

Section 2 Religion: environmental and medical issues

Topic 8.2.5 Judaism and stewardship

Revised

Judaism teaches that God made humans as stewards of his Earth and gave them control of the Earth and all its creatures. However, as God's stewards, Jewish people must look after the Earth in the way God showed in these mitzvot:

- Around every town there must be an area of open parkland.
- At the festival of New Year for Trees, trees should be planted where they are needed.
- Every 50 years no crops should be planted nor fruit harvested, so nature can recharge its batteries.

How Jewish teachings about stewardship affect attitudes to the environment

- The responsibility to be God's stewards and to leave the Earth a better place than they found it means that Jewish people should try to reduce pollution and preserve resources.
- Jewish people should show stewardship by working to share the Earth's resources more fairly and improve the standard of living in LEDCs.
- The belief that they will be judged on their behaviour as stewards means Jewish people should help the work of groups trying to reduce pollution and conserve resources.
- God created the environment as something which is good, therefore Jewish people have a duty to preserve the environment.
- Orthodox Jews must obey the mitzvot so they must care for the environment.

However, Jewish people believe that human interests come first and so the effects of environmental projects on humans cannot be ignored.

Evaluation of the teachings of Judaism on stewardship

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Judaism.

Now test yourself

Tested

- 1 What did God make humans to be according to Judaism?
- 2 What do the mitzvot say should happen every 50 years?
- 3 How should Jewish people show their stewardship?
- 4 What does the belief that they will be judged on their behaviour as stewards mean for Jewish people?

Answers at end

Topic 8.2.8 Attitudes to infertility treatments in Judaism

Revised

IVF and AIH are accepted by all Jewish people because:

- having children is very important in Judaism
- the rabbis teach that humans can use the benefits of technology as long as they are within the mitzvot
- the unused embryos are not foetuses so life is not being taken.

Orthodox Jews

- Most Orthodox Jews do not allow AID as they believe it involves adultery.
- Surrogacy is not allowed as Jewishness is passed on by the mother.

- Many Orthodox Jews accept egg donation as long as the donation is by a Jewish woman.

Reform Jews

Most Reform Jews accept all treatments as they believe that upbringing makes a child Jewish.

Evaluation of Judaism and infertility treatments

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Judaism.

Now test yourself

Tested

- 1 What infertility treatments are accepted by all Jewish people?
- 2 What do the rabbis teach about infertility treatments?
- 3 Why do Orthodox Jews not allow surrogacy?
- 4 Why do most Orthodox Jews not allow AID?

Answers at end

Topic 8.2.11 Attitudes to transplant surgery in Judaism

Revised

Many Jewish people only allow transplant surgery using organs from a living Jewish donor because:

- organs such as the heart are an essential part of the individual God has created
- organs from non-Jews would affect a person's Jewishness
- giving organs from the dead to the living is playing God, which is a great sin
- organs from living donors are not as vital and can be used to obey the mitzvot to preserve life
- paying for organs is exploiting the poor, which is banned by the Tenakh.

Some Jewish people are against all forms of transplant surgery because:

- transplanting organs is breaking the mitzvot on the sanctity of life

- organs have been created by God for a specific person and cannot be swapped around
- having non-Jewish organs could change a Jewish person into a non-Jew.

Some Jewish people agree with transplant surgery, but would not allow payment for organs, because:

- they believe God wants people to use medical technology to save lives
- they believe that organ donation is a way of obeying the mitzvot to love your neighbour
- they believe the Tenakh forbids exploiting the poor.

Evaluation of Judaism and transplant surgery

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Judaism.

Now test yourself

Tested

- 1 Why do many Jewish people not allow important organs like the heart to be transplanted?
- 2 Why do Jewish people not allow buying organs from the poor?
- 3 Which mitzvot do some Jewish people believe bans all transplants?
- 4 Which mitzvot make some Jewish people allow transplants?

Answers at end

Summary of Judaism and environmental and medical issues

- Judaism teaches that God created humans as his stewards of the Earth to have authority over animals and plants. He showed people how to look after the Earth in the mitzvot. Life is a test and God will judge Jews on how well they have looked after the world.
- All Jews accept IVF and AIH because having children is very important in Judaism. Some Jews accept all forms of fertility treatment, but some do not accept AID because of problems concerning the identity of parents.
- Most Jewish people agree with transplants from living donors, but not from the dead or non-Jews because organs from non-Jews would alter a person's Jewishness. Some Jewish people are against all transplants because they think they are breaking the laws on the sanctity of life. Some Jewish people agree with transplants because they save lives and show love of neighbour.

