

# WHY NOT JUDAISM?

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## WHY NOT JUDAISM?

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According to Biblical tradition, Judaism was founded at least 3,000 years ago when the nation of Israel was formed by Prophet Abraham and his descendants in the land of Palestine in the Middle East.

### THE HEBREW BIBLE

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The beliefs of Judaism are based on the Hebrew Bible which consists of the Law, the Prophets and the Writings and on the teachings of Prophets Abraham and Moses.

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#### THE LAW

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The Law or Torah narrates the story of creation, God's covenant with the descendants of Prophet Abraham and the creation of the nation of Israel as an example to all other nations.

The Law is made up of five books:

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

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#### THE PROPHETS

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The Prophets or *Nevi'im* reports the interpretations of the Law and frequent condemnations and declarations of divine punishment by ancient Israelite prophets of their nation's behaviour.

The Former Prophets include:

- Joshua
- Judges
- Samuel
- Kings

The Latter Prophets include:

- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Ezekiel
- The Twelve or Minor Prophets such as Malachi

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### THE WRITINGS

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The Writings or *Ketuvim* is a collection of books which include history, songs and hymns, poetry, stories and wisdom literature. Psalms is a collection of hymns and songs, the other books include

- Proverbs
- Job
- Song of Songs
- Ruth
- Lamentations
- Ecclesiastes
- Esther
- Daniel
- Ezra
- Nehemiah
- Chronicles

### THE JEWISH GOD

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#### ONENESS

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The monotheistic creed of Judaism is stated:

- in the Law:

*Hear O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is one.*<sup>1</sup>

- in the Prophets:

*"You are my witnesses," declares the Lord, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me no god was formed, nor will there be one after Me. I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from Me there is no Saviour."*<sup>2</sup>

*"This is what the Lord says, Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from Me there is no God."*<sup>3</sup>

*Declare what is to be, present it, let them take counsel together. Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Saviour; there is none but Me.*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy Chapter 6 Verses 4

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah Chapter 43 Verses 10-11

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah Chapter 44 Verse 6

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah Chapter 45 Verses 21

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### TRANSCENDENCE?

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Whilst the statements of monotheism are unambiguous, the assertion of the transcendence of God is not:

- in the trifold declaration of God's holiness, or divine "otherness":  
*And they were calling to one another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."*<sup>5</sup>
- in the substitution of *Adonai* ("my Lord") for the tetragrammaton (YHWH) in the reading of the Bible itself

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### IMMANENCE? IMMATERIAL?

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According to Jews, the Jewish God is immanent:

- in the Haggada ["Storytelling"] recited during the Passover meal: *...and the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt—not by an angel, and not by a seraph, and not by a messenger...*  
Passover is the Jewish festival celebrating the death of the first born sons of the ancient Egyptians on the eve of the Jew's Exodus
- in the divine name *Shekhina*, being "Presence" of God in the world, and this is derived from a Hebrew root meaning "to dwell"

The Jewish God is therefore material.

However, the evidence from the Hebrew Bible is contradictory:

- *Then Moses said, "Now show me Your Glory." And the Lord said, "I will cause all My Goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim My Name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. "But," He said, "You cannot see My Face for no one may see Me and live."*<sup>6</sup>  
In other words, God cannot be present in the material universe, because His Essence would consume the universe. Since He created matter, energy, space and time of the material universe, His Essence must be immaterial.
- *The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.*<sup>7</sup>

However, God was also present in the material universe which was not destroyed.

Therefore, the Jewish God is confused as to His immanence and immateriality.

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<sup>5</sup> Isaiah Chapter 6 Verse 3

<sup>6</sup> Exodus Chapter 33 Verses 18-20

<sup>7</sup> Exodus Chapter 33 Verse 11

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### NOT ALL-KNOWING AND NOT TRANSCENDENT

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The Jewish God is not all-knowing.

For example, He does not know Prophet Adam's whereabouts, when Prophet Adam and his wife, Eve, ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

*Then the man [Prophet Adam] and his wife [Eve] heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the Garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the Garden. But the Lord God called out to the man, "Where are you?"*<sup>8</sup>

The Jewish God is not transcendent because He cannot see Adam and Eve hiding in the Garden that He is supposed to have created.

Did the Jewish God then create the Garden? If the Jewish God did not create the Garden, can He be the God Who is the Uncaused Cause of all creation?

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### NOT ALL-POWERFUL

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The Jewish God is not all-powerful according to the Hebrew Bible.

- *And the Lord God said, "The man {Prophet Adam} has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.*<sup>9</sup>

Why should the Jewish God fear at all, if He is the all-powerful Creator?

Why should the Jewish God fear a mere creature like Prophet Adam?

Clearly, the Jewish God cannot be all-powerful and, therefore, cannot be God.

Perhaps the Jewish God acquired His immortality from the tree of life?

Perhaps He did not create the Garden with its trees of knowledge and life?

Perhaps the Jewish God is not God at all, but a minor "god" in the chain of Creation.

The true God would be the one who created the Garden with its trees of knowledge and life from which this Jewish God perhaps acquired knowledge of good and evil and immortality. This would explain why the Jewish God fears Adam's immortality.

If Prophet Adam gained immortality, he would "become like one of us." In other words, Prophet Adam would become like the Jewish god, one of perhaps many gods who likewise acquired knowledge of good and evil and immortality!

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<sup>8</sup> Genesis Chapter 3 Verses 8

<sup>9</sup> Genesis Chapter 3 Verses 22-23

## WHY NOT JUDAISM?

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- *That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of Jabbok. After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, "Let me go for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."<sup>10</sup>*

In this case, Prophet Jacob wrestled with God and defeated Him!

Clearly, the Jewish God is not all-powerful!

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### TIMELESS-ETERNAL OR OMNITEMPORAL-ETERNAL?

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The Jewish God is eternal.

*For this is what the high and lofty One says – he who lives forever; whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite."<sup>11</sup>*

On the one hand, the Jewish God is infinite-omnitemporal:

*Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.<sup>12</sup>*

So God exists in an infinite time in the eternal past to the eternal future.

On the other hand, the Jewish God is also timeless because He created time – day, night, evening and morning:

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day" and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening and there was morning – the first day.<sup>13</sup>*

God cannot both be timeless and infinite-omnitemporal, because as an immaterial being, He is not made of one part that is timeless, and another that is infinite-omnitemporal.

Therefore, the Jewish God is confused as to His eternality.

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<sup>10</sup> Genesis Chapter 32 Verses 22-30

<sup>11</sup> Isaiah Chapter 57 Verse 15

<sup>12</sup> Psalm Chapter 90 Verses 1-2

<sup>13</sup> Genesis Chapter 1 Verses 1-5

## WHY NOT JUDAISM?

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### THE JEWISH GOD CANNOT BE GOD

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The Jewish belief in God therefore fails the nature of God test, because the Jewish God is:

- is confused as to his immanence and immateriality;
- not all-knowing, which contradicts the Jewish affirmation of transcendence;
- not all-powerful;
- is confused as to his eternity.

Therefore, Judaism is not compatible with our rational understanding of God.