

# Sh'ma:

## The Foundation and Fulfillment of the Faith



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# Sh'ma: The Foundation and Fulfillment of the Faith

It is the Creed of all Israel. Sh'ma is the name of the creed, and it is the first word of all. This is a principle and a proclamation. Sh'ma is both our credo and our heart's cry. As the corner stone laid by Moses and the most sacred commandment raised up by Messiah, the Sh'ma acts as a shortened form of the whole Law, a summation of the 10 Words, and the supreme directive of Heaven itself. The future kingdom of YHWH will be run by this standard, and thus our present life shall be held to the same touchstone. So it is, therefore, that this divine declaration, being our KING's first, greatest, and most important order, is and should ever be our genuine way of life and the sacred statement of faith for all the people of YHWH.

*Sh'ma Yisrael ! YHWH Eloheinu, YHWH Echad!*

*(Hear oh Israel ! YHWH is our Mighty One, YHWH is One !)*

*Blessed is His NAME and His glorious Kingdom*

*forever and ever.*

*And You shall love YHWH Eloheicha with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words which I command you today shall be upon your hearts. You shall teach them diligently to your children. You shall speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road, when you lie down and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as reminders between your eyes. You shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates.*

## HEAR

In its most basic sense, “Sh'ma“ means “hear”, but like most Hebrew words, it cannot be so bluntly understood, nor so brutally translated. Yes, “Sh'ma” does mean “hear”, but more so it means “listen.” It means, “understand” and it means, “obey” Sh'ma means “listen with intelligence, and **do**.” This is a very heavy word. It is a loaded word, pregnant with meaning, and ready to burst.

In our post-modern western world, with our Greek way of thinking and our Roman way of living, we very often forget the old Hebrew mindset being starkly counter to our own. When we see “Sh'ma” we think the word “hear” which is the passive reception of sound and information, and while that meaning is contained within the word, this is the least of its aspects. What we should be thinking when seeing the word, “Sh'ma” is the active intake, not only of mental facts and physical sound waves but of the specific details and their direct impact or involvement in our lives. Sh'ma is our FATHER's desire for us to pay attention to what He is about to tell us, perceive all the details of His Message, and prepare ourselves in heart, mind, and body to bring His words to life in our actions. Sh'ma requires particular consideration for the meaning behind what is said with all requirements put upon us by every word and their successive meanings. To know the facts is nothing, and to agree that they are true is even less impressive. What matters to the Most High is only making word into work, and morphing what was recited by others into reality for ourselves in our time.

There's also another aspect of the word, "Sh'ma" often missed by most. Yes, it can imply reception of sound, but it can also connote the conveying of information. "Sh'ma" can mean, "tell, report, declare, proclaim, publish, show." When YHWH tells us, "Sh'ma", He is ordering us to take action, visible and vital to our faith without which our religion is but hollow and hopeless. We are instructed in this first word of our creed to take heed to help prove our own beliefs, but more importantly to illustrate in actions the veracity of Heaven's holy Law. Our works make all the difference in the world between whether or not the faithless and the hopeless will hear what our FATHER told us. If they see us doing what we were told, they too will be inclined to investigate the Message.

And this leads us to the last aspect of this word, "Sh'ma" which may also mean, "consent" or "witness". YHWH spoke, and we heard. Hearing, we acted, for ourselves to make our faith real, and for others to bring higher reality to bare before their eyes in this lonely world. And so we give our consent to the covenant our Creator has offered to us, going out into the earth as witnesses of His majesty and might, our every word and gesture generating genuine reflection of Heaven here where it is needed inside of the dying, the downtrodden, and the desperate. This meaning too tells of the creed's entire purpose being that of a witness. All faith is built on this blessed statement, and all the creed is founded on this word. Sh'ma is the call to gather from the fringes. It is the call to give heed to the speaker. It is the call to conform to the commission. And it is the call to become the personification of all that follows here...

## OH ISRAEL

The command to hear is not given to all Creation. Not every nation was called to listen, understand, and obey. And the Most High was not issuing proclamation onto each individual person on earth. As in every age, the Almighty is asking only His own to understand this and to answer His announcement. Therefore He says in the Royal command, "Sh'ma Yishrael..." Hear, oh Israel!!! The subject of this order to hear, listen, understand, obey, tell, report, declare, proclaim, publish, show, consent, and bear witness to... is Israel. No one else is addressed. None other considered. YHWH is talking to the only people He has ever called His own, and He is calling them Israel.