Section 3 Religion: peace and conflict

Topic 8.3.6 Attitudes to war in Judaism

Revised

Peace is the ideal for all Jewish people. However, Judaism expects Jewish people to fight in just wars because:

- the Talmud says war must be fought if God commands it
- there are mitzvot saying that Jewish people must fight when attacked
- there are many accounts in the Tenakh of how Israel had to fight wars to preserve its independence
- the Holocaust reminds Jewish people what can happen if there is no army to defend Jewish people against attack.

However, there are some Jewish pacifists who believe that war is wrong in the modern world because modern weapons are bound to harm so many innocent people.

Evaluation of Judaism and attitudes to war

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Judaism.

Now test yourself

Tested

- 1 What is the ideal for all Jewish people?
- 2 What does the Talmud say about war?
- 3 What reminds Jewish people what can happen if there is no army to defend Jewish people against attack?
- 4 Why are some Jewish people pacifists?

Answers at end

Topic 8.3.8 Attitudes to bullying in Judaism

Revised

Jewish people are against all forms of bullying because:

- Jewish society is based on respect between the members of society; bullies have no respect for the people they bully and so do not understand Jewish society
- Judaism regards using violence without a just cause as sinful
- Judaism teaches that people are a creation of God made in God's image; bullying is mistreating God's creation and so is wrong
- it is the duty of Jewish people to protect the weak and innocent but bullies do the exact opposite and so must be wrong

- all the different forms of Judaism teach that Jewish people should defend human rights and bullying denies the victim's human rights.

Evaluation of Judaism and attitudes to bullying

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Judaism.

Now test yourself

Tested

- 1 What is Jewish society based on?
- 2 What does Judaism think about using violence without a just cause?
- 3 Why are bullies failing in their Jewish duty?
- 4 What does bullying do to people's human rights?

Answers at end

Topic 8.3.11: Forgiveness and reconciliation in Judaism

Revised

Jewish people believe they should be forgiving and try to bring reconciliation because:

- the Tenakh teaches that God forgives those who turn to him in repentance
- the Tenakh teaches that Jewish people should forgive those who wrong them
- rabbis encourage Jewish people to forgive those who wrong them
- it is Jewish belief that Jewish people should forgive those who have wronged them, when on their deathbed, so that God will forgive their sins
- in the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, Jewish people have to settle any quarrels they have had with families or friends over the past year.

However, Jewish people do not have to forgive the enemies of Judaism, nor people who don't want to be forgiven.

Evaluation of Judaism: teachings on forgiveness and reconciliation

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Judaism.

Now test yourself

Tested

- 1 What does the Tenakh teach about God's forgiveness?
- 2 What do rabbis encourage Jewish people to do?
- 3 What should Jewish people do on their deathbed?
- 4 When do Jewish people have to settle any quarrels they have had with families or friends over the past year?

Answers at end

Summary of Judaism, peace and conflict

- Jewish people believe in peace, but Judaism teaches that Jewish people must defend themselves if they are attacked, as stated in the Torah and Talmud. However, some Jewish people are pacifists because they think modern weapons are too destructive ever to be used.
- Jewish people are against bullying because they should love their neighbours and protect the weak and innocent who were created by God in his image.
- Jewish people believe they should forgive those who wrong them because it is taught in the Tenakh. They also believe it is their duty to resolve conflicts as every year they have Yom Kippur when they must forgive people and resolve any personal conflicts.

Section 4 Religion: crime and punishment

Topic 8.4.4 Why justice is important in Judaism

Revised

Justice is important for Jewish people because:

- God is just, and God created the world as a place of justice
- Jewish people have to live their lives according to the mitzvot (laws) and so it is important for the courts to operate fairly and for everyone to be treated equally
- the Torah says that God is a God of justice and for Jewish people the Torah is the word of God
- the Tenakh says that people should be treated fairly and not cheat and there are many statements in the Responsa about how Jewish people should treat people fairly and equally
- as part of their belief in justice, Jewish people have been very involved in the struggle for equal rights and the change of unjust laws (many American Jewish people worked for the civil rights movement for equal rights for black Americans and many Russian Jewish people campaigned for human rights in the former USSR).

Evaluation of why justice is important for Jewish people

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Judaism.

Now test yourself

Tested

- 1 Why is it important for Jewish courts to operate fairly and for everyone to be treated equally?
- 2 What says that God is a God of justice?
- 3 What do the Tenakh and Responsa say about how people should be treated?
- 4 What have Jewish people been involved in as part of their belief in justice?

Answers at end

Topic 8.4.7 Attitudes to capital punishment in Judaism

Revised

Most Jewish people agree with capital punishment, but only if there is no possibility of reforming the murderer, because:

- the Torah says that capital punishment should be used for certain crimes
- the Talmud says capital punishment can be used but with many restrictions
- the basis of punishment is the protection of society and so murderers who will always be a danger to society should be executed
- they believe capital punishment should be used if it will deter people from becoming a threat to society.

