

# What Is Judaism?

By Rabbi HERBERT M. BAUMGARD, D.H.L.

## 1. IT IS ABRAHAM INTERCEDING FOR THE PEOPLE OF SODOM.

It is a religion which teaches that the good man must stand between the people and group disaster. He must act to avoid impending doom. (Gen. 18:16 ff.)

## 2. IT IS MOSES CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN TO TOUCH HANDS WITH GOD TO OBTAIN THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

It is a religion based on certain ethical laws believed to be part of the fabric of the world and without which society couldn't stand.

## 3. IT IS THE PROPHET HOSEA SAYING IN THE NAME OF GOD, "I DESIRE LOVING-KINDNESS AND NOT PRIESTLY FORMS." \*

It is a religion which includes many customs and ceremonies, but it recognizes that human kindness (loyalty) is greater than any of these.

## 4. IT IS AMOS SAYING, "ARE YE NOT AS THE CHILDREN OF THE ETHIOPIANS UNTO ME, O CHILDREN OF ISRAEL?" (9:7)

It is a religion which looks beyond race and skin color for the basic worth of every human being as a child of God.

## 5. IT IS THE PROPHET (AMOS) SAYING, "JUST AS I BROUGHT UP ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT, SO I BROUGHT THE PHILISTINES FROM CAPH-TOR, AND THE ARAMITES FROM KIR." (9:7)

It is a religion born out of the experience of one people which does not favor one nation against the other, and yet requires greater responsibility, a noblesse oblige, from the Jewish people.

## 6. IT IS ISAIAH CALLING UPON ISRAEL TO OBEY GOD'S LAW EVEN THOUGH THEY SUFFER AND "ARE AFFLICTED FOR THE SINS OF MANY." (Isaiah 53)

It is a religion which teaches that the service of God may invoke not reward but heartbreak, and, yet, the good and the just cause must be served, none the less.

## 7. IT IS EZEKIEL PROCLAIMING THAT "THE DRY BONES WILL LIVE."

It is a religion which preaches hope no matter how dark and dismal conditions may be, for man does not labor without an ally.

\*That is, priestly worship forms believed, in themselves, to satisfy God.

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8. IT IS MOSES DECLARING, "YE SHALL BE HOLY BECAUSE I, THE LORD YOUR GOD, AM HOLY." (Lev. 19)

It is a religion which teaches that the "imitation of God" is man's greatest duty; and the sanctification of life is his greatest goal.

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It is a religion which preaches hope no matter how dark and dismal conditions may be, for man does not labor without an ally.

6. IT IS ISRAH CALLING UPON ISRAEL TO OBEY GOD'S LAW EVEN THOUGH THEY SUFFER AND "ARE AFFLICTED FOR THE SINS OF MANY." (Leviticus 26)

It is a religion which teaches that the service of God may involve not reward but hardship, and yet, the good and the just cause must be served because the just.

5. IT IS THE PROPHET AMOS SAYING, "JUST AS I BROUGHT UP ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT, SO I BROUGHT THE PHILISTINES FROM CANAAN, AND THE ARABITES FROM KUR." (Amos 9:7)

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