

INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM ON-LINE COURSE



שלום

Shalom – Welcome!
to the Introduction to Judaism Online Course

This document contains the introduction and curriculum outlining the content of the 7 units and the thirty sessions that they comprise.

There are also two introductory sessions which help to establish a framework into which your further studies, reading and viewing will fit, and will also give you a taste of the course, the learning tasks and the tutorial system. There is no charge for these initial sessions.

The course is open to everyone, Jewish or not, and knowledge of Hebrew is not required and is not taught as part of this course, though it would certainly assist to undertake some study of Hebrew if you wish to get a better feel for Judaism and be more able to participate.

The sessions have several 'Learning Tasks', from which the student can choose the easier or extended options. These are submitted to a tutor. It is important that all submitted work is written in the student's own words, as simply copying from a book or website does not make you process, understand and learn or retain much from the process.

Once the two introductory sessions have been completed, and if you are interested to proceed, the tutor will explain the registration procedures and introduce you to one of the Rabbis of the Progressive Movement in Australia, New Zealand and Asia. This allows you to open a conversation with a Rabbi and ask any questions you may have (all our Introduction to Judaism courses are supervised by our Rabbis, who are responsible for their content).

This curriculum contains information about the topics that need to be covered as well as the required and recommended readings for each of the seven units (it happens that 7 is a powerful, mystical and symbolic number in Judaism – eg 7 days of week, the 7th day, 7 branches of Menorah, 7th – sabbatical - year).

Each unit comprises a number of sessions which can be undertaken at a speed that is comfortable and convenient to you. There is a charge to undertake each unit, and each needs to be completed before proceeding to the next (apart from unit 1, see below).

Unit 1 is about 'Jewish Time' – the framework of the Jewish year, and unit 5 is about the New Year and Day of Atonement and the other Festivals in the month of Tishrei.

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Unit 1 is undertaken over the annual cycle (in the months listed) and Unit 5 is leading up to and over the New Year (September) – and your attendance at the festivals and other events wherever possible is a valuable part of the program, reinforcing the academic learning with an experiential aspect. (If you think you may wish to convert, it is all the more important that you have attended as many Shabbat and Festival services as possible). Therefore please note carefully the festivals and other events listed (shaded rows). **Congregational bulletins or websites will give details of service and event times. If you are not within easy reach of one of our congregations, you will have discussed this with the tutor and/or Rabbi you have already spoken to.**

Units 2 to 4 and 6 and 7 can be undertaken at a speed which is convenient to you, but need to be done in their numerical order as they assume knowledge and understanding from the previous sessions and units.

Please do ALL the required readings and as much of the recommended (and any further) reading as time and interest dictate. Movies and TV documentaries also add to the perspectives and images of Judaism that will give you a broader understanding and feel for this rich and wonderful heritage. Your learning and success is largely dependent on completing the preparation prior to undertaking each session.

Each session of the unit has a '**Learning Goal**' and an easy **self-checking test**, to make sure you have covered the key points. The tests are for your own use and do not need to be submitted.

Each unit also has '**Learning Tasks**'. Generally these are associated with the sessions in that unit (sometimes one task per session). As in the introductory sessions, there is a choice of tasks, from easier to more extended, depending how much time you have and how much challenge you require.

Aside from the published materials listed below, booklets and other materials are sometimes indicated and these are available from the PJV website at:

<http://pju.org.au/education/introduction-judaism-online>

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REQUIRED and RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

The materials required for the two introductory sessions do not require to be purchased. They are available free of charge on-line.

Required Texts (all usually available from LBC – 03 9819 7160 or www.lbc.org.au):

Rabbi Wayne Dosick - "Living Judaism – The complete guide to Jewish belief, tradition, and practice" (also available as an ebook from Amazon.com)

Rabbis Pete Tobias/Jonathan Keren-Black – "A Judaism for the 21st Century" (also available as an ebook from Amazon.com)

World Union Edition of Mishkan T'filah, (Daily, Sabbath and festivals *Siddur* prayer book)

TaNakh (The Hebrew Bible; JPS Hebrew/English version would be best)

Additional Recommended Texts:

The Torah, A Modern Commentary and/or The Torah, A Women's Commentary (both URJ Press).

