

Life on Earth:

- Beliefs and teachings about Pikuach Nefesh
- The relationship between free will and the 613 mitzvot (duties)

Key Concepts:

Covenant	A promise or agreement between God and the Jews	Shabbat	Day of rest for Jews from Friday to Saturday sunset
Shekhinah	Place where God's presence rests and can be felt	Kosher	Foods and practices allowed
Messiah	Anointed one who will bring about a new age for mankind	Synagogue	Place of worship and learning for Jews
Mitzvot	Duties or commandments	Torah	The five books of the Tenakh

Exam Practice:

- What is meant by mitzvot? (2)
- 'All Jews should keep the 613 mitzvot (duties)'. Discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. (15)

Key Sources of Authority:

- God created life in his image (Genesis 1)
- People should live not die by the Torah (Talmud)
- When I had not yet formed you in the womb I knew you (Jeremiah 1)
- The role of individual conscience

Key Beliefs:

What is Pikuach Nefesh?	The saving of a life, although it is often used to refer to the sanctity of life .
Why is Pikuach Nefesh Important?	As God created life in his own image, life is therefore sacred. Saving a life is more important than all of the other mitzvot (apart from idolatry , incest and adultery). The Talmud teaches people should 'live' not 'die' by the Torah . Jews consider teachings about Pikuach Nefesh when making life and death decisions such as abortion; organ donation; transplants; euthanasia etc. They have to be certain that their actions will actually save a life.
What is free will?	Everyone is born with an inclination to do good and an inclination to do bad. Humans are not puppets. The Torah teaches God has given Jews the freedom to choose right from wrong.
What are the 613 mitzvot ?	There are 613 mitzvot (duties) in the Torah although some can no longer be kept as they refer to practices in the Temple which is now destroyed. Orthodox Jews believe they should keep all the other mitzvot . Reform Jews believe some are not relevant to today and choose to follow those they consider most important for modern day life. The number of mitzvot are represented by the number of knots on the tallit worn by many Jews during worship . Through keeping the mitzvot many Jews believe they are keeping their relationship with God .
What is the relationship between free will and the 613 mitzvot (duties)?	Although the mitzvot are in the Torah God gave humans free will to follow them or not. It is believed that Jews are born with the inclination to do good or bad. Studying the Torah helps humans choose to do good. Once a year Mitzvah Day is celebrated when Jews do good deeds and actions for the local and wider community.

Key Connections:

How does Pikuach Nefesh relate to beliefs about *organ transplants and abortion*?

How does belief about free will relate to *keeping of the mitzvot and judgement*?