Long before this He chose one man named Yakov (Jacob), a trickster and a deceiver, and YHWH changed this man overnight giving him the new name of Israel. Jacob was no one special, and everything he had ever acquired he had gained by chicanery, but one night YHWH gave him an opportunity to wrestle with a mighty one of Heaven so that Jacob could gain the understanding of the true strength inside him, the willingness to hold on and to out last. For this he was renamed Israel, and ever after he walked with a limp. YHWH wanted a representative on the earth to reveal His greatness to the nations, and so He chose Jacob, the trickster, and made him into Israel, "He who rules with Elohim."

From this man came the 12 tribes of the nation also called Israel, and it is to this people that YHWH is calling in the Sh'ma, to perform all that therein follows. But what makes a person part of this nation? Yes, those who were born to one of the 12 tribes: Ruben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin (technically 13) ; These are Israelites for sure, unless of course they break YHWH's Law, in which case they will be cut off. And if an Israelite can be cut out of Israel, can a non-Israelite, a born-gentile ever be brought in and made a part of this people? The Scriptures have shown us this is so and shown us the way by which we who were born abroad may come to abide in Israel. If you were renounce this world, with its ways and it's gods and

you commit to YHWH, to His Way and His world, then you are of Israel; and the Sh'ma is being said to you.

If, however, you decide to be part of Israel, you are not only committing your life to a righteous course for yourself, you are also committing to a responsibility for others, to show them The Way to go and the good Lord you are following to get there. To be an Israelite is to be one who rules with Elohim. That means we are charged to utilize the commandments of our FATHER to give proper judgment and to properly regulate our own world. We never force our will or the will of our Heavenly FATHER on anyone, but over all that is our own, we are tasked to construct into the Kingdom of Heaven. And moreover, as Israel can also imply “one who rules as elohim”, we must understand that the Most High is calling us to the high honor of serving on the earth as elohim, not idolatrously receiving worship, prayer, or genuflection, but idealistically reflecting all worship, prayer, and genuflection toward our FATHER in Heaven. We are called to be mighty ones in our time, to demonstrate the character and Commandments of our Mighty One in order that we might properly fulfill the Sh'ma, showing and bearing witness to all our Mighty One there in has said.

## YHWH IS OUR MIGHTY ONE

And just Who is this Mighty One of ours? Most people respond incredulously to such a question these days. “There is only one ‘God’” they say emphatically, as though it shouldn’t matter about specifics. Most people in postmodern nations are taught to be monotheistic, if they are trained in any form of faith at all. But the centrality of monotheism as the all important standard for religion is a misnomer. The worship of only one “God” is not a proper measure of orthodoxy at all, in the same way that being human does not make man. A human could be a woman too or a child, and moreover looking for a particular human being would demand more than a check on genetics of man, woman, or child, but would involve an investigation into locations, dates, and names to identify the desired individual.

Had the Egyptians eliminated all their idols except Osiris, would they have had a pure faith? If the Greeks retained know deity but Zeus, and the Romans only their chiefest chicanery, Jupiter, would we be justified in joining them in temple, or would we still be judged idolaters? We would never agree to such abominations, but yet we still insist on being vague about our own Mighty One. Why?

Perhaps more modern examples would help us here. The Asatru religion serves the old Norse gods, the Aesir and Vanir deities and are thus polytheists, but some of their number name only one paternal divinity called, Tiwas, with no partners. What if we prayed to this “God” alone, would that be all right? Or maybe we should cite more familiar examples. The Hindus worship thousands of gods but still claim to be monotheist, by saying these are all the many sides of the one God, Brahman. How about him? Would he do? Or we could call on Allah like the Muslims, with no partners and no images at all, but would this be right and just? Would this be keeping the commandment of Scripture? Decidedly not, no!

It was a mistake to think the commandment claims there is only one “God”. It clearly says no such thing! Whether or not there be gods aplenty makes no difference here, and is no never mind to us. Let there be thousands, millions even. That there be a vigintillion or a Centillion number of celestial beings believed on, worshiped, and prayed to, everyone of them called “God,” but *for us*, there is *One*, and only *One*... And He is not called “God”. Never was till the English translators got ahold of Him. “God” is a name HE was saddled with by Saxons and Germans who served deities called God and Gott. While the origin of these idols and the etymology of its name are uncertain, scholarship traces its

likelihood back to the Goths, who are speculated to belong to the people of Gad, the lost tribe of Israel. Originally from the Mesopotamian region and their known as Gad, these people were named Gad after the local luck idol of the same name. The divinity of good fortune. Our irresponsible translators are responsible for this title, “God” being given to our great Creator, but nowhere is it found in Scripture referring to our MAKER.