Heritage by Abba Eban – this is available either on DVD as a watchable 9 episode TV documentary, or in accompanying book form ISBN 0 297 78541 9.

The Family Haggadah, UPJ

Gates of Repentance (High Holyday *machzor* prayer book).

Louis Jacobs - "The Book of Jewish Belief" & "The Book of Jewish Practice"

Online material at: <http://pju.org.au/education/introduction-judaism-online>

Introduction to Judaism Online - Current coordinator and tutor:

Sue Black, email Tutor1@pju.org.au

Introduction to Judaism Online - Rabbinic Supervisor:

Rabbi Jonathan Keren-Black, email rabbi@lbc.org.au

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COURSE OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION (2 sessions)

- 1) Jewish Time, the Jewish Yearly Cycle – Overview,
- 2) The three pillars of Judaism: God, Torah and Israel.

UNIT 1 (7 sessions) - [Jewish Time - The cycle of the Year](#)

UNIT 2 (3 sessions) - Jewish Worship

UNIT 3 (5 sessions) - The Days of Our Lives – The Jewish Lifecycle

UNIT 4 (4 sessions) - Who are the Jews and how did they get here?

UNIT 5 (4 sessions) - [Jewish Holy Time – The High Holydays & Tishrei Festivals](#)

UNIT 6 (4 sessions) - The People of the Book

UNIT 7 (3 sessions) - Jewish Living – Turning the Everyday into the Sacred

Month	Unit/Topic	Note as completed
INTRO session 1 Any time	<p align="center">WELCOME & ORIENTATION.</p> <p align="center"><i>Jewish Time, the Jewish Yearly Cycle, The Synagogue - Overview</i></p> <p>Required reading: A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pages 5-8, 16-25 & pp 115-116 Dosick pp. 119-126, 210-218 (all these available electronically) Living Judaism booklet, p15, 16-17, 25</p>	
INTRO session 2 Any time	<p align="center"><i>The three pillars of Judaism: God, Torah and Israel.</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Jewish Understandings of God.</i></p> <p align="center"><i>The Diversity of Jewish Tradition</i></p> <p>Required readings: A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pages 9-15, 59-63, 31-35, 157-168 (available as electronic copy) Powerpoint: God, Torah and Israel (available electronically)</p>	
January/ February	New Year of the Trees – Tu B'Shevat	
UNIT 1	JEWISH HOLY TIME – THE JEWISH YEAR	
U 1 – 1 - Feb	<p align="center"><i>Tu B'Shevat, Purim, the Scroll of Esther. Special Sabbaths.</i></p> <p>Required: Dosick pp. 155-161 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 137-138 Powerpoint: Purim and the Scroll of Esther</p> <p>Also Required: Read the Book of Esther, which can be found in your TaNaKh¹ in the Writings section, or the shortened version available at http://pjuv.org.au/education/introduction-judaism-course-online-course.</p>	
	Purim – March	
U1 – 2 – March	<p align="center"><i>'Springtime' Festivals², Pesach 1</i></p> <p align="center"><i>History, themes, background to Pesach.</i></p> <p>Required: Dosick pp. 162-174 & 118 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 123 -128 **You will need to use a Passover Haggadah**</p>	

¹ TaNaKh = Hebrew acronym for Torah (the five books of Moses), Nevi'im (Prophets) & Ketuvim (Writings), otherwise known as the Hebrew Bible, or by Christians as the "Old Testament".

² yes, Spring! Judaism is orientated to the seasons in the Northern hemisphere.

