

But how are we to understand the oneness of God? Does it mean that God is one in the sense of a numerical oneness -- one individual, or one Person? Or is the oneness of God a dynamic unity, which allows for a godhead of Persons?

In Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donin's book, To Be a Jew, a handbook of contemporary Jewish belief and observances, the author states:

"Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One" (Deut. 6:4). These words express the underlying faith of Israel that there exists a one, indivisible God by whose will the universe and all that is in it was created. In what was a radical departure from polytheism and idolatry, Abraham the Hebrew was the first to give effective expression to this monotheistic faith . . .<sup>10</sup>

But how are we to understand his words, "a one, indivisible God," and his meaning of "monotheistic faith"? It is interesting to note that a few lines later Rabbi Donin mentions Maimonides, one of the greatest rabbis of Judaism. In A.D. 1168 Maimonides (Moses ben Maimon) completed his Commentary on the Mishnah; and in his introduction to the tenth chapter of Tractate Sanhedrin he enumerates thirteen Basic Principles as constituting the very foundation of the Faith of Israel. The second principle concerns God's unity. Maimonides says:

PRINCIPLE 2 is that we are to believe in the unity of the Lord, blessed be He, that is, we are to believe that He who is the Cause of all things is One: not that He is One in a numerical sense, or one in the sense of a species, or one in the sense of being an individual person who is divisible into many parts, or one in the sense of constituting some one simple substance capable of infinite division -- but the Lord, blessed be He, is One by virtue of a Unity which is unlike any other unity. It is this, the SECOND PRINCIPLE, that is referred to in his words, Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One.<sup>11</sup>

Does Maimonides, by his denial that God is one in a numerical sense, leave open the possibility that God is a dynamic unity?

It is fascinating to note that the word translated "one" in Deuteronomy 6:4 (ECHAD) is also used in Genesis 2:24, where we read: "For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one (ECHAD) flesh." Here is an instance of a dynamic unity, in which two become one in one sense while remaining two in another sense.