

PRAYER AND SERVICES

Judaism
Practices

Tefillah: prayer, literally 'to judge oneself'

Kavanah: the mindset for prayer

Tallit: a prayer shawl

Tefillin: small leather boxes containing extracts from the Torah, strapped to the wearers arm and forehead for prayers.

Amidah: also known as the 'standing prayer' a central part of Jewish worship.

What happens in an Orthodox service & why?

- Service opens with prayers consisting of thanksgiving and readings from Psalms
- The Shema prayer is read aloud. The Shema is a Jewish statement of belief in one God. This will be accompanied by blessings before and after.
- Orthodox services will be conducted in Hebrew
- The Rabbi will stand on the Bimah facing Jerusalem while taking the service
- Men and women will be separate

The Amidah (standing prayer)

- The Amidah is the core of Jewish prayer services. Orthodox Jews will pray in silence while standing facing Jerusalem.
- The Amidah consists of a series of blessings:
- **Three** to praise God and ask for mercy
- **Thirteen** to ask for God's help (**six** for personal requests and **six** for the community and a final request that God accepts the prayers)
- **Three** to thank God for the opportunity to serve him.

Prayers and services in the synagogue

- Formal prayer services are held three times a day: morning, afternoon and evening.
- A minyan (10 adult men in Orthodox and 10 adult men or women in Reform) must be present for services to take place
- Daily prayers are read from the siddur (prayer book)

Daily Jewish prayers

- **Morning prayers** – Jews will dedicate their day to God and ask for support and guidance through the day
- **Afternoon prayers** – Jews interrupt their day to worship God. This shows that nothing is more important than Him.
- **Evening prayers** – Jews will thank God for blessing and guiding them through the day

Jews believe prayer is vital for communicating with God. It brings them closer and enables them to focus their hearts, souls and minds to him.

Shema Prayer: 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is One'

Past Exam Questions

Spec: Explain two contrasting ways in which worship is carried out in Orthodox and non-Orthodox synagogues. (4)

Give two reasons why Jews might prefer to worship in a synagogue rather than at home. (2)

2018: Explain two contrasting ways in which Jews worship. (4)

2020: Which one of the following is the Amidah? (1)

2021: 'The synagogue is the centre of the Jewish faith.' (12)

Prayer and services influences

- **influences** Jews to dedicate all parts of their day to God
- **influences** Jews to be closer to the Jewish community
- **influences** Jews to always give thanks for what they have
- **influences** Jews to understand the importance of tradition
- **influences** Jews to be kind and compassionate to others
- **influences** Jews to communicate and strengthen their relationship with God