

Traditional communities recite the Sh'ma while seated, and say the line beginning "Baruch Sheim – Blessed is" silently.
Some communities rise to recite the Sh'ma and say the line starting "Baruch Sheim" aloud.
When praying in private, first say: "Eil mé-lech ne'e-man – אל מֶלֶךְ נֶאֱמָן – You are a faithful ruler."
Many people cover their eyes when reciting the first line of the Sh'ma.
After this page is chanted aloud, we read silently to the bottom of page 53.

Sh'ma, שְׁמַע,
Yis-ra'el, יִשְׂרָאֵל,
A-do-nai E-lo-héi-nu, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
A-do-nai E-chad. יְיָ אֶחָד.¹

Ba-ruch sheim k'vod mal'chu-to בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ
l'o-lam va-ed. לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

V'a-hav-ta eit A-do-nai E-lo-hé-cha, b'chol l'vá-v'cha, וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֵת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ, כָּכָל לְבָבְךָ,
u-v'chol naf-sh'cha, u-v'chol m'o-dé-cha. וְכָכָל נַפְשְׁךָ, וְכָכָל מְאֹדְךָ.

V'ha-yu ha-d'va-rim ha-éil-leh, וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה,
a-sheer A-no-chi m'tzav-v'cha ha-yom, al l'va-vé-cha. אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם, עַל לְבָבְךָ.

V'shin-nan-tam l'va-né-cha, וְשִׁנְנָתֶם לְבָנֶיךָ,
v'dib-bar-ta bam, וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם,
b'shiv-t'cha b'vei-té-cha, u-v'lech-t'cha va-dé-rech, בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ, וּבְלַכְתְּךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ,
u-v'shoch-b'cha, u-v'ku-mé-cha. וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ, וּבְקוּמֶךָ.

U-k'shar-tam l'ot al ya-dé-cha, וְקָשַׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל יָדְךָ,
v'ha-yu l'to-ta-fot bein ei-né-cha. וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפוֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ.
U-ch'tav-tam al m'zu-zot bei-té-cha וְחָתַבְתָּם עַל מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ,
u-vish-a-ré-cha. וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ.

Following is the same text as above but with the symbols that indicate how this portion of the Torah is chanted:

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד: וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֵת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
כָּכָל לְבָבְךָ וְכָכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וְכָכָל מְאֹדְךָ: וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה
אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם עַל לְבָבְךָ: וְשִׁנְנָתֶם לְבָנֶיךָ וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם
בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלַכְתְּךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמֶךָ: וְקָשַׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת
עַל יָדְךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפוֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ: וְחָתַבְתָּם עַל מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ:

See note on page at left.

Listen,
Israel,
Adonai is our God,
Adonai is One.

(Deut. 6:4)

² Blessed is the essence of God's glorious majesty
for ever and ever. (P'sachim 56a)

Love Adonai your God with all your heart,
with all your being, with all your power.

³ Fix these words which I command you today
in your mind and in your heart.

Teach them to your children at all times and places,
speaking of them
when you are at home, and when you are away,
when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Tie them on your hand as a reminder,
and also between your eyes.
Write them on the doorposts of your house
and on your gates. (Deut. 6:5-9)

GUIDEPOSTS

The Sh'ma – Six Words. These six Hebrew words are a high point of the service. They contain two important spiritual affirmations: that Adonai is *our* God, not simply remote and abstract, and that Adonai is one, not simply one of a multiplicity of gods. These two affirmations interact, as in the meditation on p. 50: all of the images we have of God are one, and God is available to us in all the ways we can imagine.

In Judaism, the Sh'ma also represents the ultimate affirmation of commitment; generations of martyrs have gone to their deaths with these words on their lips.

The Sh'ma – Three Paragraphs. In the prayer service, the phrase "the Sh'ma" also refers to the six words of the Sh'ma together with three extended passages from the Torah. The first, on this page, focuses on our making the divine presence and commandments central to our lives. The second (on p. 52) describes the consequences of rejecting the path prescribed in the Torah. Together, they address the notions of loving and fearing God (see p. 49). The third passage (on p. 53) gives us a practical way of remembering these messages.

