



Be Prepared...  
for new adventure!

## JUDAISM

Judaism does not have formal mandatory beliefs. The most accepted summary of Jewish beliefs is Rambam's 13 principles of faith; even these basic principles have been debated. Judaism focuses on the relationships between the Creator, mankind, and the land of Israel.

The closest that anyone has ever come to creating a widely-accepted list of Jewish beliefs is Rambam's thirteen principles of faith. These principles, which Rambam thought were the minimum requirements of Jewish belief, are:

1. G-d exists
2. G-d is one and unique
3. G-d is incorporeal
4. G-d is eternal
5. Prayer is to be directed to G-d alone and to no other
6. The words of the prophets are true
7. Moses' prophecies are true, and Moses was the greatest of the prophets
8. The Written Torah (first 5 books of the Bible) and Oral Torah (teachings now contained in the Talmud and other writings) were given to Moses
9. There will be no other Torah
10. G-d knows the thoughts and deeds of men
11. G-d will reward the good and punish the wicked
12. The Messiah will come
13. The dead will be resurrected

As you can see, these are very basic and general principles. Yet as basic as these principles are, the necessity of believing each one of these has been disputed at one time or another, and the liberal movements of Judaism dispute many of these principles.

Unlike many other religions, Judaism does not focus much on abstract cosmological concepts. Although Jews have certainly considered the nature of G-d, man, the universe, life and the afterlife at great, there is no mandated, official, definitive belief on these subjects, outside of the very general concepts discussed above. There is substantial room for personal opinion on all of these matters because Judaism is more concerned about actions than beliefs.

### God

Judaism is a monotheistic faith, meaning that Jews believe there is only One God. Often this God is beyond our ability to comprehend but God is nevertheless present in our everyday lives. How individual Jews choose to understand this manifestation of the divine varies. Some connect with God through prayer, others see the divine in the majesty of the natural world, others may not think about God on a daily basis. Each individual's relationship with God is unique and personal.

Judaism teaches that every person (Jewish and non-Jewish) was created "in the image of God." For this reason every person is equally important and has an infinite potential to do good in the world. People have the freewill to make choices in their lives and each of us is responsible for the consequences of those choices.

### Community

Judaism believes that Jews are uniquely connected with each other. Regardless of where they live in the world, all Jews are part of a global Jewish community.

## **Torah**

The Torah is Judaism's most important text. It contains stories and commandments that teach us about life and death. All Jews consider the 10 Commandments to be the most important commandments in the Torah.

The Ten Commandments:

1. I am the Lord your God
2. You shall not recognize the gods of others in My presence
3. You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain
4. Remember the day of Shabbat to keep it holy
5. Honour your father and your mother
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal
9. Do not give false testimony against your neighbor
10. You shall not covet your fellow's possessions

## **The Land of Israel**

The Torah tells us that the Land of Israel (Eretz Yisrael) was part of the covenant made between God and the Jewish People at Mount Sinai. However, there is no one view of Israel among modern day Jews. Some strongly support Israel, while others feel conflicted by the politics of the region. The only thing that can be said across the board is that Israel is part of every Jew's worldview, in one way or another.

## **Messiah**

Judaism teaches that one day a Messiah (a person from God) will unite the world and bring peace to humanity. The concept of the Messiah is not a central part of every Jew's belief system, but tradition does teach that the Messiah will be descended from the family of King David.

## **Judaism On One Foot - Summing Up Judaism**

There is a story in the Talmud that is often told when someone is asked to summarize the essence of Judaism. During the first century

AD a great rabbi named Hillel was asked to sum up Judaism while standing on one foot. He replied: "Certainly! What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. That is the Torah." Hence, at its core Judaism is concerned with the well-being of humanity.