

Notes on the Supplemental Materials to “Who Knows One: Jewish Perspectives on God”

The materials contained in this CD-ROM are intended to supplement the “Who Knows One” video series, to provide further background and context, and to stimulate further discussion. Along with the videos, they can be used to form a curriculum on Jewish theology and belief.

The materials include:

- a glossary of relevant Hebrew, Yiddish and Aramaic terms,
- outlines of the philosophical arguments for God’s existence and their refutations,
- Biblical, Talmudic and Midrashic source materials relating to the topics covered in the “Who Knows One” video series (as well as some topics for further exploration),
- questions for discussion relating to the topics covered in “Who Knows One” (as well as some topics for further exploration), and
- biographies of the participants in “Who Knows One.”

These materials are by no means comprehensive and many more terms, arguments, sources and questions exist. In fact, every part of the *Torah*, both oral and written, could arguably fall into some category related to “Who Knows One.” The producer endeavored to gather materials that would show the breadth and significance of these concepts in Judaism, but countless other sources would no doubt enlighten the user and enhance the discussion. It is nonetheless the producer’s hope that these materials will provide a starting point for exploration and that they will facilitate open and thoughtful conversation. Please visit www.whoknowsone.net for further information and suggested reading.

A Note on the Spelling of God’s Name

According to *halakhah* and Jewish tradition, Jews are forbidden to take God’s name in vain, which includes speaking or writing God’s name unnecessarily. In *Torah*, God is generally referred to as either “*Elo-him*” or “*Ado-nai*,” the latter being a substitute for the tetragrammaton, or four-letter name for God, which *halakhah* prohibits Jews from pronouncing under any circumstance. In keeping with the prohibition against taking God’s name in vain, the names “*Elo-him*” and “*Ado-nai*” are traditionally pronounced only in the context of formal prayer or ritual services. Outside of these contexts, “*Elokim*” is substituted for “*Elo-him*” and “*Hashem*” (lit. “The Name”) is substituted for “*Ado-nai*.”

Likewise, according to Jewish law and tradition, anything on which God’s name is written must be treated as a holy object and cannot be thrown away, but rather must be disposed of in a *genizah*, a burial place for texts that include the name of God. For this reason, in the Sources included in these supplementary materials, the letter “ד” has been substituted for the letter “ה” in the tetragrammaton and the letter “ק” has been substituted for the letter “ה” in the Hebrew “*Elo-him*.” While the English spelling of the names is not

technically considered holy, it has become accepted tradition to substitute the letters in English as well. Therefore, English titles including God's name have likewise been altered to substitute the letter "k" for the letter "h" or to include a "-" dividing the name into two parts where clarity of the concept necessitates the original spelling. (See *Adonai*, *Elo-him*, and *Hashem* in the Glossary for further information.)

Thanks

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Acknowledgments

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Notes on the Sources

A guide to the abbreviations used in the notes to the Soncino Midrash Rabbah ("Midrash Rabbah Abbreviations") and a glossary to the Soncino Midrash Rabbah ("Soncino Midrash Rabbah Glossary") are provided in the materials included herewith.

To facilitate the reader's further research, all footnotes to the texts and translations herein retain the numbering scheme found in the original publications.

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