U1 – 3 - March	<p style="text-align: center;">Pesach 2 – The Seder & finding our way around the Haggadah. Pesach songs and recipes. Same readings as last week. **You will need to use a Passover Haggadah**</p>	
March/ April	<p style="text-align: center;">Pesach You are strongly encouraged to attend a congregational Seder. Bookings are required in advance.</p>	
U1 – 4 - April	<p style="text-align: center;">The Omer, Yom HaShoah U’Gevurah The Holocaust & anti-Semitism. Required: Dosick pp. 181-182 (Yom HaShoah) A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 128-129, 140 -143 Recommended: Dosick essay pp. 183-194, Jacobs ch 17 & 18 Abba Eban: Heritage episode 8: Out of the Ashes Alice Herz Sommer YouTube</p>	
U1 – 5 – April/ May	<p style="text-align: center;">Yom HaZikaron & Yom Ha’atzmaut⁴ Israel’s Place in the Jewish World Today. Key Symbols of the Jewish State. Israel and the Diaspora. Required: Dosick pp. 195-196 (Yom HaAtzmaut), 334-336 (9.The Israeli Flag, 10. The Emblem of the State of Israel, 11. “Hatikvah”), A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 138 -139 Recommended: Dosick Essay on Israel, pp 342-355</p>	
May	<p style="text-align: center;">Yom Ha’Atzma’ut – Israel Independence Day Community observances and celebrations</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">On-line check in/ask the Rabbi session. An opportunity to reflect on the course so far, particularly the festivals and observances of the previous several weeks (Pesach on), and to discuss any questions/issues that have arisen. No required reading</p>	

³ Note that where Dosick uses the title ‘The Eight Days of Passover’ on page 173, this is an orthodox/conservative practice. As biblically ordained, Passover is a seven day holiday.

⁴ Please note that the history of Israel and Zionism is covered in unit 4.5.

U1 – 6 - June	<p align="center">Shavuot & The Book of Ruth. Ruth as the quintessential Jew by choice. Tisha B'Av</p> <p align="center">Required: Dosick pp. 174-181 & 65 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 128 -130, 139</p> <p align="center">Also Required: Read the whole Book of Ruth found in the Writings section of your TaNaKh. Recommended Reading: Jacobs ch 5.</p>	
Evening May/June	<p align="center">Shavuot – Late-night study, Revelation, Ruth and Dairy Foods!</p> <p align="center">Attend your nearest congregation's Erev Shavuot Programming including service & Tikkun Leil Shavuot. Review - Dosick pp. 176-181, A Judaism for Today p 139</p>	
July/ August	<p align="center">Tisha b'Av – 25 hour fast-day.</p> <p align="center">What's it all about?</p>	
U1 – 7 - Nov	<p align="center">Chanukah – Lights in the Middle of Winter (Yes, Winter!) The "December Dilemma" – Living as Jews in a predominantly non-Jewish society.</p> <p align="center">Dosick pp. 151-155 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 135-136</p>	
December	Chanukah	

UNIT 2	JEWISH WORSHIP	
U2 - 1	<p align="center">Introductory Concepts & Terms, Prayer in Place of Temple Worship, Times of Prayer, Synagogue and its ritual objects, Synagogue People, The "Uniform" of Jewish Prayer.</p> <p align="center">Key Jewish Symbols.</p> <p align="center">Required: Dosick pp. 201-210, (review 210-218), 221-225, 275-2845 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 85-97</p> <p align="center">Also Required – World Union Edition of Mishkan T'filah Read Contents (ix-x) & Notes on Style and Usage (pp. xix-xx) and note on T'filin on page 29</p> <p align="center">Recommended reading: Jacobs ch 14, and Blue thread article at: http://pjuv.org.au/education/introduction-judaism-online</p>	

