Did Albert Einstein Believe in God?

We explained previously that the second principle we learn from the Shema Israel is to accept HaShem, God, as the authority that teaches us the difference between good and evil.

To better understand the great importance of this principle, let us think what would happen if we only had the first principle, “believing in the existence of God”.

There are many ways to believe in God that are not compatible with what the Shema Israel is saying. And I am not referring now to different religions but to beliefs similar to atheism.

Aristotle believed in God. But that god was not the creator of the world. It was an eternal god who existed together with an eternal universe. That god had no “will”, that is, he could not decide, change or act against physical laws. The god of Aristotle was a “passive” force immanent in the universe. To have a better idea of what Aristotle was referring to, let’s think about the “fire”, which without having its own will and without doing anything actively, imbues its surrounding environment with heat. Well, the god of Aristotle was that energy that imbues the universe of movement. That god of the philosophers, as the Cuzari called it, alluding to the followers of Aristotle, also did not communicate with human beings. And you could not pray to the god of Aristotle. He did not expect anything special from the behavior of men. According to this deterministic philosophy, humans, in any case, have no free will, and their behavior is determined by factors beyond their will. And when a human being dies, he simply and completely dies. There is no soul that survives death.
The god of Aristotle did not reveal his will or the reason for

human’s existence. Men can establish their own law and morality and do whatever they want with their lives. The god of Aristotle does not get involved in those subjects.

This was also the concept of the god that Spinoza, the father of modern pantheism, maintained. Spinoza believed in an impersonal god. A god / nature The totality of the physical and the material. A god that is everything, and nothing at the same time.
And this was also the belief of Albert Einstein. In his book “Einstein and Religion” Max Jammer explains that the famous Jewish scientist believed in a “cosmic religion”, like that of Spinoza, or that of certain branches of Buddhism.

What can really confuse us is that Einstein, like Spinoza and many others, constantly talked about “god”, and even opposed being called an atheist. Although the main (or only) difference between the pantheism of Aristotle, Spinoza and Einstein, and the modern atheism of Richard Dawkins, for example, is that while atheism denies unequivocally the existence of God, pantheism has no problem speaking of “god” and declaring His existence.

While according to statistics from the Pew Research Institute (2009, see this) most scientists declare that they DO believe in God, many of them have in mind a Powerful Force or Being immanent in the universe, who does not relate in any way to human beings.

And when you believe in a “god” who did not reveal His will to human beings, who gets to decide –beyond what is necessary to maintain law and order– what is good and what is wrong? What are the moral values □□that one must follow? Man? Society? Modern Family? The government? Obama or Trump? Do we have to practice a moral anarchy, where each one acts according to what seems right to him and her (or suits him or her)? .

As we see, the belief in the existence of “god” or even “God”

is not enough to answer one of the most important existential questions: what is the right thing to do with my life?

Now I believe we can better appreciate the second message of the Shema Israel, “God is the authority”.

Remember also that the First of the Ten Commandments deals with this same subject. When it affirms that God is ELOQUIM, the Supreme Judge, the source and reference of Law and morality. It is a fundamental Jewish belief that HaShem granted us free will, revealed His will in His Tora and expects us to do what is right in His eyes,

When we say “SHEMA ISRAEL HASHEM ELOQENU” we do not only confirm our belief in the existence of God but also
1.We proclaim God as our Sovereign.
2. We acknowledge that He gave us a code of law and morality , the Tora.
3. And as members of the people of Israel, we accept His authority (□□□□ □□□□□ □□□ □□□□).