

Judaism Paper 1

“Now this was stated with regards to the Good Inclination in man and with regard to his Evil Inclination. That is to say, that he might lay to his heart the love of God and his faith in Him, even at an hour of rebellion, or wrath or displeasure.”

Identify three beliefs in this passage.

- Man has an inclination to do good (*yetzer ha-tov*) and evil (*yetzer ha-ra*)
- God gives man free will to go towards one of these inclinations
- Man must acknowledge God even when he is inclined to *yetzer ha-ra* to attain true happiness; in other words, man makes a covenant with God in order to attain happiness.

Explain Jewish beliefs about free will.

People who follow Judaism have concluded that all people have free will, but God is all-knowing and knows exactly what they will do next. There have been many theories to solve this paradoxical axiom, such as God knows what choices we will choose from, but not the exact choice we will choose, but there is no biblical evidence supporting this theory. In order to best use their free will and please God, Jews usually follow *mitzvot* (precepts/rules) in the Torah. However, the extent to which certain sects of Jews follow these rules are different; some, like Orthodox Jews, follow the *mitzvot* to the letter, while others, such as Conservative Jews, think that rules come from the people, not God.

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart.”

Identify and comment on the meaning of this passage.

- God warned the Israelites through the words of Moses about worshipping other Gods; when Moses said “The Lord is our God, the Lord is one”, he was trying to prioritize God over the other, pagan Egyptian gods.
- The Israelites had been pagan for generations, until God communicated through the prophet Moses to the Israelites, making a covenant saying that God would protect the Israelites if they followed the word of God.
- Moses is trying to make the Israelites remember the Ten Commandments he will soon speak by saying, “keep these words. . . in your heart” – or, in other words, to remember them and pass them on to future generations.
- Jews should allow their love for God to be seen by other people, as Jews are the “chosen people” and are a model for the rest of the people in the world.

Explain how Jews should live according to the Shema. According to the Shema, Jewish peoples’ number one priority should be to “love god” and allow their love for God to be visible. Jews should not accept the

existence of any other god other than YHWH, as this goes against the ten commandments laid down by the Lord after the Shema. Also, Jews should pass down this custom to their children, so that the religion remains known. Jews should use their faith in everything they do – Judaism isn't a religion it's a way of life.