

Throughout the subsequent paragraphs, the student exhibits a commendable grasp of Fackenheim's ideas and engages in insightful analysis, but the argument could have been strengthened with more specific references to core material. The counter-argument on Rubenstein is well-presented, although it falls short of achieving the maximum AO1 score, as the explanation of knowledge through an excellent selection of relevant material could have been further developed.

Nevertheless, this essay serves as an excellent example of a synoptic approach. Rather than presenting additional content, it adeptly utilises other points to develop the argument and analysis, showcasing the candidate's ability to make connections and draw on relevant material to support their points effectively.

### Assessment for learning



To make sure candidates achieve the highest levels of proficiency in AO1 and AO2, it is essential that they fully engage with primary source material from scholars and demonstrate confidence in incorporating it into their essay responses. To elevate their responses, candidates should present an excellent selection of relevant material, showcasing accurate and highly detailed knowledge. Specific references to the ideas and writings of post-Holocaust theologians can enhance candidate arguments and analyses.

In comparison questions, it is not necessary for candidates to discuss all aspects of the topic under study. Instead, they should focus on the two scholars or themes being compared within the question. By avoiding a broad overview of all their learning on the topic, candidates can delve deeper and offer more detailed and critical responses. This approach allows for a more thorough exploration of the subject matter and enables candidates to provide nuanced and insightful analyses.

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