The Sh'ma has revealed Him to us boldly and blatantly. Whomever else may be out there, and whatever else may be praised as a *mighty one*, YHWH is *our* Mighty One. True religion was not raised on the bland worship of some half blind All-father in the snowy north, nor the chopped up half-dead eunuch ruler of the Sands in the South. We were not raised to put our faith in a generic “God” and a generalized “Lord”, some lofty and aloof cosmic parent who planted us here on this planet and then let us be without being able to call on Him, know Him personally, and bless His NAME. From the inception, He introduced Himself to us, unapologetically as YHWH, and He has since made no emendations. To serve any other *God*, or to shun The NAME of *this* One and Only Mighty One, is the most grievous blasphemy, because either or both would be making *our own* faith in *our own* way, not *His*. YHWH made the heavens and the earth in six days and Sabbath on that Seventh. YHWH spared our first parents, Adam and Eve, in the Fall, and later Noah and Company in the Flood. YHWH called out Abraham, selected Isaac, and chose Jacob to be Israel. YHWH brought Israel out of Egypt. YHWH sent the prophets, gave us the Scriptures, and offers all who desire it, Salvation from sin and death through His well beloved “Son”, Yahshua (whom folks have taken to renaming “Jesus”), Who died to give us Life. No *God* did these things, and this Mighty One gave us no other NAME to give HIM

If there be any other Deity, none but YHWH has promised us so much hope and blessing, and no other is therefore worthy of our worship and our praise. This is the message of the Shema, not that there is a *God*, nor that there is only *one*, but that, as far as Israel is concerned, there is only one Mighty One, and that YHWH Is He. Maybe there are many gods. Maybe there is only one. Indeed, the nations worship many things and name them gods, be it king or priest, angel or demon, rock or river, athlete or warrior, every one is made a God by Man; but YHWH is the Mighty One Who *made* man, and none can hold a candle to Him.

Israel only was asked to hear, to listen, understand, and obey all that followed. And the first to follow that order to pay attention is the obligation to make Certain YHWH is the only Mighty One in Israel. Let all nations worship what they will, but for us, there is only YHWH, The Father Almighty. This is what we were asked to put into practice, not merely to make mental ascent to the information. Before we were told Who our Mighty One is and should ever be, we were told to listen intelligently and to do what was to be heard. How do we do this? How do we convert to action the knowledge that YHWH is the only Elohim, the only Mighty One? By remembering the many meanings of Shema and deliberately bringing them to life.

Sh'ma is more than hearing. It is actively listening, but even more actively or proactively it is consenting. The Shema is telling all Israel to agree that YHWH is our Mighty One, and then it is asking that we show it in our lives, to prove it by deeds done in mummery of the Most High. Then having shown to all eyes that this is the real thing, then Shema demands that we declare it also outside our self, that we publish this truth in our writing, that we proclaim it in our chosen speech, and that we bear witness in both, reporting and telling to every person, not that there is a God, not that there's only one, but in right action from a right heart done at the right time in the right manner and for the right

reasons, that there is truly only one Mighty One in Israel, and His NAME is YHWH. In this way alone will all nations be made to know of the futility of their own faith, misplaced in created things, of the reality of our own faith resting in the Creator, and of the way by which they too may come to know Him, be welcomed in His NAME, and find a place made for them in His nation, Israel.

## YHWH Is ONE

The object of our worship identified, only then can we begin to understand His essence as far as Scripture reveals. The Shema lays the foundation for such a knowledge and the limits for our investigation, when it says, “YHWH Is One.” A simple statement, yes, and yet so very profound. Spoken in a world and time of countless religions and uncountable gods, it was no small wonder to declare the worship of one single Mighty One, and not as a being who ruled over merely *one* area of the world - the winds, the waves, the earth, or the sky - but who ruled over *all* the world and *all* the universe and who in fact made every part of it by Himself.

