

REDEDICATION



REFLECT Worship Prayer/תפילה *Sh'ma*

Sh'ma is recited as part of daily morning and evening services as well as on Shabbat and holidays. It is also a custom to say *Sh'ma* at night, after climbing into bed. For an interpretation of the bedtime *Sh'ma* to share with children, see *The Bedtime Sh'ma: A Good Night Book* by Sarah Gershman. For an child's introduction to saying *Sh'ma*, *Modeh ani* and other morning blessings, see *Modeh Ani: A Good Morning Book* by Sarah Gershman.

The complete text and notes on the *Sh'ma* reproduced on the following pages are from *Siddur Lev Shalem for Shabbat and Festivals* (pp. 155-156).

You can also find *Sh'ma* in the PAS *Siddur for Youth* (p. 59).

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד.

Sh'ma yisrael, Adonai eloheinu Adonai ehad.

Hear, O Israel, ADONAI is our God, ADONAI is one.

Hear, O Israel

The core of our worship is not a prayer at all, but a cry to our fellow Jews and fellow humans. In it we declare that God is one—which is also to say that humanity is one, that life is one, that joys and sufferings are all one—for God is the force that binds them all together. There is nothing obvious about this truth, for life as we experience it seems infinitely fragmented. Human beings seem isolated from one another, divided by all the fears and hatreds that make up human history. Even within a single life, one moment feels cut off from the next, memories of joy and fullness offering us little consolation when we are depressed or lonely. To assert that all is one in God is our supreme act of faith. No wonder that the Sh'ma, the first "prayer" we learn in childhood, is also the last thing we are to say before we die.

—ARTHUR GREEN

The Challenge of Faith

The Israeli poet Yoram Nissonovitch remarks that religious questions may not constitute the subversion of our faith; rather, it may help us get past tired notions that narrow our vision, and it may open our souls to new and deeper understandings. And his colleague Elhanan Nir adds: Doubts lead to a strong, surprising, and deep faith that cannot be compared with classical faith. This is a faith for which nothing is taken for granted.

Recitation of the Sh'ma

Some people may wish to pause here for a moment. Some may close their eyes; others may place a hand over their eyes. The intention is to concentrate on God's oneness.

The following words are added in the absence of a minyan: God is a faithful sovereign.

Hear, O Israel, ADONAI is our God, ADONAI is one.

Sh'ma yisrael, Adonai eloheinu Adonai ehad.

Recited quietly: Praised be the name of the one whose glorious sovereignty is forever and ever.

You shall love ADONAI your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all that is yours.

These words that I command you this day shall be taken to heart.

Teach them again and again to your children;

speak of them when you sit in your home,

when you walk on your way,

when you lie down,

and when you rise up.

Bind them as a sign upon your hand

and as a symbol above your eyes;

inscribe them upon the doorposts of your home

and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 6:4–9

V'ahavta et Adonai elohekha b'khol l'av'v'kha u-v'khol nafsh'kha u-v'khol me'odekha. V'hayu ha-d'varim ha-eileh asher anokhi m'tzav'kha ha-yom al l'avekha. V'shinantam l'vanekha v'dibarta bam, b'shivt'kha b'veitekha u-v'lekht'kha va-derekh u-v'shokhb'kha u-v'kumekha.

U-k'shartam l'ot al yadekha v'hayu l'totafot bein einekha.

U-kh'tavtam al m'zuzot beitekha u-visharekha.

Siddur Lev Shalem for Shabbat and Festivals, Morning Service, Sh'ma and Its Blessings, pp. 155-156.

קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע

Some people may wish to pause here for a moment. Some may close their eyes; others may place a hand over their eyes. The intention is to concentrate on God's oneness.

In the absence of a minyan, we add the following: אֵל מֶלֶךְ נֶאֱמָן.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד.

Recited quietly: שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

וְאֶהְבֵת אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי בְּכָל-לִבִּי וּבְכָל-נַפְשִׁי

וּבְכָל-מַאֲדִי: וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה

הַיּוֹם עַל-לִבִּי: וְשִׁנַּנְתֶּם לְבָבְךָ וּדְבַרְתָּ בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ

בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתְּךָ בְּדַרְךָ וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ:

וְקִשַׂרְתֶּם לְאָזְנוֹתְךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפוֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ:

וּכְתַבְתֶּם עַל-מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

דברים ו:ד-ט

covering his eyes came to be seen as a sign of deep contemplation, and so it became the custom of many to cover the eyes while reciting the Sh'ma, as a moment to meditate on God's unity.

