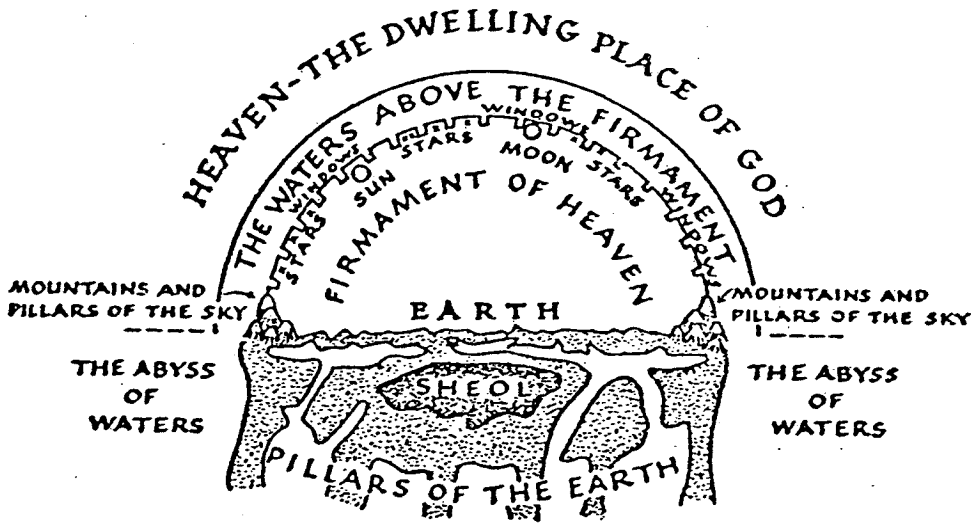


The Major Contributions of Judaism

Rev.Dr.Timothy Dissmeyer, 2/20/06

There is real meaning (or purpose) to be found in the following ten dimensions of life:

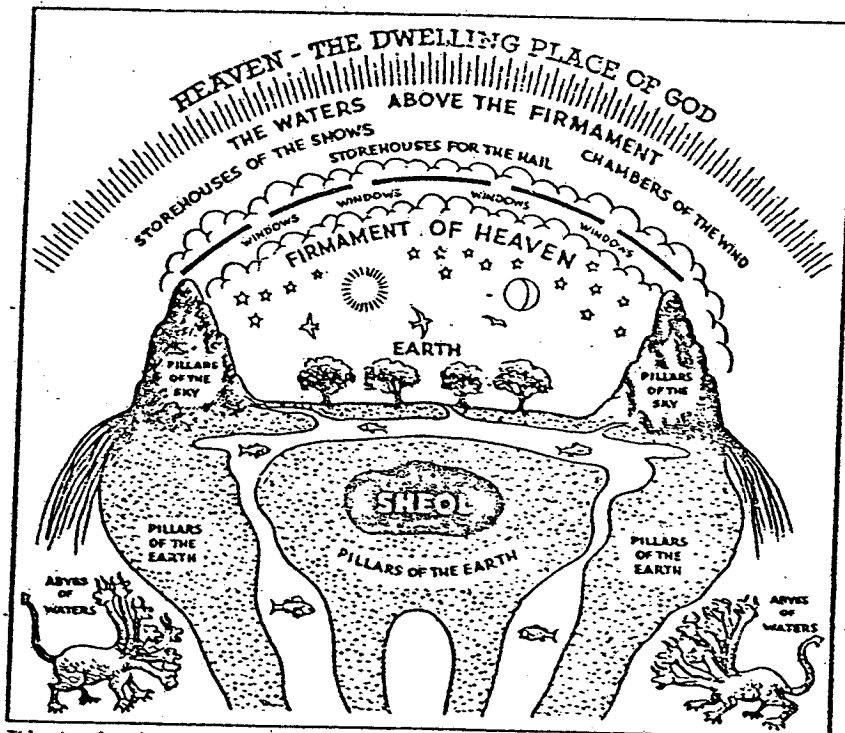
- 1. Monotheism....the belief in the existence of only one God and the rejection of any form of idolatry or polytheism says that there is meaning in the relationship to the one God.**
- 2. Divine Involvement....God gets involved in human affairs, especially in those of the people God chose to be in a special covenant. So there is meaning in human existence since this one God loves people, chooses and forgives them, frees and restores them.**
- 3. This one God is the Creator of the world, so there is meaning in Creation.**
- 4. The TANAK provides important stories of how people relate to each other and to God, including the Creation, the genesis of humanity, their struggle with evil and God's provision of purpose and freedom. (The Tanak is the holy Scriptures containing 34 books, the most important of which are the first five, called the Torah, comprising Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). So there is meaning in holy scripture.**
- 5. A strong sense of concepts of justice and mercy as the basis for ethical standards for human living. These concepts are represented by reference to the Law. So there is meaning in the moral establishment of justice.**
- 6. Community is an essential need for real living. There is meaning within the need for and expression of community among people.**
- 7. The progressive and linear sense of time, from the distant past towards an imaginable future, though not a smooth nor perfectly straight line. History progresses from the past to the future, never repeating itself in a circular or reincarnational pattern. There is meaning within history.**
- 8. The radical insistence upon freedom, freedom from oppression and freedom to express one's dignity and creativity. So there is meaning in striving for and expressing one's freedom.**
- 9. The human struggle for survival is ongoing and not yet finished, and often in the face of overwhelming destructiveness still results in miraculous persistence, e.g. the meaning of the name "Israel" as "one who struggles", 722 and 586 B.C.E., 165 and 63 B.C.E., 70 and 132-135 C.E. and 1933-1945. So there is meaning in the experience of and overcoming of suffering.**
- 10. Regular and sincere rituals are essential to equip people to deal with the stress of change and the need for repeated reminders of their value and purpose amid the burdens and pressures of daily living. There is, then, meaning to be found in ritual.**



The Hebrew conception of the universe assumed a flat earth supported over a watery abyss. A solid firmament held back the waters above the earth and to it were attached the heavenly bodies. At the outermost limits of the earth a circular range of mountains supported the firmament.

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CROWN HIM LORD OF ALL



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