

Nature of God

The Nature of God:

- God as One; Creator; Law Giver and Judge
- Nature and significance of the Shekhinah

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:

- Describe Jewish beliefs about God as Creator (5)

Key Sources of Authority:

- 'Hear O Israel the Lord Our God the Lord is one' part of the Shema
- 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me' Exodus 20
- 'In the beginning God created heavens and earth' Genesis 1
- 'In the image of God, He created him, male and female He created them' Genesis 1

Key Beliefs:

God as One	Jews believe in one God (monotheism). The shema prayer states 'Hear O Israel the Lord Our God, the Lord is one'. God is believed to be all knowing (omniscient), all powerful (omnipotent) and always existing (omnipresent). Synagogues show this belief by not having statues of any living beings. Some Jews believe the name of God is so special that anything with God's name must be buried if no longer used.
God as Creator	Many Jews believe God alone created all life as stated in Genesis , the first book of the Torah . Some Jews believe God literally created the world in six days. Others believe the story should not be taken literally as what is important is the story shows God is creator of all. The weekly festival of Shabbat celebrates creation. As God gave life then the preservation of life Pikuach Nefesh is very important.
God as Law Giver	God revealed to Moses the duties that Jews should keep, including the Ten Commandments . Through the following of these laws Jews are fulfilling what God wants and forming a relationship with him.
God as Judge	God is a God of justice and mercy and is a judge of how the duties of the Torah are followed. At the festival of Rosh Hashanah God judges every person. God's ways may not be understandable, but they are considered to be just.
Shekhinah	Used in the Torah to describe God's dwelling on the earth. Some Jews believe the shekhinah never left the Temple and that is why Israel has a special spirituality. It is believed that through the shekhinah God's presence can be felt and creates a sense of peace and calm e.g. when Shabbat candles are lit.

Key Connections:

How do beliefs about the nature of God relate to other areas of your study?

Shabbat, Rosh Hashanah, Pikuach Nefesh, Care of the Environment, worship, Moses.