GOD IS A FAITHFUL SOVEREIGN אֵל מֶלֶךְ נֶאֱמָן. These words form an acronym of *amen*. When we recite the Sh'ma with a *minyan*, the leader concludes with the words *Adonai eloheikhem emet*, "Your God truly"; when, in the absence of a *minyan*, that affirmation is not recited, we add this private affirmation at the beginning of the Sh'ma. The Kabbalists noted that the Sh'ma contained 245 words and so, by adding three additional words, we reach 248—the number of limbs in the body, according to the belief of the ancient rabbis. Thus we affirm, whether by adding words at the beginning or the end of the Sh'ma, that our entire being is dedicated to God.

SH'MA YISRAEL יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁמַע. To whom are these words addressed? Certainly, we are speaking to ourselves, enjoining ourselves to truly hear what our lips are saying. We may also be speaking to each other—the collective people Israel—reminding each other that we are a people united by values, nurturing our own sense of peoplehood. A moving midrash imagines these words recited by Jacob's sons, addressed to their father Jacob/Israel, reassuring him on his deathbed that they remain true to his teachings, and that the God of Jacob is and will remain "their God" (Genesis Rabbah 98:3). And so, we too may be speaking to our forebears, reassuring our ancestors (all the way back to Jacob!) that their legacy continues in us.

ONE אֶחָד. The Hebrew word *ehad*, "one," has been variously interpreted. It can mean that God is totally unified and not made up of parts, as is the case with everything else we encounter in the universe. It can mean unique, that God is different from all else we encounter. It can mean "only," that there is no other being who is divine. Mystics interpret it as meaning that God is one with the universe—or in another formulation, present throughout the universe.

PRaised BE THE NAME שֵׁם כְּבוֹד. This phrase is not part of the biblical text but was the customary response of those assembled to hearing the name of God as part of priestly prayers in the Temple. To differentiate it from the actual biblical text, it is recited silently. In the legend mentioned above, this sentence constituted Jacob's response to his children's affirmation, and so it is voiced differently.

INSCRIBE THEM UPON THE DOORPOSTS וּכְתַבְתֶּם עַל מְזוּזוֹת. The observant Jew lives a life surrounded by the Sh'ma: reciting it in the morning upon arising and at night before going to sleep, walking past its inscription on the *mezuzah* when entering one's home, and even adorning oneself with the words on weekday mornings upon one's head and near one's heart when putting on *t'fillin*, phylacteries.

THE RECITATION OF THE SH'MA. Rabbinic literature refers to the Sh'ma as a *k'riah*, a reading aloud of a passage of the Torah. Later it became a meditation as well, a way to focus on God's "oneness"—so much so that for some it became a moment to experience a mystical union with God. The Babylonian Talmud reports: Rabbi Judah the Prince was teaching and needed to stop, since the hour for reciting the Sh'ma was passing, so he covered his eyes for a moment and then continued teaching (Berakhot 13b). In this story, reciting the Sh'ma was but a momentary interruption. Later, Rabbi Judah's act of

Other Gods

What is an idol? A thing, a force, a person, a group, an institution or an ideal, regarded as supreme. God alone is supreme.

—ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

To Love and Revere God

When one contemplates the wonders of God's creation and sees in them God's infinite wisdom, one immediately loves, praises, and craves to know God's great name, as David sang, "I thirst for the living God" (Psalm 42:3). But as one contemplates these things one is immediately struck dumb and becomes fearful, for one knows that a person is only a tiny part of the vastness of creation—humble and ignorant, standing with little understanding before the fullness of knowledge, as David lamented, "When I gaze at Your heavens, Your handiwork, what are mortals that You care for them?" (Psalm 8:4-5).

—MAIMONIDES

If you will hear and obey the mitzvot that I command you this day, to love and serve ADONAI your God with all your heart and all your soul, then I will grant the rain for your land in season, rain in autumn and rain in spring. You shall gather in your grain and wine and oil; I will provide grass in your fields for your cattle and you shall eat and be satisfied. Take care lest your heart be tempted, and you stray and serve other gods and bow to them. Then ADONAI's anger will flare up against you, and God will close up the sky so that there will be no rain and the earth will not yield its produce. You will quickly disappear from the good land that ADONAI is giving you. Therefore, impress these words of mine upon your heart and upon your soul. Bind them as a sign upon your hand and as a symbol above your eyes; teach them to your children, by speaking of them when you sit in your home, when you walk on your way, when you lie down and when you rise up. Inscribe them upon the doorposts of your home and on your gates. Then your days and the days of your children, on the land that ADONAI swore to your ancestors to give them, will be as many as the days the heavens are above the earth.

