

## Idolatry

Idolatry is alluring. An idol is something one can touch and feel and is made with human hands. Although idols in antiquity traditionally represented forces beyond themselves, they were still the visible, tangible symbols to which people clung and to which they prayed.

Judaism entered the world insisting that the greatest reality was intangible. What we create is a pale reflection of the true creation. Things we fashion ourselves are worthy of respect, at times astonishment, but nothing we make can be worthy of worship.

This has always been a challenge for Jews. It is not easy to pray without an image in one's mind; the golden calf was not only a seduction in ancient times but still remains so today. We are sensual creatures, we like things we can see and taste and touch. Still, deep in our souls lives the intuition that the greatest reality is what cannot be seen. Behind the veil of phenomena is an eternal, inexplicable, non-physical truth that we call God. Idolatry will never entirely

disappear. People will always succumb to reverence for things. So the Jewish message is as countercultural and powerful as ever: if you only see what is visible, you are blind. There is so much more.