

THE ROLE OF HILLEL IN THE LIFE OF THE JEWISH STUDENT

Judaism is a religion based on the history of the Jewish people which are used as basis for theology and to teach the Jew to live a moral life.

American Jewish life is composed of three major divisions - Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform - which differ in their interpretation and practice of rituals and traditions, as well as theology. The Orthodox interpretation of Judaism is that of exact observance of certain ritual and tradition; the Conservative interpretation and practice of Judaism is a middle of the road attitude toward observance and practice; while the Reform interpretation of Judaism is that of a liberal approach to rituals and traditions. Theological viewpoints vary similarly.

The Jewish religion does not attempt to proselytize or actively recruit adherents. Generally, one is born into the Household of Israel. It does not have any missionaries whose purpose is to persuade people into "seeing the light." In contrast, the Jewish religion believes that in order for a person to practice his religion properly, the person must voluntarily have the desire to seek religion, and must be free of pressure when making his choice of a religious affiliation. If a person feels that the Jewish beliefs coincide with his personal beliefs, and if this person has the desire to associate himself with the Jewish people, then and only then, does the Jewish religion regard this person as a Jew.

Hillel (the Jewish student organization on college campuses) aims to provide a Jewish cultural, religious, and social atmosphere for the Jewish student. The sponsorship of Hillel comes from the B'nai B'rith, an international lodge of Jewish men whose purpose is to act as a service organization for the Jewish religion.

In providing a cultural atmosphere for the Jewish student, Hillel presents programs - speakers, discussions, or films - which attempt to further the students understanding of his religion and its relevance. Each Hillel meeting contains a religious service which provides the Jewish student with the opportunity to worship. To further the religious atmosphere for the college student at the University of Kentucky, Hillel attempts to promote their attendance at worship in the two Lexington Synagogues. To fulfill the provisions of a social atmosphere for the Jewish student, Hillel promotes get-togethers which serve the purpose of meeting and associating with people of the same faith.

At the University of Kentucky, Hillel is proud of its accomplishments and success in fulfilling its aims and responsibilities to the Jewish students on campus. It has and will continue to further teach and aid the Jewish student to live a moral, idealistic, and realistic life.

George Schwartzman, President
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