

The Nature of the Almighty: ONE and CREATOR How respect is shown for the Almighty: - God's name never spoken. Spelt G-d. Not written frequently, never erased. - Use the name 'Hashem' (the Name) What Jews believe about God's oneness - Torah: 'The Lord is God in heaven above and on earth below. There is no other'. - Torah: 'Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me'. - Shema said morning and night. Commanded in Torah. 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one'. Importance of believing in One God: - Most important characteristic of God, hence recited in Shema. - Torah (God's word) says there's one God. - Shema wouldn't be in Mezuzah placed on every door way if it wasn't important. What Jews believe about God the Creator: - Only one God created universe: in the Beinning God created the heavens and the earth' (Genesis). - Genesis says God breathed life into humans. Orthodox Jews take it literally. Reform Jews say God started creation, but humans evolved. - Creation shows God is good and humans have control of the earth. Importance of believing in God as creator: - Creation is a gift from God, to be cared for. - God's work of creation is ongoing: Jews pray each day 'his goodness renews the work of creation each day continually'.	The Nature of the Almighty: LAW GIVER and JUDGE What Jews believe about God the law giver: - Torah says God gave humans laws to help them care for earth and live good lives (mitzvot). - These laws are to be taught to their children 'you may command your children to obey carefully the words of this law'. - The laws connect Jews with God, they are his people. Importance of believing in God as law giver: - The laws form the basis of every day life. - They give life meaning and purpose for Jews. - They are part of the covenant with Moses, which forms the basis of Judaism. What Jews believe about God the Judge: - He delivers justice and mercy. Tenakh teaches 'he will judge the world in righteousness'. - God will judge Jews on how well they have kept the mitzvot. - God will treat everyone with respect and judge them fairly, justice will reign in the future. Importance of believing in God as judge: - Ensures good are rewarded, bad punished. - World is protected from chaos that would come if there was no way to ensure people keep God's laws. - It affects everyday life. They celebrate Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur to say sorry for sins, hoping God will judge them well in the future.	The Shekhinah Shekhinah means 'to settle or dwell' and refers to God's presence on earth. - When Moses was guided through wilderness to the promised land, God said 'my presence will go with you and I will give you rest' (Exodus). - God told Jews to build him a tabernacle in the wilderness: make me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them' Exodus Different understandings of Shekhinah: - Some Jews think it is the same as God. - Orthodox Jews say it is like a light created to be a link between God and man. - Some think it's like the holy spirit. - Reform Jews think it represents God's female attributes as it's a female word in Hebrew. How it's expressed today by Jews: - When they pray (in a minyan) Shekhinah is with them. Solomon said 'the glory of Hashem filled the Temple' as he prayed there. - Studying Torah, Shekhinah's present. Done in a Yeshiva (school). Rabbi Teradion: if two sit together and the words between them are of the Torah, the Shekhinah is in their midst'. - In Synagogue, a light burns (Ner Tamid) to represent God's presence in the synagogue, as it did in Temple of Jerusalem. Why believing in Shekhinah is important: - Reminder: be close to God, whilst still maintaining a deep sense of respect for God. - Shekhinah surrounded Moses when received Torah, so it must have come from God. - Reminder: they can connect with God through prayer/ worship.	Messiah - Nevi'im (Prophets) says Messianic age is golden time, peace will reign, world will be place of justice. - Zechariah: there will be no sin or evil, everyone will follow God's commandments. Why Jews wanted a Messiah - Means 'anointed one', referred to kings of Israel. When Israelite kingdom captured in 586BCE, Jewish people wanted a Messiah who would be a great political leader descended from David (Jeremiah), charismatic leader inspiring others (Isaiah) and a person who would keep God's commandments (Isaiah). Different understandings: - All Jews generally accept Messiah will come (Maimonides said it's a principle of faith) but they disagree about <i>when</i>: - Some Orthodox say it will be when everyone keeps the mitzvot perfectly. - Most Orthodox say no one can know when it will be. Some Haredi Jews say they know when it will happen. - Many Reform don't believe in an individual Messiah (for when Jews needed hope). But think they should work to encourage peace (messianic age).	The Abrahamic Covenant: in Genesis Covenant = binding agreement and sealed with oath (brit olam). - God promises Abraham he will be a leader of a great nation', give him a Son (Isaac) and many descendants, lead him to a promised land. In return Abraham must leave his land, trust that God will take them to promised land, give him a child (Sarah was old) and must circumcise males as sign of covenant (Brit milah). Why circumcision: Genesis: circumcision will be the sign of the covenant between me and you'. God seals the covenant which promises Abraham many descendants with a mark on the part of the body that creates the future generations. - Man shouldn't be satisfied with imperfect state, circumcision perfects man, should try to serve God will all of body. Different Jewish attitudes towards circumcision: - Orthodox Jews see it as sign of being part of Abrahamic covenant, boys have it at 8 days old. Important to remember God promised Abraham children and kept the promise, controlled nature for him (Isaac). - Reform Jews don't circumcise, instead have a welcoming ceremony. See Mosaic covenant as more important, see circumcision as unethical (painful), think being born of Jewish mother makes you Jewish and follow Torah which says you shall not make any cuttings in your flesh on account of the dead or tattoo any marks upon you'. History of Promised land: - Jews lives in Israel from 1200 BCE to 135 CE, then exiled by Romans. For 2000 years prayed to return. In 1947 state of Israel created, but still war and conflict as Palestinians and Israelis fight over territory. Exodus: a land flowing with milk and honey. Promised land affects Jews: - Central to Judaism. Laws tied up with it: Exodus 23 – Jewish farmers must leave land fallow for 1 year out of 7. Some Orthodox Jews don't buy Israeli vegetables one year out of 7. - Features in Synagogue prayers. They pray towards Jerusalem. - When buried, small amount of earth from Israel put in coffin, symbol of being buried in land of Israel.
