



# St. Antony's Catholic College

Aspire - Believe - Achieve

## Year 10 Religion

*Instructions for the week beginning Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May*

### Watch

<https://www.youtube.com/user/MitzvahDay1>

There are a variety of clips in the above link, so go through them.

### Read

The attached pages of the textbook

### Listen to

### Do

1. Read through the attached pages of the textbook.
2. Make notes based on the following.
  - a. What is Free Will?
  - b. What is Yetzer ha tov?
  - c. What is Yetzer ha ra?
  - d. What do Jew's believe about forgiveness?
  - e. Make 5 bullet points on Mitzvah day
  - f. What is Tikkun Olam?
  - g. What is Gemilut hasadim?
  - h. What is Tzedakah?
3. Now watch the clips about Mitzvah day, is there anything you can add to your notes?
4. Do the quiz questions on show my homework related to this task.

## Free will

Judaism teaches that God is the creator of all life and he alone decides when people are born and when they die:

*'Without your consent you were born, and without your consent you live, and without your consent you die.'*

From the Sayings of the Fathers 4:29

There are also many references to God continuing to watch over all creation and provide care.

*'From his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth.'*

Psalms 33:14

For many centuries people have discussed how far God intervenes in human lives and events, and how far humans have free will – that is, the ability to make their own choices. Many questions are discussed, such as:

- ▶ Are the mitzvot a path that Jews should follow – a sort of guide-line?
- ▶ Are the mitzvot a path that must be followed or people will be punished?
- ▶ Do people have free will to act and behave as they want without any intervention by God?

The Torah teaches that God has given Jews a choice – the choice whether to keep the mitzvot or not. As humans they were made in the ‘image of God’, and it is believed they have the mind and the soul to help with that choice.

Judaism does not teach that people are born sinful but that each individual has been born with two inclinations or natural ways to act:

- ▶ Yetzer ha tov – is the inclination or natural urge to do good actions.
- ▶ Yetzer ha ra – is the inclination or natural urge to do evil actions.

In Judaism it is believed that people are born with yetzer ha tov and yetzer ha ra as a balance but as the person does more good or bad actions so the balance changes. There is no belief in evil beings, such as the devil, as the yetzer ha ra that is within everyone creates the evil in the world – not another being.

There is a traditional story in which a Jew asks a Rabbi to drive out the negative thoughts in his mind. The Rabbi says he cannot do this but recommends another person some distance away. Eagerly the man sets out on the long journey. When he arrives at the house he sees a light on. With great relief he thinks he will be welcomed into the house and given food and a bed for the night. He bangs on the door. No response. He bangs again on the door and on the windows. Still no

response. Eventually he sits down by the house and falls asleep.

The next morning the master of the house appears and welcomes the traveller inside. Confused the traveller asks why he had not been allowed into the house the night before. ‘Well’ said the Rabbi, ‘I wanted to teach you a lesson. The lesson is you are the master of your own house and of your own actions. You can choose to resist pressure or to give in.’

Although humans are given free will, Judaism teaches that it is not possible to hide acts of evil from God. Nor is it believed that doing one good action will suddenly make someone a good person. Each is considered separately by God on the Ten Days of Repentance between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Sins against God can be atoned for through showing repentance, prayer and giving to charity. Any harm done to other human beings must be forgiven by them before God can forgive.

## The problem of evil and suffering

At times of great tragedy and disaster people of all religions often question why God could allow such events to occur.

The Talmud tells of a rabbi who was also an excellent healer. One day someone came to him and said that if God wanted the man to be well, God wouldn't let him be ill. The rabbi replied that if God wanted people to be ill, then he wouldn't have created the medicines to help people become well.

If God is all-powerful and all-knowing, then God must have the ability to foresee the future. If so, then why doesn't he intervene or stop tragedies happening? However, to do so would mean that people don't have free will to act as they want. Such questions have been asked through the centuries and particularly at times of great tragedy and suffering such as the Holocaust.

## ► Mitzvah Day

Mitzvah Day was started in Britain in 2008 and has now spread across the world. It encourages people to join together to make a positive impact on their community.

Jews and non-Jews work together to try to:

- reduce poverty
- care for the environment
- care for others.

The day is rooted in the values of the 613 mitzvot that are important in Judaism and treating people with the respect that they would want for themselves. Mitzvah Day also reflects another meaning of mitzvah – that of doing a good deed for someone. The deed is done, not because it is one of the 613 mitzvot, but because it is a kind action.

There are three Jewish concepts that are particularly important on Mitzvah Day:

- **Tikkun olam** – 'healing' or 'perfecting' the world. It shows a shared responsibility for making the world better by helping others, looking after the environment and supporting human rights. One of Mitzvah Day's achievements has been to create partnership and inter-faith dialogue. Projects have included Sunshine to Seniors which provides care to the elderly and Plant a Tree on Mitzvah Day which involves planting trees in the local area.

- ▶ **Gemilut hasadim** – the ‘the giving of loving-kindness’ which expects nothing in return. Every year on Mitzvah Day, over 37,000 participants do just that, through many projects based on the principle of doing acts of kindness.
- ▶ **Tzedakah** – the ‘righteousness’ and ‘justice’ that is shown through social action and acts of loving-kindness; not because it feels good but because the Jewish faith educates that it is the right thing to do.