Deuteronomy 11:13-21

ADONAI said to Moses: Speak to the people Israel, and instruct them that in every generation they shall put *tzitzit* on the corners of their garments, placing a thread of blue on the *tzitzit*, the fringe of each corner. That shall be your *tzitzit*; you shall look at it and remember all the mitzvot of ADONAI, and fulfill them, and not be seduced by your eyes and heart as they lead you astray. Then you will remember and fulfill all My mitzvot, and be holy before your God. I am ADONAI your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. I am ADONAI your God—

Numbers 15:37-41

Truly

When there is a minyan, the leader says:

▶ ADONAI your God—truly—

this teaching is constant, well-founded and enduring, righteous and trustworthy, beloved and cherished, desirable and pleasing, awe-inspiring and majestic, well-ordered and established, good and beautiful, and so incumbent on us forever.

וְהָיָה אִם-שָׁמַעַתְּ אֶת-מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְלַעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל-לְבַבְכֶם וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁכֶם: וְנָתַתִּי מִטְר-אֲרָצְכֶם בְּעִתּוֹ יוֹרֵה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ וְאֶסְפַּת דְּגַנְךָ וְתִירְשֶׁךָ וְיִצְהַרְךָ: וְנָתַתִּי עֵשֶׂב בְּשָׂדֶךָ לְבְהֵמְתֶךָ וְאֶכְלֵת וְשָׂבַעְתָּ: הַשְּׁמְרוּ לָכֶם פְּרִיפְתָה לְבַבְכֶם וְסוּרְתָם וְעַבְדְתֶם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם: וְחָרָה אַף-יְהוָה בְּכֶם וְעָצַר אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה מָטָר וְהִיאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת-יְבוּלָהּ וְאֶבְדַתֶּם מְהֵרָה מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה נָתַן לָכֶם: וְשָׂמַתֶּם אֶת-דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹהֵי עַל-לְבַבְכֶם וְעַל-נַפְשְׁכֶם וְקִשְׁרֹתֶם אֹתָם לְאוֹת עַל-יְדֵיכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם: וּלְמַדְתֶּם אֹתָם אֶת-בְּנֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ: וְכִתַּבְתֶּם עַל-מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ: לְמַעַן יִרְבוּ יְמֵיכֶם וְיָמֵי בְנֵיכֶם עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְתֵּיכֶם לֵאמֹר לָהֶם כִּימֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם עַל-הָאָרֶץ:

דברים יא:יג-כא

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצֵת עַל-כַּנְּפֵי בְגָדֵיהֶם לְדוֹרָתָם וְנָתַנּוּ עַל-צִיצֵת הַכְּנָף פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת: וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצֵת וּרְאִיתֶם אוֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹת יְהוָה וְעָשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְלֹא תִתּוּרוּ אַחֲרַי לְבַבְכֶם וְאַחֲרַי עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר-אַתֶּם זָנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם: לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וְעָשִׂיתֶם אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹתַי וְהִיִּיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים לְאֱלֹהֵיכֶם: אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְהִיּוֹת לָכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

במדבר טו:לו-מא

אמת

When there is a minyan, the leader says:

◀ יהוה אלהיכם – אמת –

וַיֵּצֵיב וְנִכּוֹן וְקַיִם וְיִשָּׁר וְנֶאֱמָן וְאֶהוּב וְחָבִיב וְנִחְמָד וְנִעֵיִם וְנוֹרָא וְאֲדִיר וּמְתָקָן וּמְקַבֵּל וְטוֹב וְיָפֵה הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

IF YOU WILL HEAR אִם תִּשְׁמָע. This paragraph suggests a direct relationship between the righteousness of our acts and our fate. If we are good, God will be good to us, and vice versa. That theology was questioned throughout the ages and even by biblical writers themselves, most sharply in the Book of Job. Nevertheless, it does speak to a deep human need to see a world as containing a moral balance between good and evil. What is expressed here in concrete terms may be understood more broadly: moral and immoral actions have consequences, both seen and unseen.

TZITZIT צִיצִית. The biblical scholar Israel Knohl, expanding a medieval Jewish comment, suggests that the word *tzitzit* may derive from *tzitz*, a headband worn by the High Priest and tied in back with a *p'til t'khelet*, a "thread of blue." On it were the words קדש קדושה (*kodesh ladonai*), "holy before Adonai." Wearing the *tzitzit* (literally, the "little *tzitzit*"), we are asked to serve God in a holy way, much as the High Priest did; thus the paragraph commands us to be "holy before your God." The act of wearing *tzitzit* turns us all, metaphorically, into High Priests.

TRULY אֱמֶת. The tradition read the word *emet*, "truly," as referring both backward and forward: it is the first word of the following paragraph and is also recited as if it were the last word of the preceding paragraph.

continued