

THE PRINCIPLES OF JUDAISM

Some of the fundamental principles of Judaism will be examined in this course, with an emphasis on their formulation from a contemporary perspective. The principles discussed will be treated from the point of view of Jewish philosophy, history, and Halakhah. The subject matter will be grouped about the three poles of God, Torah, and Israel.

I. GOD.A. The Belief in a Personal God.

1. Theism vs. Deism and pantheism
2. The sources of religious commitment
3. The nature of religious experience

B. Idolatry.

1. In the Bible and Prophets
2. Its larger meaning
3. Contemporary significance

C. Creation.D. Providence.

1. Nature and the Supernatural
2. Theories of providence
3. Scientific causality and divine freedom
4. Miracles

E. Revelation.

1. The phenomenon of prophecy
2. Sinai
3. Ruach Ha-kodesh

F. The Attributes.

1. Of Existence
2. Of action
3. The Names of God

G. "Proofs" of God's Existence.H. Good and Evil.

1. Jewish concepts of morality
2. The Garden of Eden
3. Reward and punishment
4. Free Will

I. Sin and Repentance.J. Love and Fear.K. HolinessL. Sacrifice and Prayer.



M. Eschatology.

1. Resurrection
2. Immortality
3. Olam Ha-ba

II. TORAH.

A. The Written Law.

1. History
2. Structure

B. The Oral Law.

1. History
2. The Torah Literature to Modern Times
3. Halakhah and Agadah

C. The Commandments.

1. The concept of Mitzvah
2. The Reasons
3. The Purposes

D. Immutability and Adjustment.

1. The eternity of Torah
2. Halakhah and changing conditions
3. The responsa literature

E. The Ethics of Torah.

1. God as the source of ethics
2. Social ethics
3. Individual ethics

F. The Covenants.

1. The universal covenant
2. Circumcision
3. Torah
4. The Sabbath

G. The Kabbalah.

III. ISRAEL.

A. Universalism and Particularism.

B. The Chosenness of Israel

C. Jewish history as a Religious Category

D. Community Consciousness

E. Israel and the Nations

F. Eretz Yisrael

G. Diaspora and Exilehood

H. Messiah