



Learning One

'Shema yisra'el hashem elokeinu hashem echad' – 'Hear Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.' The number One, 'Echad', is a central and pervasive theme within Jewish thought and practice, but what does it actually mean?

In this Chavruta Project we question the place of Oneness within Judaism. How do we understand belief in only one God? Is there really only one world? Does Hebrew have a unique status as the prototype language or as the one Jewish language? And what is the role of the narrative of being a 'chosen people'?

'One' is also significant in our understanding of the wider world around us – a major goal of physics is trying to find a 'Grand Unified Theory of Everything' that will unify the four fundamental forces of nature; electro-magnetism, the strong and weak nuclear forces and gravity.

With the slightly more modest aim of uniting the four sections of this book to make One Chavruta, we invite you to join us and learn.

Section One, 'One Language', compiled in the UK by **Hannah Kaye** (Chair), **Hannah Sassoon** and **Mark Garfield**, asks if the ideal is to have one language or many, how language affects us and whether it unites or divides us. It also looks at the special status of Hebrew.

Section Two, 'One God', compiled in Australia by **Paul Turner** (Chair), **Lior Misrachi**, **Michael Misrachi**, **Joel Nothman**, **Peta Jones Pellach**, **Aliza Pinczewski** and **Tommy Sterling**, discusses the centrality of the

Shema, our understanding of God, our understanding of His 'Oneness' and our relationship with Him.

Section Three, 'One People', compiled in New York by **Karen Radkowsky** (Chair), **Ellen Flax**, **Dmitri Glinski**, **Josie Kluger**, **Jen Krause**, **Avital Morris**, **Joe Septimus** and **Sara Sloan**, looks at the factors that contribute to nationhood, what it means to be a chosen people and the extent of our responsibility to others.

Section Four, 'One World', compiled in the Galil by **David Biton** (Chair) and **Merav Arbel**, questions whether our world is the only one, and looks at our relationship to the world(s) and transitions to the world to come.

I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has had a part in bringing this Chavruta Project together.

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Hannah Kaye
Chair, Chavruta Project 2009



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T 020 7424 6400
E central@ujia.org

www.ujia.org



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