Moreover, this minor line of the Sh'ma, has a major impact upon the believer too beyond merely being mystified by a people who serve only one single sovereign. The impact of this proclamation is the implication made by inference regarding all other gods. Because the commandment is directed toward Israel and no other, it forbids no other nation from forging images as desired and deifying them to their hearts delight, and yet by saying “YHWH Is One,” the Sh'ma is claiming that He is the only One. In other words, the oneness of YHWH nullifies the divinity of any other deity, real or imagined. The world is free to worship whatever they wish, but we are not of this world. For us there is only one Mighty One, and He is YHWH. For us all other gods are made up by their servants and are therefore nothing at all of either value or of threat.

The Shema is telling us we have only one Mighty One, that YHWH is that One, and that all other gods of the nations are idols and evil nonsense. But beyond this, the notion, that YHWH is One is also describing a part of His character, an indistinguishable aspect about the exact nature of His being. He is One. Whatever else may be later made known about our Mighty One, the principal importance inviolable is that He is One. He cannot be two, like the gnostics taught. He cannot be three like the tritheists say. He is not seven. He's not 15. He is not 1053. He is One and only One, quite simply a Singularity, with no partners, helpers, or equals in anyway or of any kind. Whether or not there exists more to this oneness than we currently are allowed to know, is not for us to say by either creed or council or by any other means, for no more is mentioned in Scripture. We are allowed the information that YHWH is the One True Mighty One, that all other gods are frauds, and that YHWH is no multiplicity of parts. This is the cornerstone of all our doctrines on Theology-Proper. And this principle ought to serve in governance over whatever else should be made from subsequent revelations. Any and all dogma must be derived from this distinction, built upon this in order to be accounted orthodoxy. Comprehending this belief in the wonders of our Mighty One will go a long way as well to understanding the sacredness of His NAME, both to us and beyond the borders of Israel unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

## BLESSED IS HIS NAME

When we think of names in the western world, the meaning behind them very rarely bears any significant weight to our musings. In naming our children or calling upon a friend, little consideration is given to the definition of one name or another. For us in the 21st-century, especially in America, names serve as vocal identifiers and very little else. We don't care what the name means most often, so long as it sounds pleasant or points to a person or thing we find pleasing.

As a result of this cultural bias, when we read in Scripture, regarding the Divine NAME, we do not notice any significance. Nothing special jumps out at us off the pages when the Almighty says, "Therefore, My people will know My NAME..." Or when the Psalmist says to the Most High, "I will sing praises to Your NAME," Or yet still when the emissary of Messiah later tells us that our Heavenly FATHER "did visit the nations to take out of them a people for His NAME." Because we so closely associate a name with a person by sound, sadly you fail so often to distinguish that when the word of the Lord refers to the "name of the Lord", it is not speaking of a title like "God" or "Lord", and it is not a synonym for "God" either. Passages that make a point to speak of a specific NAME for our Creator are attempting to draw our attention to the NAME Itself and with it, all the meaning that it inherently holds.

In the time that our Lord introduced Himself to His people and issued the Shema to us, He did so knowing the global weight that every name carried. Therefore, it is imperative that we who worship the One, True Elohim get it through our heads how important His NAME is to Him and likewise how priceless He would have us believe it to be. When the Almighty Creator commanded the Shema, a name was thought to define a person entirely, not simply to identify them by sound. In that age, a name described a person's tribe and family, along with their country and people he or she belonged to. A name told someone what class a person belonged in, what occupation they held, and even described for the inquiring the said person's character and projected probable destiny. Because names were so powerfully representative of peoples' entire selves, it was very common in ancient times to be overcautious share one's name for fear that others could use the knowledge against them to control them by means of magic. This was the type of world into which the Creator of the Universe cared to communicate His Divine Identifier, telling Moses emphatically, "Say to the Israelites, YHWH, the Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob has sent me to you. This is My NAME forever, the NAME by which I am to be *remembered (mentioned)* from generation to generation."

In the face of superstition, knowing no one could control Him, by magic or otherwise, and in full and complete understanding that a name tells everything about anyone that anyone else would ever need know, YAHWEH Elohim gave us His NAME with the knowledge in the Shema that of all names ever uttered or offered in heaven or on earth, this one, this NAME above all Name, this NAME is holy and blessed. Just as it is said in the "Lord's Prayer" the Avinu, "Our Father in heaven, holy is Your NAME..." So here in the Shema, we are declaring in the beginning what was made clear at the end, that YAHWEH is our Father, that He is set apart in "Light unapproachable," and that His NAME Itself is as sacred as He and inseparable from Him. The word "blessed" used of the NAME is "Baruch" meaning, "praised, knelt to, saluted, worshiped." This NAME we call our Heavenly Father is indeed unique, a thing unlike any other in Creation. Of its own, it is sanctified, needing not to be made so like everything else. No. This is the King NAME, the NAME exclusive to the Creator alone and borne

none besides. For any other to call themselves or be called YAHWEH would constitute a most wicked blasphemy.