U2 -2	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Siddur & the Structure of our Services</i> <i>The Synagogue has permanently replaced the Temple</i> <i>Definitions of Siddur and Machzor. Worship</i> <i>Practices, Outline of the Prayer Service. Key Prayers</i> <i>& their Meanings.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Required: Dosick pp. 116-117, 218-220, A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 98-107, 193-197 World Union Edition of Mishkah T'filah Recommended: Jacobs ch 13</p>	
U2 - 3	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Ways of understanding Jewish Prayer.</i> <i>Gender in Prayer & Other Key Concerns of Progressive Judaism with</i> <i>Respect to Prayer.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Required: Dosick essay pp. 226-245 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 178-183, 198-208 World Union Edition of Mishkah T'filah</p>	

UNIT 3	THE DAYS OF OUR LIVES – THE JEWISH LIFECYCLE	
U3 – 1	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Concept of Brit (covenant), Birth to Bar/Bat Mitzvah.</i> <i>Contraception, birth and the relevance of circumcision.</i> <i>Early childhood to leaving childhood</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Required: Dosick pp. 17-19 & 285-295 A Judaism for the 21st Century, pp26-30, 69-73, 144-147, 209-214</p>	
U3 – 2	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Relationships, Marriage & Divorce.</i> <i>Key Terms, Values & Concepts. Mikveh⁶,</i> <i>Taharat Hamishpachah,⁷ Bet Din.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Required: Dosick pp. 295-303, A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 215-221 Recommended: Dosick 269-2758, Jacobs ch 25,</p>	

⁵ Note that 'Hashem' (the name) as in 'Baruch Hashem', 'b'ezrat Hashem' etc is a very indirect way of referring to God, most usually identified with the very orthodox part of the community.

⁶ Apart from conversion, Mikveh is rarely used in our communities - for background information only

⁷ This is for background information and is probably never observed in our communities

U3 – 3	<p align="center"><i>Jewish Burial & Mourning Practices.</i> <i>Dying, Death, Funeral, Minyan, The Mourner’s Kaddish.</i> Required: Dosick pp. 303-312 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp148-151</p>	
U3 - 4	<p align="center"><i>Jewish Beliefs about the Afterlife.</i> <i>Jewish Understandings of the Messiah.</i> Dosick essay pp. 313-322 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp188-192 Recommended: Dosick pp. 43-50, Jacobs ch 26 & 27</p>	
U3 - 5	<p align="center"><i>Sexual orientation, Jewish Status issues with children,</i> <i>Choosing Judaism. Conversion in Jewish Tradition</i> Dosick pp. 65-71 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 222-237</p>	

UNIT 4	<p>WHO ARE THE JEWS AND HOW DID WE GET HERE? THE PAST TO THE PRESENT</p>	
U4 - 1	<p align="center"><i>God, Torah & Israel.</i> <i>Who are the Jews? - the diversity of the Jewish People in our own time.</i> <i>Sephardim, Ashkenazim, Edot HaMizrach & Modern</i> <i>Denominations/Streams. The Melbourne Jewish</i> <i>Community as a case study for the diversity that exists in</i> <i>Jewish life today.</i> Required: Dosick pp. 51-64 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 175-177 Recommended Reading: the background to the World Union of Progressive Judaism in ‘A Judaism for the Twenty First Century’, pp169-175, Jacobs ch 16 See Directory of Victorian Jewish Organisations from theJCCV diary (on-line at jccv.org.au)</p>	