First Paragraph of the Sh'ma. This passage exhorts us to love God as intensely as God loves us, to convey our love and understanding of God to others, and to keep God in our consciousness at all times. This message is underscored by the placement of "Ahavah Rabbah" immediately before the Sh'ma (pp. 49-50).

COMMENTS

¹ The two large letters – שְׁמַע of (Sh'ma) and ד of אֶחָד (echad) – together spell the word עֵיד (eid) – witness. These letters are written large in the Torah, as if to say that when we recite these words as an *affirmation*, we are also *testifying* to God's presence and significance.

² See comment 2 on p. 17 for a discussion of this verse.

³ "These words" refers to the six words of the Sh'ma and to the commandment to love God that follows them.

V'ha-yah im sha-mó-a tish-m'u el mitz-vo-tai
 a-she'r A-no-chi m'tzav-veh et-chem ha-yom:
 l'a-ha-vah et A-do-nai E-lo-hei-chem,
 u-l'ov-do b'chol l'av-chem,
 u-v'chol naf-sh'chem.
 V'na-tat-ti m'tar ar-tz'chem b'it-to,
 yo-reh u-mal-kosh,
 v'a-saf-ta d'ga-né-cha,
 v'ti-rosh-cha, v'yitz-ha-ré-cha.
 V'na-tat-ti éi-sev b'sa-d'cha liv-hem-té-cha,
 v'a-chal-ta v'sa-vá-ta.

Hi-sha-m'ru la-chem pen yif-teh l'av-chem,
 v'sar-tem va-a-vad-tem e-lo-him a-chei-rim
 v'hish-ta-cha-vi-tem la-hem.

V'cha-rah af A-do-nai ba-chem,
 v'a-tzar et ha-sha-má-yim,
 v'lo yih-yeh ma-tar,
 v'ha-a-da-mah lo tit-tein et y'vu-lah.
 Va-a-vad-tem m'hei-rah mei-al ha-á-retz ha-to-vah
 a-she'r A-do-nai no-tein la-chem.

V'sam-tem et d'va-rai éil-leh
 al l'av-chem v'al naf-sh'chem.
 U-k'shar-tem o-tam l'ot al yed-chem,
 v'ha-yu l'to-ta-fot bein ei-nei-chem.
 V'lim-mad-tem o-tam et b'nei-chem, l'dab-beir bam
 b'shiv-t'cha b'vei-té-cha, u-v'lech-t'cha va-dé-rech,
 u-v'shoch-b'cha u-v'ku-mé-cha.
 U-ch'tav-tam al m'zu-zot bei-té-cha
 u-vish-a-ré-cha.

וְהָיָה אִם שָׁמַעַתְּ מִצְוֹתַי
 אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מֵצִוְהָ אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם:
 לְאַהֲבָה אֹת יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם,
 וּלְעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל לְבַבְכֶם,
 וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁכֶם.
 וְנָתַתִּי מָטָר אֲרָצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ,
 יוֹרֵה וּמַלְקוֹשׁ,
 וְאִסַּפְתִּי דִגְנְךָ,
 וְחִירְשְׁךָ, וַיִּצְהַרְךָ.
 וְנָתַתִּי עֵשֶׂב בְּשָׂדֶךָ לְבְהֵמְתְּךָ,
 וְאָכְלָתָ וּשְׂבָעְתָּ.

הַשָּׂמְרוּ לָכֵם פֶּן יִפְתָּה לְבַבְכֶם,
 וְסָרְתֶם וַעֲבַדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים
 וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם.

וְחָרָה אַף יְיָ בְּכֶם,
 וְעָזַר אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם,
 וְלֹא יִהְיֶה מָטָר,
 וְהִאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת יְבוּלָהּ.
 וְאֲבַדְתֶּם מְהֵרָה מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה
 אֲשֶׁר יְיָ נָתַן לָכֶם.

