

# Reciting the Shema

Keriat Shema Aleph: Deut. 6:4-9

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו,  
הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ,  
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל

May He who makes peace in  
His high places make peace for  
us, and for all Israel.

We first say:

אֵל מֶלֶךְ נְאֻמָּן

El melekh ne'eman: God is a faithful King.

וְהָיָה יְהוָה לְמֶלֶךְ  
עַל-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא  
וְהָיָה יְהוָה אֶחָד וְשִׁמוֹ אֶחָד

"And the LORD will be king over all the  
earth. On that day the LORD will be one  
and his name one." (Zech. 14:9)

## שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד

Cover the eyes  
with the right  
hand:

Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu<sup>1</sup>, Adonai echad<sup>2</sup>

The oversized Ayin  
and Dalet form the  
word עֵד, "witness."

### HEAR, O ISRAEL: THE LORD IS OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE

This implies acceptance  
of the yoke of heaven.

[ בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד ]

Said in an undertone...  
Pause briefly after reciting.

barukh shem kevod malkhuto le'olam va'ed

Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever.

ve'ahavta et Adonai  
Elohekha<sup>3</sup> b'khol levavekha<sup>4</sup>  
uvkhol nafshekha<sup>5</sup> uvkhol  
me'odekha<sup>6</sup>

וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ  
וּבְכָל-נַפְשֶׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדֶךָ:

You shall love the LORD your  
God with all your heart and  
with all your soul and with all  
your resources.

vahayu hadevarim ha'eleh  
asher anakhi metzavekha  
hayom al-levavekha<sup>7</sup>

וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי  
מִצְוֶיךָ הַיּוֹם עַל-לִבְבְּךָ:

And these words that I  
command you today shall be  
on your heart.

ve'shinantam<sup>8</sup> levanekha  
vedibarta bam beshivtekha  
b'vetekha uvlekhtekha  
vaderekh uvshakbekha<sup>9</sup>  
uvkumekha

וּשְׁנַנְתֶּם לְבַנְיֵיךָ וּדְבַרְתֶּם בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ  
בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ  
וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ:

You shall impress them upon  
your children, and shall talk  
of them when you sit in your  
house, and when you walk  
by the way, and when you lie  
down, and when you rise up.

ukshartam le'ot al-  
yadekha<sup>10</sup>, vahayu le'totafot  
bein enekha

וּקְשַׁרְתֶּם לְאוֹת עַל-יָדְךָ  
וְהָיוּ לְטַטְפֹּת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ:

You shall bind them as a sign  
on your hand, and they shall  
be as frontlets between your  
eyes.

ukhtavtam al-mezuzot  
betekha uvsharekha<sup>11</sup>

וּכְתַבְתֶּם עַל-מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

You shall write them on the  
doorposts of your house and  
on your gates.

<sup>1</sup> The Name יהוה represents God's attributes of love and mercy (מִדַּת הַרַחֲמִים), as opposed to the Name אֱלֹהִים, which represents God's justice and role as our Creator.

<sup>2</sup> The seminal verse is an affirmation of the acceptance of God's sovereignty and our loyalty to God as His subjects. The word "hear" means "listen," "obey," "respond."

<sup>3</sup> What is the proper kind of love for God? Loving others as yourself: וְאַהֲבַת לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ ("You shall love your neighbor as yourself," Lev. 19:18).

<sup>4</sup> The word "heart" is usually spelled with a single Vet. The double Vet is said to represent a double measure of love or a twofold love.

<sup>5</sup> I.e., with the will and all your desires. With every breath we are obligated to thank the Creator.

<sup>6</sup> I.e., with all your money (Berachot 54a, 61b, etc.). Me'od is related to middah, "measure," though some argue it means "much" (i.e., with all your "muchness").

<sup>7</sup> I.e., by constant study and absorption of the truth of God's Torah and revelation. Study to show yourself approved. Pause between "hayom" and "al-levavekha."

<sup>8</sup> The word means to "pierce sharply" or to impress sharply. The words of the Torah are to be "sharp" (i.e., familiar) in your mouth, not said with stammering.

<sup>9</sup> The sages note this implies that the Shema should be recited twice daily: in the evening (after three stars appear) and in the morning.

<sup>10</sup> Jewish tradition derives from this the various laws concerning the (hand and head) tefillin (phylacteries). The word totafot is obscure though refers to head tefillin.

<sup>11</sup> I.e., affixing a mezuzah scroll to each doorpost of the house. It is customary to touch the mezuzah when entering or leaving the house. "Gates" refers to public displays.