

4-2018

## The Doctrine of Man: What does Judaism say about man's destiny?

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### Recommended Citation

Willmington, Harold, "The Doctrine of Man: What does Judaism say about man's destiny?" (2018). *The Adam File*. 6.

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## THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

### ARTICLE SIX

#### **What does Judaism say about man's destiny?**

Some Jews believe that prayer, repentance, and obeying the Law are necessary for salvation. Others believe that salvation is the improvement of society.

One's eternal existence in the hereafter is determined by moral behavior and attitudes. Although there is no Christian notion of saving grace in Judaism, it is taught that God always offers even the most evil men the possibility of repentance (*teshuva*, "turning"). After such repentance one can atone for one's rebellion against God's way by positive action.

But the notion of individual salvation and heavenly existence is not prominent in Judaism. In fact many Jews criticize Christianity for being a "selfish" religion, too concerned with personal eternal rewards.

The notion of an afterlife is not well developed in the Old Testament. Later writers speculated unsystematically about a final day of judgment.

Jews still hope for the coming of the Messiah, who will hand out eternal judgment and reward to all. This hope is largely communal; the entire Jewish race and the whole of creation is in view more than individual men.

In the end the moral life of man here on earth is considered the most proper concern of man; final judgments are best left to God.