וְשָׁמַתֶּם אֶת דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹהִים
 עַל לְבַבְכֶם וְעַל נַפְשְׁכֶם.
 וְקִשְׂרֹתֶם אֹתָם לְאוֹת עַל יְדֵיכֶם,
 וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפוֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם.
 וְלִמְדַתֶּם אֹתָם בְּנֵיכֶם, לְדַבֵּר בָּם
 בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ, וּבְלֻכְתְּךָ בְּדֶרֶךְךָ,
 וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ.
 וְכָתַבְתֶּם עַל מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ
 וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ.

¹ If you pay close attention to My commandments
 that I am teaching you today –
 to love Adonai your God,
 and to serve God with all your heart,
 and with all your being –
 then I will provide rain for your land on time,
 the early rain and the late rain,
 so that you may gather your grain,
 your wine, and your oil.
 I will provide grass in your field for your cattle,
 and you will eat and be satisfied.

Do not let your heart be seduced;
 do not stray from the path,
 worship other gods, and serve them.

If you do, Adonai will be angry with you,
 and will keep the waters up in the heavens,
 so that the rain will not fall
 and the earth will not yield its produce.
 Then you will quickly perish from the good land
 which Adonai is giving you.

Therefore, keep these words of Mine
 in your mind and in your soul.
 Tie them on your hand as a reminder,
 and also between your eyes.
 Teach them to your children, speaking of them
 when you are at home and when you are away,
 when you lie down, and when you rise up.
 Write them on the doorposts of your house
 and on your gates ...

GUIDEPOSTS

Second Paragraph of the Sh'ma. Whereas the first passage focuses on love of God, the second focuses on the consequences of disobedience.

PERSPECTIVES

Reward and Punishment. All of our actions have consequences. This we understand and accept. Our ancestors, however, understood this in terms of reward and punishment meted out by a God who sits in judgment of our behavior. This notion is quite foreign to many of us, and indeed some of us abandoned religion when we found that God didn't directly respond to our behavior. In the traditional Siddur, this image of God is rare, its authors preferring to present God as a source of unconditional love and blessing, a role inconsistent with that of a stern judge. That role is reserved, by and large, for the days preceding Yom Kippur; even in the Yom Kippur liturgy, however, God's forgiveness is more prominent than God's sternness. This Siddur (see p. 21) rejects altogether the notion of a punishing God.

ALTERNATIVES

¹ Listen to My Commandments.

This interpretive translation of the second paragraph of the Sh'ma reflects the perspective described above:

If you listen to My commandments and do them, the rain that falls on your fields will also fall in your lives, enabling everything to grow. Your fields will be fruitful, your animals will be fruitful, and you will be fruitful in body and in spirit.

But if you turn away from My commandments, then you will also turn away from My rain; you will no longer be aware of this blessing and its source, so that, for you, the rain will no longer exist. You will be unable to enjoy fully the fruit of your fields, or the fruit of your lives.

So listen to My commandments, be mindful of My blessings, and inherit the promises I made to your ancestors: of fields rich with My bounty, of lives rich with My presence.

L'má-an yir-bu y'mei-chem vi-mei v'nei-chem
al ha-a-da-mah a-sheer nish-ba A-do-nai
la-a-vo-tei-chem la-teit la-hem,
ki-mei ha-sha-má-yim al ha-á-retz.

*In the morning service, it is customary to look at and kiss the tzitzit
each time the word "tzitzit" is read, and also at the word "emet."*

Alternatively, one may hold the tzitzit and "look at them," as indicated in the text.

Va-yó-mer A-do-nai el Mo-sheh lei-mor:
Dab-beir el b'nei Yis-ra-eil v'a-mar-ta a-lei-hem
v'a-su la-hem tzi-tzit
al kan-fei vig-dei-hem l'do-ro-tam,
v'na-t'nu al tzi-tzit ha-ka-naf p'til t'chéi-let.

"V'ha-yah la-chem l'tzi-tzit,
u-r'i-tem o-to,
u-z'char-tem et kol mitz-vot A-do-nai,
va-a-si-tem o-tam,
v'lo ta-tú-ru a-cha-rei l'av-chem
v'a-cha-rei ei-nei-chem,
a-sheer at-tem zo-nim a-cha-rei-hem.