This NAME is called Baruch, because it is blessed naturally; but also it is required and rightly expected to be blessed by all Creation. Baruch identifies a choice, the supreme choice, that is – to bless the King NAME willingly or be forced to do so before the end comes to all things. Ironically, Baruch can mean both “bless” or “curse” depending on the context and a heart condition of the speaker. Therefore, the Tetragrammaton, these FOUR Sacred LETTERS, form the Battle-line for the Final War, and what Baruch means to each person determines whose side they’ll be on when the trumpet sounds.

The Sh’ma is commanding that we recognize the special nature of the King NAME, the meaning of It and the power of it, and recommends we keep it so in our own lives and make it known to those outside. The NAME, YAHWEH, means “HE WHO IS” or “HE WHO EXISTS”, Identifying the Creator as Father, set apart, and having a NAME like no other. And this NAME is primarily like no other, because It is the only One He has called Himself, rather than one we have described to Him. As it has been said, “He who pronounces it shakes heaven and earth and inspires the very angels with terror. A sovereign authority resides in it. It governs the worlds, and it is the fountain of all grace and blessing, the channel through which the mercies of the Most High are conveyed to Men... Such is the shuttering NAME of the Mighty One.”

## ...AND HIS GLORIOUS KINGDOM, FOREVER AND EVER

The power of the NAME of our FATHER and it’s reception in every heart, wherever that Divine NAME reigns supreme, there is the Kingdom of Heaven. The Avinu commonly called the Lord’s Prayer goes on to say, “Your Kingdom come. Your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven...” Which is the same wish as we see here in the expression of the Sh’ma. Forever and ever the glorious Kingdom of YHWH is and will be holy and blessed, though it be found in places of little account.

From the very beginning we’ve been asked to build the Kingdom of our Father upon the earth, and many have tried over the centuries to disastrous results. Thus far our failures in this endeavor have been loud and legendary, leaving corruption and carnage in our wake. And why? Because we have not been obedient to this one supreme command. We have not heard what our Father called us to do in the Sh’ma. The Sh’ma says that it is His NAME and His glorious Kingdom that is blessed, but we have made the mistake of either building our own kingdom instead or building His Kingdom in our image. So far our efforts have raised buildings called churches as holy spots in the world, but they have not made anything better. We’ve tried to force holy things on a heathen culture and are surprised we have had poor results. And we have talked ad nosium about one we call ‘Jesus’, but the earth itself could care little and less. None of this is that glorious Kingdom the Sh’ma spoke about and the Avinu prayer called us to create.

The Kingdom of Heaven that has been herein asked for our action to fashion for ages to come is not constructed out of wood and stone. It is not rules enforced on an unbelieving populous, nor is it traveling land and sea to “save souls” for ‘Jesus’. Building the Kingdom of Heaven involves flesh and bone, blood and soul for materials, for it is established in the hearts and minds of holy folk ready to give all for the Good News of Yahshua and the Torah He taught us... And learning there is little difference. It is found in the hearts and formed with the hands. The Kingdom we are making is built little by little in right action from a right heart, done at the right time, in the right way, and for the right reasons. This Kingdom is lived, and that is how it comes to be. There is no other way.

Kingdom Living is following the rules of the Torah, out of a joyous heartfelt longing to please our King, and in this way, demonstrating the might of the Sacred NAME of YHWH to every generation we encounter. By living in the light of the Sh’ma, we are spreading the message of the King’s character, and so we are spreading His Kingdom, preparing for the day His presence will be with us once more in the world. Making it clear what kind of King rules over Creation, we are removing excuses for doubters and doers of evil. We are drawing the battle lines for the end game, making everything ready for what eventually will be the destruction of wickedness and the dominion of righteousness in all the universe. This is the task set before us, the requirement of the Sh’ma,



that we hear and obey and further the Word so that all others too can here and choose His Kingdom or the darkness.

