

# 1. Why does **God** reveal Himself as **Elohim**, a *plurality*, and **not Elohe**, a *singularity*? Genesis 1:1

In the beginning, **God** (*Elohim-n.pl.*) **created** (*bara- v.sing.*) the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1

## Known Nature of God

In the Bible, God reveals himself to us that we might know him. But, we must remember that we *hear him* as fallen creatures, who would prefer to **dictate** how we know and relate to him rather than receive him as he is.

In our *fallen state* as eaters of the tree, our default is to **stand apart** from God, to stand on our own as being *self-sufficient* and well capable of our own self-righteousness. Not only do we seek to determine “good” and “evil” for ourselves, but we seek to redefine God as someone who **validates**

our moral choices. As those who stand apart, we seek a God who himself is distant and apart, a **detached deity**. Or, we seek a multitude of gods with power to help but also a **myriad of interests** and purposes to match our own.

But, God reveals himself as neither. He makes himself known as *Elohim*, a **plurality**. Existing not in a perpetual state of detachment but in community. Standing not alone but together, not in stubborn disunity but in agreement, for God-*Elohim* says to *Elohim*, “**Let us** make man in **our** image, in **our** likeness” (Genesis 1:26).

So, God creates “together” as a community, but God-*Elohim* also creates as a perfect **oneness**—so the verb for create, “bara,” takes a *singular form*. This perfect unity of being and action is remarkable—unseen in the pagan world and unwelcome by the religionists, but the basis of God’s nature as Creator.

For, when creating the expanse-*raqia*, **God as Head** *commands*: “Let there be an expanse” (Genesis 1:6) and **God as Honoring** this command *obeys*: “So, God made the expanse” (Genesis 1:7).

### Elohim's Inconvenient Nature: a Plural Unity

At the very core of **God-Elohim's** *nature*, this unexpected **plural unity** of God explains the reason he reveals himself to us. The very definition of community, God is willing to share in his nature that we might draw near and live with him in this community. For this reason, God-*Elohim* freely shares His very nature with man, his “**image**” and “**likeness**” as a **family resemblance** to bring us near (Genesis 1:26).

For, the community which God-*Elohim* shares as “Us” (Genesis 1:26) is depicted as a family unity which we first see enacted in the marital union of Adam and Even, when the plurality of individuals (Adam and Eve) become **basar echad**—“one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). It is this very word which

God-*Elohim* describes his own nature, for the Lord our God is also ***echad- one***.

### Responding to Elohim as echad.

But, our *fallen humanity* resists such an invitation to share in a common life with God, preferring to stand apart. It is this alienation-impulse that drives the Mohammedans to insist that God is a solitary and lonely *Allah*, having no son, even though God says about Mashiach: “I will be a father to him, and he will be a son to me” (2 Samuel 7:14) and Mashiach himself testifies, “The Lord said to me, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you” (Psalm 2:7).

For, not only does God-*Elohim's* nature as a monotheistic, *plural-unity* invite us near to share in his family unity as sons, but it also demands that we *subject ourselves*—denying our usurping natures and forsaking our self-sufficient righteousness. For, even God-*Elohim* subjected himself to the Father's command, so making the

*expanse of the heavens* because God-*Elohim*, his Father, commanded it. Such subjection is also distasteful to our fallen natures. So, in Israel's past, it has resisted this first view of God-*Elohim* as plural-unity. Abandoning this *biblical monotheism* for a more-reasonable deity.

Like the Mohammedans, Israel's teachers have embraced a *monadistic* view of God as a lonely singularity, worshipped at a distance and unknowable so that only the *elite* and *powerful* controlled access to him. These teachers *boldly accused God of mis-representing himself*, preferring that he revealed himself as *elohe* rather than *Elohim* and claiming that his oneness should be not *echad*- a unity, but *yachid*- a singularity. Such a re-casting of God-*Elohim* is akin to their ancestors creating a golden calf and demanding "*Elohim yeleku*"— gods (plural) to go ahead (plural) (Exodus 32:1). Until Israel stops re-casting Elohim according to its own preferences, it will never know God as the "Elohim" who is "echad."