

# בשורה Besorah!

שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד ואהבת את  
יהוה אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך ודו  
הדברים האלה אשר אנכי מצוך היום על לבבך ושננתם  
לבנך ודברתם בשבתך בביתך ובדרכך ובשכבך

## Who Knows One?

**Echad Mi Yodea?** (Hebrew: אחד מי יודע, lit. 'Who Knows One?')

This wonderful, cumulative-styled song is traditionally sung on Passover, after the conclusion of the Seder, and is found in the Haggadah. It enumerates common Jewish motifs and teachings.

Recitation varies from family to family. The song first had versions in Yiddish and Hebrew, and then many other languages. Sometimes it is played as a memory game, recited without looking. Sometimes the goal is to recite the entire chorus in one breath!

It is meant to be fun and humorous, and is used to teach and reinforce the lessons of Pesach to children. However, without argument, it contains important lessons for all.

The very first line – and response – carries the truth central to Judaism: Our God is One, in Heaven and on Earth! We know that the 'Shema' ('Hear, O Israel: the Lord, our God, the Lord is One' - taken from Deut 6:4) is the single most important declaration of faith for Jewish people.

But the first words of the song ask: 'Who knows one?' The Hebrew word for 'one' is

'echad' (אחד). As we know, this type of 'one' is not a solitary unit. Rather, it is a composite unity. In other words, God is the 'sum of all His parts'. This same word is used of Adam and Eve when they are described as being 'one flesh' (Gen 2:24). Even before that we read, when God was creating the world, 'and there was evening and there was morning, **one day**'. (Gen 1:5 in Hebrew reads: יום אחד – one day - *not* the 'first day', which would be יום ראשון) The 'oneness' is the sum of the respective parts: evening and morning. We also find it in Ezekiel 37:17, where the two sticks are joined together and become 'one' in the prophet's hand.

The Hebrew word for solitary absolute is 'yachid' (יחיד). Sadly, when Rabbi Moses ben Maimonides (1135 – 1204) formulated the basic principles of Judaism into 13 affirmations, as an attempt to clarify differences between Judaism and Christianity and Islam, he chose this word 'yachid' to describe God in his Second Article of faith; a word that is never used in the Bible, in connection with God.

Furthermore, we see the 'plurality' of God in the very opening lines of Genesis: 'In the



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beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.' The title 'God' is plural (אלוהים), while the verb 'created' (ברא) is singular.

### Our Passover song asks: 'Who knows One?'

The Hebrew, יודע, (*to know*) has a profound meaning and application. It is used of Adam and Eve to describe the most intimate of relationships: Adam 'knew' Eve, his wife, and she conceived (Gen 4:1). This kind of 'knowledge' (ידע) implies more than intellectual assent; it implies a personal and experiential interaction which produces results or fruit.

The reply to the song's question is: 'I know One. One is our God, in the Heavens and on Earth.' Is it possible to 'know' God, in this way, or is this just a figure of speech?



### Proverbs 30:4 also poses a question:

'Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is His Name, and what is His Son's Name, if *thou canst tell*.' (lit, 'for you shall/should know' - כי תדע) There's that word 'know' again!

### Wait a minute! God has a SON?!

Last year, I was at a seminar attended by Jewish people from all over the world. One of the people that I met was 'R', who lives in Jerusalem. As we gradually became acquainted, he asked me about my background and what brought me to the UK. I was able to share my testimony with him and set out the Gospel, as part of my story. As he questioned me further, I was able to explain the need for a perfect, innocent substitute for the atonement for sin. I described the fact that while animals are

innocent, they are not a perfect substitute for a human; but that, while a person would be a reasonable candidate, we have all sinned and so are not innocent.

In response, 'R' practically cried, 'Where can we find such a person?!' I told him that Yeshua came as the perfect, innocent substitute offering for sin – that He was fully human and fully God! R immediately grasped this and said, 'Yes, God is capable of sending part of Himself to earth in this way... I'm just not ready to commit myself to this concept, yet.'

Isaiah 53:11b says, 'by the **knowledge** of Him, My Righteous Servant **will justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.**' R's head knowledge was not enough to save him.

In speaking about the New Covenant that God would cut with the house of Israel

and the house of Judah, we read, 'And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for **they shall all know me**, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: **for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.**' Jeremiah 31: 34

If only people like 'R' would be willing to *respond* to the revelation of who Jesus is, and let the Truth *penetrate their hearts*, then they would **know** 'the Lord Our Righteousness.'

Echad Mi Yodea is known in Yiddish as: ווער קען זאגן ווער קען רעדן 'Who can say, who can tell?' Isaiah asks, 'Who hath **believed our report?**' (53:1)

May the Lord reveal Himself to His People and may they KNOW Him as their sinless substitute and their Righteousness, this Passover!

Chrissy Rodgers

