

## Key Words

Synagogue	Shema	Mezuzah	Pushke
Orthodox	Modeh Ani	Siddur	Tenakh
Shabbat	Menorah	Tzedekah	Talmud

## Sacred Places: The Jewish Home

The home is also regarded as a sacred place for Jews and a place where Jewish traditions are upheld. Regardless of whether or not a Jew attends **synagogue** each evening, the Jewish home is still a place of prayer and worship. On first waking in the morning and while still in bed, many **Orthodox** Jews will recite the **Modeh Ani** as a way to fulfil the first instruction in the Code of Jewish Law: 'Be strong as a lion when you wake up in the morning to serve your Creator.' The words of this prayer ('I offer thanks to You, living and eternal King, for You have mercifully restored my soul within me; Your faithfulness is great') ensure that the first conscious moments of the individual are spent thanking God for his gift of life. In addition, Jews will recite the **Shema** at various points during the day as part of the declaration of their faith. The observance of **Shabbat** and other important Jewish celebrations is also an integral part of worship and tradition within the home. Many Jews believe that praying regularly at home helps to develop a strong relationship with God and many will use the **Siddur** prayer book to guide them through their daily prayers. This can be used in both the synagogue and the home.

The Jewish home is also where Jewish values are developed and passed on to children. It is where a Jew learns what it means to be a Jew and this is reinforced through many of the practices of the home. For example, most Jews will place a **menorah** in the window during Hanukkah. Many will also place a **mezuzah** on the doorframe of their front door, and on the right-hand door posts of all the other rooms in the home (apart from the bathroom). This is a parchment scroll with the words of the Shema written on it. Jews will touch the mezuzah and then kiss their fingers to remind them that they should live according to the words of the Shema. The mezuzah turns the home into a sanctuary, a place where God lives and is a symbol of God's love and protection.

Most Jewish homes also have a **tzedakah** box or **pushke** which is used to collect money for charity. The Hebrew word tzedakah comes from the root *tzedek* which means 'justice.' In Judaism, giving money and resources to those in need is understood to be an act of justice.



## Key Concepts

- Can God be worshipped anywhere?
- The importance of the home as a place of worship.
- The home as a place of Jewish identity.
- The home as a place of Jewish tradition.

## Key Sources of Authority

- **The Tenakh** - The Torah (the Law), the Nevi'im (the Prophets) and the Ketuvim (the Writings).
- **The Talmud** - this is the written version of the Oral Torah which provides a commentary to explain the meaning behind the scriptures and how to apply the laws.

## Relevant past paper questions

Describe how the home is a place of Jewish traditions. (5) (SAMS)