8 See notes 7 and 8 above

U4 - 2	<p align="center"><i>How did we get here? – Dynamic Development – Creation through 135 CE.</i></p> <p align="center"><i>The Biblical Period through the destruction of the Temples and the dawn of the Rabbinic Period. Tisha b’Av.</i></p> <p align="center">Required: Dosick pp. 357-362, 196-199 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 36-40 (mid), 152-156 Powerpoint U4:2, ‘Creation to 135 CE’ available from http://pjb.org.au/education/introduction-judaism-online If possible: Abba Eban: Heritage, either DVD ‘A People is Born’ and ‘The Power of the Word’ episodes 1 and 2 or in the book, chapters 1 and 2 NOTE: the dates & events on the timeline on p. 358 are essential basics that you are <u>strongly</u> encouraged to try to memorize to help place everything you learn about Jewish history & literature into context.</p>	
U4 - 3	<p align="center"><i>How did we get here? – 200 CE-17th Century</i></p> <p align="center"><i>The Rabbinic and Geonic periods. The “Golden Age of Spain” & the expulsion. The Middle Ages.</i></p> <p align="center">Required: Dosick pp. 363-366 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp mid 40-mid 41 Powerpoint U4:3, ‘135 CE to the 17th Century’, and Powerpoint U4:3 ‘Judaism Christianity and Islam are siblings’, available from http://pjb.org.au/education/introduction-judaism-online If possible: Abba Eban: Heritage, either DVD ‘The Shaping of Traditions’ and ‘The Crucible of Europe’ episodes 3 and 4 or in the book, chapters 4 and 6</p>	
U4 - 4	<p align="center"><i>How did we get here? – 18th Century through to the Shoah</i></p> <p align="center"><i>The various Jewish responses to Enlightenment & Modernity.</i></p> <p align="center">Required: A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp mid 41-43, 184-187 Dosick (chronology) pp. 366-370. Review p. 358. Powerpoint U4:4, ‘18th Century to the Shoah’ available from http://pjb.org.au/education/introduction-judaism-online If possible: Abba Eban: Heritage: either DVD ‘The Search for Deliverance’, ‘Roads from the Ghetto’ and ‘Out of the Ashes’ episodes 5, 6 and 8 or in the book, chapters 7, 9 and 11</p>	
U 4-5	<p align="center"><i>Zionism and the History of the State of Israel.</i></p> <p align="center">Required: Dosick pp. 323-341 & 369-374. Review p. 358 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 44-50 Recommended Reading: Booklet: ‘Jews-State’ by Theodor Herzl, available online from http://pjb.org.au/education/introduction-judaism-online Powerpoint U4:5, ‘Zionism and the State of Israel’ available from http://pjb.org.au/education/introduction-judaism-online If possible: Abba Eban: Heritage: either DVD ‘Into the Future’, episode 9, or in the book ‘Israel and World Jewry: The Modern Age’ chapter 12</p>	

UNIT 5	JEWISH HOLY TIME – THE HIGH HOLYDAYS & TISHREI FESTIVALS	
U5 – 1 - Aug	<p><i>Brief Review of the Jewish Calendar with a focus on the Elul-Tishrei festival cycle.</i> <i>Themes, Symbols, Practices of Elul, Selichot, Rosh Hashanah.</i> Required: Dosick pp. (review 117, 119-126) &130-134 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 114-120 top Gates of Repentance Recommended Readings: Jacobs ch 20</p>	
U5 – 2 - Aug	<p><i>Yom Kippur & Aseret Y'mei Teshuvah (the Ten Days of Repentance). A look at key prayers in the Machzor for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.</i> Required: Dosick pp. 134-138 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 120 -122 Gates of Repentance Recommended Readings: Jacobs ch 22</p>	
U5 – 3- Aug	<p><i>Sin, Repentance & Forgiveness in Judaism. The book of Jonah</i> Required Dosick pp. 139-146, The Book of Jonah. (in Gates of Repentance & TaNaKh)</p>	
Sep	Erev (Eve of) and Day of Rosh Hashanah Jewish New Year	
Sep	Shabbat Shuvah – Sabbath of Repentance – the Sabbath between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur	
Sep	Kol Nidre (Evening) and Day of Yom Kippur Day of Atonement, 25 hour fast.	
U 5 – 4- Sept/ Oct	<p><i>Sukkot & Simchat Torah – Themes, Symbols. Book of Ecclesiastes. In the Sukkah & Friedlander.</i> Required Dosick 147-151 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 130 -133 Also read or at least skim the Book of Ecclesiastes (found in the Writings section of your TaNaKh).</p>	

Sept/ Oct	Sukkot first Day	
In the Sukkah!	Shabbaton – Meet others and Ask the Rabbi session! An opportunity to reflect on the course so far and to discuss any questions/issues that have arisen especially during the High Holy Days and about Sukkot/Simchat Torah. No required reading. Wear warm clothes!	
Sept/ Oct	Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah – finish and re-start yearly Torah reading cycle.	