Some Jewish people do not agree with capital punishment because:

- the Mishnah seems to be against capital punishment
- they agree with the non-religious arguments against capital punishment
- they believe the teachings of the Torah and Tenakh need updating and do not apply today.

Evaluation of different attitudes to capital punishment in Judaism

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Judaism.

Now test yourself

Tested

- 1 What does the Torah say about capital punishment?
- 2 What does the Talmud say about capital punishment?
- 3 How does the need to protect society justify capital punishment?
- 4 Why is the Mishnah used by Jewish people who disagree with capital punishment?

Answers at end

Topic 8.4.11 Attitudes to drugs and alcohol in Judaism

Revised

All Jewish people are against the use of illegal drugs because:

- the Torah teaches that being addicted to physical pleasures and doing anything to support a habit is wrong
- using drugs makes it difficult to pray, fulfil the mitzvot and learn the Torah properly
- young people using drugs stops them from honouring their parents, because parents will be upset
- the Torah says, 'You shall be holy', so Jewish people should not take drugs.
- the Tenakh speaks in praise of wine as a substance that 'gladdens the human heart'
- the use of wine is required for Shabbat and festivals
- drunkenness is condemned in the Tenakh and anyone under the influence of alcohol is forbidden to pray until sober
- the command of the Torah to be holy means that Jewish people must be moderate in their use of alcohol.

Since the discoveries of the effects of smoking on health, Jewish people are advised not to smoke because of the mitzvah to be holy.

Most Jewish people believe alcohol should be used in moderation because:

Evaluation of attitudes to drugs and alcohol in Judaism

Evaluation questions will only ask you to refer to one religion, so it would be best just to use Christianity in answering evaluation questions, although you could use extra reasons from Judaism.

Now test yourself

Tested

- 1 How does the Torah condemn drug abuse?
- 2 What does the Tenakh say 'gladdens the human heart'?
- 3 When are Jewish people required to use wine?
- 4 When are Jewish people forbidden to pray?

Answers at end

Summary of Judaism, crime and punishment

- Judaism believes in justice because the Torah says God is a God of justice and the Tenakh encourages Jewish people to work for justice by working for fair shares for the poor.
- Most Jewish people agree with capital punishment because it is approved by the Torah, and they think it will deter criminals. Some Jewish people think capital punishment is wrong because of what the Mishnah says.
- Judaism is against the use of drugs because they lead to addiction and prevent the keeping of the mitzvot. It is also against smoking because Jewish people should not harm their bodies. It allows the use of alcohol in moderation because the Tenakh praises wine, and wine plays a central part in Jewish rituals.

Answers to Now test yourself

Unit 8

Topic 8.2.5 Stewardship

- 1 Stewards of his Earth with control of the Earth and all its creatures
- 2 No crops should be planted nor fruit harvested, so nature can recharge its batteries
- 3 By working to share the Earth's resources more fairly and to improve the standard of living in LEDCs
- 4 They should help the work of groups which try to reduce pollution and conserve resources

Topic 8.2.8 Infertility treatments

- 1 IVF and AIH
- 2 Humans can use the benefits of technology as long as they are within the mitzvot
- 3 Because Jewishness is passed on by the mother
- 4 Because they believe it involves adultery

Topic 8.2.11 Transplant surgery

- 1 Because they are an essential part of the individual God has created
- 2 Because exploiting the poor is banned by the Tenakh
- 3 The mitzvot on sanctity of life
- 4 The mitzvot on loving your neighbour

Topic 8.3.6 Attitudes to war

- 1 Peace
- 2 War must be fought if God commands it
- 3 The Holocaust
- 4 Because modern weapons are bound to harm so many innocent people

Topic 8.3.8 Attitudes to bullying

- 1 Respect between the members of society
- 2 It is sinful
- 3 Because it is the duty of Jewish people to protect the weak and innocent
- 4 Denies the victim's human rights

Topic 8.3.11 Forgiveness and reconciliation

- 1 God forgives those who turn to him in repentance
- 2 To forgive those who wrong them
- 3 Forgive those who have wronged them so that God will forgive their sins
- 4 In the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

Topic 8.4.4 Justice

- 1 Because Jewish people have to live their lives according to the mitzvot
- 2 The Torah
- 3 They should be treated fairly and equally and not be cheated
- 4 The struggle for equal rights and the changing of unjust laws

Topic 8.4.7 Different attitudes to capital punishment

- 1 It should be used for certain crimes
- 2 It can be used but with many restrictions
- 3 Because murderers will always be a danger to society unless they are executed
- 4 Because it seems to be against capital punishment

Topic 8.4.11 Attitudes to drugs and alcohol

- 1 It teaches that being addicted to physical pleasures and doing anything to support a habit is wrong
- 2 Wine
- 3 For Shabbat and other festivals
- 4 When they are under the influence of alcohol