

THAT'S THE ONE

by Rabbi Label Lam

Blessed is the Omnipresent One, blessed be He! Blessed is He who gave the Torah to His people Israel, blessed be He! The Torah speaks of four children: One wise, one wicked, one simple and one does not know how to ask. (Haggadah)

We know that the Haggadah is sparing with its words. Why then, we must ask, when introducing the four sons does it repeat the word "one" -"echod" before the each type? The Haggadah could easily have said, "The Torah speaks of four children, wise, wicked, simple ..." What is added by the repetition of the word "one" -"echod"by each child?

There is a story about two brothers. One lived in Israel in the very modest neighborhood of Meah Sha'arim. The other lived in the New York area in America. The one in Israel had a large family consisting of 12 children while the brother in America had no children. The brother with the large family was extremely poor and they barely had food for their table, while the brother with no children was a multi-mega millionaire.

One day the brother in America contacted his brother in Israel and made him an irresistible offer. He said, "You, my brother, have 12 children! I have none! You have no money! I have millions! I am willing to give you a million dollars if you give me just one of your children. That way you can have support for your family and I will have a child!"

The brother in Israel discussed the matter with his wife and under the burden of financial duress they succumbed and agreed. A legal contract was drawn up between the two and a date for the exchange was set. The night before the deal was to go into effect the brother in Israel and his wife had the painstaking task of deciding which child they should choose to part with.

While the children slept they made their rounds and gazed at each cherubic face. They repeated their route many times and when the sun rose on the next day he called his brother in America and gave him the news. "The deal is off!" The brother in America was outraged! "We have a legal contract!" The brother in Israel answered as follows; "I realize that but I believe it is invalid. The contract is based on a false assumption that I have twelve children. Tonight I realized that I do not have twelve children! I have one Chani, one Rachel, one Shimmy, one Chaim...each one is a one!"

The whole Hagaddah is based on one small verse, "You shall tell your child on that day..." It does not say children! This is not general education. We are not teaching to the middle of the class. No! We have a holy mandate to reach each one!

Let's take one bite deeper now. In the Siddur HaGra, the Siach Yitzchok asks, why after declaring HASHEM Echod, G-d's Absolute Unity, in the daily Shema, does the verse then demand, "And you should love HASHEM your G-d with all your heart and with all of your soul and with all of your might..." Can the Torah legislate about love? From where does all this fountain of love suddenly spring by simply stating - "HASHEM is One"?

We tend to have affection for those who constitute the constellation of our support system. Our love is distributed to all these facilitators of our good. However when we close our eyes and contemplate the notion that all these agencies of our happiness are actually emanating from one sublime source, those feelings are then focused into a rich concentration of love. Then the expression follows more naturally, "And you should love HASHEM your G-d..." Perhaps at the Pesach Seder we are meant to be reminded that each child was really sent to us as a unique challenge by HASHEM Echod. **That's the One!** DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).