UNIT 6	THE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK	
U6 – 1	<p style="text-align: center;">Literature – TaNaKh⁹. Key Contents, Terms & Concepts. Torah Shebichtav (Written Torah), The Apocrypha. Who Wrote the Bible? How Is the Bible ‘True’?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Required: Dosick pp. 73-84, 92-93. Review pp. 357-362 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 51-53 TaNaKh</p> <p style="text-align: center;">You may wish to review Abba Eban: Heritage episode 1 Recommended Readings: Dosick pp. 85-91, Jacobs ch 3 & 6</p>	
U6 - 2	<p style="text-align: center;">Literature – Concept of Torah SheB’al Peh (Oral Torah). Rabbinic Judaism. <u>Brief</u> introduction to: Mishnah, Gemara & Talmud, Rabbinic Bible Commentaries, Codification of Jewish Law (Halachah), Midrash, Zohar & Kabbalah.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Required Dosick pp. 93-105 & 114-116 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 53-58 Review Dosick pp. 358, 363-366</p> <p style="text-align: center;">You may wish to review Abba Eban: Heritage episode 3 Recommended Reading: Jacobs ch 7</p>	
U6 - 3	<p style="text-align: center;">Key Jewish Concepts: Kedushah, Mitzvah, Ethical Monotheism, the role of ritual, Tikkun Olam, Jewish Peoplehood. The “Chosen People”.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Required: Dosick pp. 30-42 (& review 51-54 and 19) A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, 64-68, 74-79 and review pp31-35 Recommended Readings: Jacobs ch.4&23;</p>	

⁹TaNaKh = Hebrew acronym for Torah (the five books of Moses), Nevi'im (Prophets) & Ketuvim (Writings), otherwise known as the Hebrew Bible, or by Christians as the “Old Testament”.

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UNIT 7	JEWISH LIVING – TURNING THE EVERYDAY INTO THE SACRED	
U7 - 1	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Living a Jewish life – An Overview of Important Jewish Values & Practices. A Jewish Community and A Jewish Home</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Required: Dosick pp. 247-256 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 80-84, 253-257 World Union Edition of Mishkan T'filah, pp 118-128, 604-620 Powerpoint U7-1 Overview Recommended Readings: Jacobs ch 19, 21, 24, 29</p>	
U7 - 2	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Making Jewish Choices for Living: Progressive Jewish understandings of Halakhah (Jewish Law). Kashrut.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What we eat as an expression of kedushah and as a model for Jewish decision making.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dosick pp. 256-268 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 249-252, 258-261 Powerpoint U7-2 Kashrut Recommended Readings: Dosick pp. 106-113 & Jacobs ch 15, Progressive Kashrut at: http://pju.org.au/education/introduction-judaism-online Orthodox website on kashrut: http://www.ahavat-israel.com/torat/treif.php</p>	
U7 - 3	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Making Jewish Choices for Living: Emphasising Meaning. Ethical Emphasis. Shabbat</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Required: Dosick pp. 127-130 A Judaism for the Twenty-First Century, pp 108-113, 238-249 Powerpoint U7-3 Shabbat Recommended Reading: Jacobs ch 11</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">Conclusion Well done – Mazal Tov! Read the midrash in Dosick pp 375-376. And remember – you have reached the end of the beginning. As Hillel said: 'All the rest is commentary – go and learn'!</p>	

*Developed for the Online course by Rabbi Jonathan Keren-Black, Leo Baeck
Centre, from the curricula developed by the Rabbis of Progressive Judaism Victoria*