L'má-an tiz-k'ru va-a-si-tem
et kol mitz-vo-tai,
vih-yi-tem k'do-shim l'Ei-lo-hei-chem.
A-ni A-do-nai E-lo-hei-chem
a-sheer ho-tzéi-ti et-chem mei-é-retz Mitz-rá-yim,
lih-yot la-chem l'Ei-lo-him.
A-ni A-do-nai E-lo-hei-chem."

The leader recites:

A-do-nai E-lo-hei-chem ... e-met!

לְמַעַן יִרְבוּ יְמֵיכֶם וְיָמֵי בְנֵיכֶם
עַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יי
לְאַבְרָהָם לָתֵת לָהֶם,
כִּימֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם עַל הָאָרֶץ.

וַיֹּאמֶר יי אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:
דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם
וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִת
עַל כְּנָפֵי בְגָדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם,
וְנִתְּנוּ עַל צִיצִת הַכֹּנָף פֶּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת.

"וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִת,
וּרְאִיתֶם אוֹתוֹ,
וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹת יי,
וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם,
וְלֹא תִתְּנוּ אַחֲרַי לְבִבְכֶם
וְאַחֲרַי עֵינֵיכֶם,
אֲשֶׁר אֹתָם זָנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם.

לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם
אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹתַי,
וְהָיִיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם.
אֲנִי יי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם,
לְהִיּוֹת לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים.
אֲנִי יי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם."

The leader recites:

יי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם ... אָמֵן !

1 ... so that you and your children will flourish
on the land that Adonai promised your ancestors,
for as many days as the heavens
remain above the earth. (Deut. 11:13-21)

See note at left.

Adonai spoke to Moses and said:
Speak to the children of Israel and tell them
to put tzitzit on the corners of their garments
throughout all their generations, including
a blue strand in the tzitzit on each corner.

Tell them: "These tzitzit are for you. Look at them
regularly, so that each time you see them,
you will remember all of God's commandments
and observe them,
2 and you will not be led astray
by your heart and your eyes,
for they will seduce you to misbehave.

Thus, each time you look at them
you will remember and do all My commandments,
and you will be holy unto your God.
I am Adonai your God
who took you out of the land of Egypt
to be your God.
I, Adonai, am your God." (Num. 15:37-41)

The leader recites:

3 Adonai Eloheichem ... emet!

Adonai is *your* God ...

and that is true!

KAVVANOT

¹ **Doorposts of the Soul.** For new insight into the
last verse of p. 52, recite this kavvanah (by Jim Propp):

The ears are doorposts of the soul and the mouth is
one of its gates. Let us inscribe God's name there, so
that when we hear the words of others and speak words
of our own, we do not lose sight of the holiness that
belongs to all people, as children of the One.

GUIDEPOSTS

Third paragraph of the Sh'ma. This passage
prescribes a simple device to help remind us of God's
expectations. If we attach tzitzit (strands) at the four
corners of our garments, we will notice them at critical
moments, and they will remind us not to follow our own
hearts and eyes. Our senses, our feelings, our thoughts
all play significant roles in our lives, but each can lead us
to inappropriate behavior. We need an anchor that will
remind us to consider God's will as well as our own.

COMMENTS

² The Hebrew words תַּתְּנוּ (taturu) and זָנִים (zonim)
allude to the story of the spies (Numbers 13-14) that
occurs in the Bible just before this paragraph. In scouting
תֹּרֶה (tur; see 13:1) the promised land, the spies whored
זָנָה (zanu; see 14:33) after their eyes and made a false
report. Thus אֲשֶׁר אֹתָם זָנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם (asher attem
zonim achareihem), usually translated "they will lead you
astray" or "they will seduce you to misbehave," is more
accurately rendered as "for they will lead you a-whoring."
If we rely only on our own instincts or only on our own
reasoning, then we are likely to be led astray.

³ The last phrase of Numbers 15:41, which means "I am
Adonai your God" or "I, Adonai, am your God," is now
repeated by the leader without the initial word "ani," so
that the phrase becomes a declaration: "Adonai is *your*
God!" The added exclamation "E-met! — That is true!"
may have originated as the congregation's response.