

The Living Words

<http://thelivingwords.ancient-hebrew.org>

~~ Unity ~~

The Hebrew word אֶחָד *ehhad* ^[H:259] is often translated as “one” but a more Hebraic definition would be a “unit” as can be clearly observed in the following verse.

*Therefore a man will leave his father and mother
and cling with his wife and they will be for a flesh
unit (ehhad).*

Genesis 2:24

The Western mind sees “one” as only singular, void of any connection to something else. For instance, “one” man is an individual entity to himself, just as “one” tree is an entity to itself. To the Ancient Hebrew mind, nothing is “one,” all things are dependent upon something else. A man is not “one,” but a unity of body, bones, flesh, organs and blood. The man is also in unity with his wife and family as well as with the larger *community*. Even a tree is a unity of roots, trunk, branches, and leaves, which is also in unity with the surrounding landscape. “One” year is a unity of seasons.

The first use of *ehhad* is found in Genesis 1:5 where “evening” and “morning,” two states of opposite function, are united to form “one” day.

*And there was evening and there was morning,
one day.*

It should be noted the use of the Hebrew word *ehhad* in this verse is rather intriguing. Days two through seven are identified by their cardinal number—second, third, fourth, etc. The only exception to this is the “first” day which does not use the cardinal number ראשון *rishon* ^[H:7223] meaning “first” but instead uses the ordinal number *ehhad*. I am of the opinion this day is a summary of all of creation, a unity of the days of creation being expressed as the separation of light and darkness. The Hebrew mind does not view time in a linear fashion as we Westerners do but as cyclical. The seven days are not meant to be a “timeline” of events but a poetic description of God’s work.

With all of this said, we do find the Hebrew word “ehhad” meaning “one” in the sense of individuality.

*And Elohiym said, the waters under the sky will be gathered to **one** (ehhad) place...*

Genesis 1:9

I have theorized in the Ancient Hebrew language there was another word to represent the ordinal number “one” and the word *ehhad* was solely used for a unit that exists within a unity. But over time, the original Hebrew word for “one” went into disuse and the word *ehhad* was used for a unit as well as the number “one.” This would not be a unique occurrence, as languages are constantly evolving, words are dropped and added, and definitions and usages change over time. However, there are some textual evidences to support this theory.

The number twelve is written in Hebrew as שני עשר *sheney asar*, literally translated as “two ten.” We would then expect eleven to be written as אחד עשר *ehhad asar* and we do find that in some verses, but we also find עשתי עשר *ashtey asar* such as in the following verse.

*And on the third day **eleven** bullocks...*

Numbers 29:20 (KJV)

The word עשתי *ashtey* ^[H:6249] means “one” but is only used in the context of “eleven.” It would appear *ashtey* was the original word for “one” but was replaced by *ehhad*.

How does all this relate to the two natures of man, the physical and the spiritual, such as we see in the following verse?

Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

Psalm 24:3,4 (KJV)

Our western mind perceives “clean hands” as physical and “pure heart” as spiritual, but what is “spiritual”? The dictionary defines this word as “Having the nature of spirit; not tangible or material.” By definition, the “spiritual” is nonphysical, and since all Hebraic thought is founded in the physical, there is no such concept of “spiritual” in the Hebrew mind. The above passage is a Hebrew parallelism, expressing “one” idea in two (or more) different ways. To the Hebrew mind, clean hands (an idiom for innocence) is the same as a pure mind (also an idiom for innocence). The author is not creating a dichotomy of physical and spiritual but expressing innocence in two different ways.

*I and the father are **one**.*

John 10:30 (RSV)

While the Greek text uses the word εις *heis* ^[G:1520] meaning “one” we must take our definition from the Hebrew word *ehhad* since he was speaking in Hebrew and not Greek. What Yeshua is saying is he and the father work together as a unit, with the same purposes and goals. Yeshua also desired this same unity with his disciples as we see in his prayer to his father.

*That they may all be **one** (heis/ehhad); even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they*

*also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be **one** (heis/ehhad) even as we are **one** (heis/ehhad).*

John 17:21,22 (RSV)