

Applying the six dimensions to the study of judaism



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December, Judaism in Six Dimensions Judaism is one of the major religions in the world today, with an estimated 13 million members worldwide, to which majority resides in Israel. In addition, it is also said that Judaism is one of the oldest monotheistic religions of the world, with an estimated three millennia of continuous existence (basicjudaism. org 2007). This paper aims to analyze Judaism according to six dimensions: experiential, mythical, doctrinal, ethical, ritual and social (Smart 2000). One of the best doctrines of Judaism that describes the experiential includes the giving of the covenant by God to the Jewish people (which includes the Ten Commandments and the laws given to Moses) (basicjudaism. org 2007). In fact, the giving of the covenant is what they believe makes the Jewish people the “ chosen people,” and it is the one that also dictates their distinctive practices (dietary prohibitions and worship on the Saturday Sabbath for instance), practices that gives them distinction from others.

Meanwhile, accounts of the creation of the world by one God, as written in the first book of the Torah (The Genesis—also in the Bible), shows the mythical component of Judaism as a religion. This narrative also shows that God blessed Abraham to be the “ father of a great nation” (basicjudaism. org 2007). While the Christian Bible also believes in this account, this puts the Jews as direct descendants of Abraham the recipient of the blessings of God and eternal salvation, which is not open to other peoples or “ gentiles” (which is contrary to Christian doctrine).

The major doctrinal dimension of Judaism is the Torah, where the 613 laws and commandments are given to the Jewish people (basicjudaism. org 2007).

It includes the giving of the law of God, the creation of the Jewish holidays and dietary restrictions, and even on the proper codes and manners of

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worship. Although it is true that the Torah also consists of the first five books of the Bible, Christians place an emphasis on the New Testament, which is not believed by the Jews. This is the reason why the belief in the Torah also contributes to the distinctive identity of Judaism.

One of the major ethical dimensions of Judaism is also found in the Torah, specifically on the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy (basicjudaism. org 2007). It is in these books where the dietary restrictions of the Jews (such as prohibitions on pork and ducks), as well as on how to treat women. In addition, it also shows the role of religious authorities in handling disputes among the people. These distinct practices also differentiate Judaism from other religions.

The practice of Circumcision is one of the main ritual dimensions of Judaism. It symbolizes the “ cleanliness” of the chosen people, and their covenant with God (basicjudaism. org 2007). However, this practice is also common with Christianity and Islam. Distinctive rituals can include the celebration of the Passover, the Sukkot (commemorating the journey to the Promised Land) and the Shavuot (the revelation of the Torah to the Jewish people).

One of the main doctrines of Judaism that demonstrates its social dimension is the creation of a set of priests, the rabbis, from the sons of Aaron (basicjudaism. org 2007). The justification of this was the notion that the Jews would continually sin, because of their human nature. The rabbis also create a special distinction of Judaism, especially in its organization, wherein they do not only have religious, but also civil duties to the people.

Works Cited

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