Moses and the Mosaic Covenant Nature and History - Jews were slaves in Egypt. Moses frees them (Exodus story). For 40 year Moses wanders in wilderness with Jews and receives 613 mitzvot. New covenant formed with God – They keep his laws, he will bless them (if not he will punish them). Importance of Covenant with Moses - Basis of Judaism today. 613 mitzvot guide life. - The covenant means there is a duty to keep God's laws. This makes them a holy nation (Exodus) - Tenakh teaches if they keep them all, they could bring all people to worship God. - Moses is important as he received laws, taught them to Jews, but just a man – God freed them. Importance of 10 commandments 1st one (I am Lord your God) reminds to worship one God, hence mezuzah and Shema. 2nd one (have no other gods but me) reminds to worship God, hence no statues. 3rd (Do not misuse God's name) reminds them God is holy, hence no saying/ erasing God's name. 4th (keep Sabbath holy) reminds them God rested on 7th day. They don't work on Sabbath. 5th (Honour mother and father) helps with family life, hence obeying parents, ensuring they're clothed and housed, supporting 'Jewish Care'. 6th - 10th (don't kill, steal etc.) help in relationships with others, promoting family values and honesty, avoiding greed and materialism.	Sanctity of Life (Pikuach Nefesh) Life is sacred, as created by God: I put to death and I bring to life' Torah. - Pikuach nefesh= any Jewish law can be broken to save a life. Torah says those who 'obeys them will live by them' rabbis added 'not that he shall die by them'. - Sabbath laws can be broken to save life: break down a wall that would fall on a child, put out a fire. Can perform an abortion to save mother's life (foetus less important than existing mother). - However, Jews say you cannot murder, commit idolatry, create a dangerous situation which might put more lives at risk, nor automatically give up life to save another (suicide). Can't perform assisted suicide or euthanasia as they hasten death. Differences in belief: - Abortion: Reform go further than Orthodox, also allow it for social reasons. - Contraception: Orthodox don't allow (male seed is sacred) Jewish AIDs trust promotes it to prevent HIV (saves lives). - Transplant surgery: mitzvot not to interfere with dead body. Orthodox only allow transplants from living donors, Reform apply Pik-Nefesh and allow from dead too.	Mitzvot and Moral Principles Nature and importance of mitzvot: Mitzvot are the 613 laws given on Mount Sinai. 248 positive commands (aseh), 365 negative (ta'aseh). - Written in Torah. Oral Torah (Misneh) explains what the 613 mean. This was passed on by priests, judges and rabbis over centuries. It was written down when it got too long to remember in the Misneh Torah. - The oral and written Torahs make up the Halakhah (the way, or Jewish law). Teaches how to fulfil all mitzvot. Orthodox say halakhah given on Mount Sinai, Reform say it developed over generations. Keeping Mitzvot and free will - They are commands, not optional. But each person decides whether to keep them or not as Torah says each person created in God's image i.e. with free will. Each day Jews choose to follow or disobey them. Importance of mitzvot between Almighty and humans - Way to connect with God, they communicate with God through them. - God's way of reaching out to humans, helping them to live correctly. - Observing them shows gratitude to God for freedom from slavery. Importance of mitzvot between humans - Keeping mitzvot like visiting sick, feeding hungry etc. are random acts of kindness, helping Jews to love neighbours. - They uphold dignity, e.g. if you lend don't charge interest to the poor. - The mitzvot which are acts of loving kindness can be done by anyone, rich or poor, unlimited times. Different beliefs about their importance: - Orthodox: they are important. Cover how to behave in life. Come from God, must be obeyed. Liberal: not directly from God so keep some food laws, not others. Modern decisions like organ donation are controversial. Different rabbis disagree over whether allowed.	Jewish Beliefs about Life After Death Jews primarily focussed on here and now, not on life after death. All generally think death not the end, but disagree about what happens: - Judgement: Some rabbis say based on behaviour, others on beliefs too Talmud: all will have it apart from those who say Torah not from heaven. - Resurrection: Maimonides said I believe there will be a resurrection of the dead'. Orthodox rabbis still teach it. Disagree when will happen (during or after Messianic age). - Heaven: (Gan Eden) for the good. Daniel says multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to everlasting life'. - Hell (Gehinom) place for the unrighteous, of 'everlasting contempt'. Some rabbis say stay there for ever, others see it as purgatory to purify yourself for heaven, others: it's for 12 months before heaven. - Reunited: Torah says reunited with loved ones. Jacob is described as gathered to his people' and Exodus says those who work on Sabbath will be cut off from the community. Importance: - Tenakh says it exists, Torah comes from God, so must be true. Talmud says it exists, Jews try to follow its teaching. Believing in judgement after death means Jews can try to keep laws. Comparison with Christian beliefs - Many Christians and Jews agree heaven and hell are there for good and evil, that purgatory (or Gehinom) purify ready for heaven and that there will be a resurrection of dead. But, there are differences of belief. Jews don't focus much on life after death, Christians do. Jews think at end of time Jews will bring all people to worship God plus will be a Messianic age, Christians don't.	

