

OBJECTIONS AND MISCONCEPTIONS BASED ON FALSE TEACHING:

- False Teaching from Judaism
 - Teachings about the Nature of Man
 - Is man inherently good?
 - Can he obtain God's standard of righteousness?

Man is the creature created for the purpose of being drawn close to G-d. He is placed between perfection and deficiency, with the power to earn perfection. Man must earn this perfection, however, through his own free will... Man's inclinations are therefore balanced between good [Yetzer Hatov] and evil [Yetzer Hara], and he is not compelled toward either of them. He has the power of choice and is able to choose either side knowingly and willingly...

Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto - The Way of G-d,
translated by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, Feldheim Publishers.

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE INCLINATION

The erroneous teaching of the Yetzer Hara places within mankind (at the age of 13) the ability in and of himself to fight, and defeat this evil impulse. Satan is thought to be a personification of this impulse (rather than an actual creature). It is even said that this impulse can be good and needful:

"Yetzer hara is not a demonic force that pushes a person to do evil, but rather a drive toward pleasure or property or security, which if left unlimited, can lead to evil (cf. Genesis Rabbah 9:7). When properly controlled by the yetzer hatov, the yetzer hara leads to many socially desirable results, including marriage, business, and community." - Spitzer, Jeffery, The Birth of the Good Inclination -www.myjewishlearning.com

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE INCLINATION

Let it first be stated that the whole idea of the Yetzer Hara comes from a verse in Genesis chapter 6. A proper view of this verse should help determine whether or not this impulse is a good thing.

"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." - Genesis 6:5

III. THE SCOPE OF THE INCLINATION

There are numerous passages in the Hebrew Scriptures that should convince us that we are hopelessly lost and undone without a supernatural intervention from the hand of God:

"The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Psalms 14:2-3

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" Isaiah 53:6a

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" Isaiah 64:6a

IV. THE SOLUTION FOR THE INCLINATION

The following is a Talmudic interpretation of the purpose of the Torah being given:

"So said the Holy One, blessed be he, to Israel: 'My son I created the Yetzer Hara and I created for it the Torah as an antidote. If you toil in Torah you will not be handed over into his hands...'"

-The Talmud - Tractate Kiddushin, p.30b.