

(אל מֶלֶךְ נֶאֱמָן)

שְׁמַע | יִשְׂרָאֵל, הִיא אֱלֹהֵינוּ, הִיא אֶחָד.
בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

God is a faithful sovereign

Hear, O Israel: Adonai is our God, Adonai alone.

Praised be God's glorious sovereignty throughout all time.

“When he covered his face with his hands, he would affirm the yoke of Divine rule” (Brachot 13b)

We are commanded
“*Shema*” – Hear!
How can we best fulfill
this commandment to
hear? Where can God’s
voice best be heard?

The text of the Shema is
recited prior
to going to sleep. What do
you think
is the logic in so doing?

The same Shema text has
become the
cry of martyrs for
generations. Why?

How might this text also
serve as a
wedding vow?

If you look closely, you
will see that the
“*ayin*” of the word
“*shema*” and the “*dalet*” of
the word “*echad*” are
enlarged. The same thing
is true where this text is
written in the Torah. Can
you postulate reasons for
such?

As the Shema is recited,
you will notice
that many people cover
their eyes? Why
do you think this done?

Is the Shema really a
prayer? What is
prayer? How might we
consider the role
of the Shema in service as
a dialogue
with God?

How is it possible to be
commanded to love? Can
it be real love? How can
one love God with all
one’s heart, soul, and
might?

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה'
אֶחָד: וְאַהֲבַת אֵת ה'
אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לֵבְבְךָ וּבְכָל־
נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדְךָ: וְהָיוּ
הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי
מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם עַל לֵבְבְךָ:
וּשְׁנַנְתָּם לְבְנֶיךָ וּדְבַרְתָּ בָם
בְּשַׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתְּךָ
בְּדַרְךָ וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ:
וְקִשְׂרָתָם לְאוֹת עַל יָדְךָ:
וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ:
וְכִתַּבְתָּם עַל מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ
וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

***You shall love Adonai
your God with all your
heart, With all your
soul, and with all your
might. And these
words, which I
command you this day,
you shall take to heart.
Teach them diligently,
to your children, and
recite them at home
and away, night and
day. Bind them as a
sign upon your hand,
and as a reminder
between your eyes.
Write them upon the
doorposts of your house
and upon your gates.***

You will often hear
Christians speaking of a
personal relationship with
God? Is this an un-Jewish
idea? Why or why not?

We are told to speak of
Torah when we lie down
and when we rise up. This
is an example of a merism
(when two polar opposites
are cited, it is meant to
include everything in
between as well.

How can we live Torah at
all times? Are there
situations in our lives in
which Torah doesn’t
apply?

We are commanded
“*v’shinantem*” – you shall
teach (literally “drill into”)
your children. Why is
there such a strong
focus on education among
Jews? Ultimately, whose
responsibility is this?

We are commanded to
wear Tefillin. How is the
purpose of the Tefillin
similar to the recent
Christian trend of the
WWJD bracelets?
Why don’t we wear
Tefillin on Shabbat?
What is the symbolism of
the placement of the
Tefillin in putting them
on? Should women wear
Tefillin?

We are commanded to put
up Mezzuzot. How can one
truly dedicate a home to
God? Why are Mezzuzot
usually decorative? Are
there buildings or rooms
on which we don’t put
mezzuzot.

SOURCES ON “STUDY”

“Say not: when I have leisure I will study, lest you may not have it!”
(Avot 2:4)

“If you have studied Torah a great deal, hold it not as a merit in yourself.”
(Avot 2:9)

“If you forsake study for one day, it will forsake you for two.”
(Talmud, Berachot)

“What a difference between one who studies a lesson a hundred times and one that studies it just once more!”
(Talmud, Chagigah)

“A teacher must repeat the lesson until the pupil has learnt it.”
(Talmud Eruvin)

“If you do not suffer the toil of study, you will suffer the toil of ignorance.”
(Ibn Ezra)

“When I ask a man, ‘Why do you not study Torah?’ and he answers ‘I do not want to’, I leave him...But when the answer is ‘I do not have time,’ I say he is a liar, because if there is a will there is a way.”
(Midor Ledor)

Tefillin as Betrothal (Wedding Ring)

- *“I will betroth you to Me forever.”*
- *“I will betroth you to Me with righteousness, with justice, with love, and with compassion.”*
- *“I will betroth you to Me with faithfulness and you shall love the Lord.”*

From the Shulchan Aruch

- It is a divine command to affix a Mezuzah to every door of the house.
 - Even if one has many rooms, and in every room there are many doors, one must affix a Mezuzah to each one of the doors, even though only one of the doors is ordinarily used.
- The Mezuzah must be affixed to the right hand side as one enters.
- The Mezuzah must be affixed within the upper third of the doorpost, at least one hand-breadth from the lintel.
- The Mezuzah should be fastened with nails to the doorpost diagonally, having the top line of the Shema towards the house.
 - If the doorpost is not wide enough, we may fasten the Mezuzah vertically.
- If we simply suspend the Mezuzah, it is not valid. It must be fastened at top and bottom so as not to be suspended.

- A house used as a temporary residence needs no Mezuzah. Therefore, the Sukkah requires no Mezuzah.
- Stores which are permanently occupied with merchandise (as opposed to a temporary bazaar) do require a Mezuzah.
- If a person moves from a house and it is to be occupied by another Jew, we must not remove the Mezuzah, but leave them there, and the new occupant is to pay for them.

- The occupant of a new house has 30 days to affix a Mezuzah.
- Because the purpose of the Mezuzah is to remind us of God's name, we should kiss the Mezuzah upon leaving the house and upon entering it.
- **Alshech**: What need is there to affix the Mezuzah to the doorposts of rooms within rooms?
 - This is necessary so that one should not think that only in public must one avoid wrongdoing.
 - The Mezuzah is a reminder that, even in the innermost rooms where one imagines being isolated and alone, we must refrain from sin.