## YOU SHALL LOVE YHWH ELOHEICHA, WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT

In all the Law and all the Prophets, Yahshua (the King commonly called 'Jesus') said that this was the supreme directive. The first, greatest, and most important commandment of the Covenant, according to 'Christ', is in fact the Sh'ma itself. And of the entire Sh'ma, this principle is paramount, for without love, we are nothing, and all our obedience is for not. YHWH has called us to hear that He is our only Mighty One, and that He is One; that His NAME is holy, and that His Kingdom is true, but above all He has called us to love. YHWH has called us to love, because the foundation of His Kingdom is love - first for Himself and second for our neighbors. It is only when we decide to live out the Sh'ma in our daily observance, however that we find that the two are in fact only one. In our efforts to express our love for YHWH, we inevitably instigate love toward our neighbors, and thereby we further discover that in loving our neighbors, the creatures of YHWH, that we have demonstrated love for our Maker and their's.

Since much is said of love these days by the demand of the damned, it should be noted that the command of YHWH for us to love is not like that of the world, nor is His idea of love anything like unto theirs. Quite the opposite in fact. The world feels and acts on its feelings, and it would have us behave in the same way with childish ignorance, blindly following after our latest emotional impulse to whatever selfish end may be in store...and then so name that love. "And don't you dare judge me," the average person will say, as if judging is the utmost of evil. To the world, love is a feeling; and there is nothing wrong with that feeling, because that feeling is love. They are using circular reasoning. They are not thinking but only feeling, and they are therefore feeling like love is something that happens to us and is beyond our control. They feel like love is a warm, fuzzy thing we fall into or out of like it were a swimming pool of teddy bears. But the world is very wrong about love, and their lack of understanding in this matter is killing them softly.

As a wise man once said, "You don't fall in love... You fall in holes." Love is not some thing that just happens to us. It is never beyond our control, and it is by no means ever warm and fuzzy. Most often when we are required to love, we are forced to do so against the way we may be feeling. The way YHWH sees it and demands of us in the Sh'ma, love is a verb. It takes work. It's tiresome, and it very often hurts, but boy is it worth it. It's the only thing worth anything, for without it without love, real love from the Father above and for Him, without that kind of virtue supporting all our attempts to be sacred and holy, we would be simply as sinful and wicked as every other sorry wretch that walks the earth.

Love is the one thing that sets us apart and empowers us to be not of this world while still residing inside it. Love is the one thing that saves, both ourselves and our hearers. When we offend our Father, His love for us withholds His wrath. When the world offends us or our Heavenly Father, our love for them takes them back. Love always makes the difference in every situation, for love is the only different thing in the universe, the only thing different from everything else in it. It is greater than hope, greater than grace, greater even than faith, and is the result of all three, the fruit of faith, grace, and hope. And like any good fruit, it's seed will grow more of the same wherever planted.

John the Evangelist taught us that "Love for the Elohim is keeping His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome." So what we see here in the Sh'ma is the details of how to do all that has been so far said. If we want to set YHWH as our only Mighty One, as being One, His NAME as holy, and build His Kingdom on earth in our lives, the only way to do that is to love, and the way of love is to live the Torah in every area of our being - heart, soul, and might, which is to say, in our minds, spirits, and bodies. In all we think, say, imagined, plan, and act upon, we must choose to do according to the Commandments of the King of the Universe. But our moving in the Way of the Torah cannot be merely going through the motions, otherwise we will be no better off than outsiders. No. Every deed must be done by faith, in full reliance on the NAME of YHWH and His greatness, for the works of the Law to be made Works of righteousness. It is our faith and His grace that makes love out of works, for faith, not work alone, pleases our Father. Faith is the power of the Law, leading to salvation in the Lord, the King Messiah, Yahshua. Without which faith is not free, Grace is not given, and love is not fashioned from our efforts. Love is the difference between "having to keep the Law to save us" and "wanting to keep the Law to please our Father." Therefore if we will have faith, if we desire grace, and if we

want to love “all the more as we see the day approaching”, we must live by the Torah for all it is worth, knowing it is worth more than all the world.

## THESE WORDS, WHICH I COMMAND YOU TODAY, SHALL BE UPON YOUR HEART

A Life lived in accordance with The Way of the Torah, requires persistence and patience. The Sh'ma asks us to hear, but not only in that moment. We are to keep on hearing perpetually, to continue listening for that still, small Voice instructing us in righteousness which we shall thereafter adhere to obedience for our betterment and to the advantage of our surroundings. For this reason we are told that these precious words, the words of the Sh'ma, shall be upon our hearts. Far from being a natural happening, we are commanded rather to make this happen, to force this action upon ourselves by sheer willpower and patience, regardless of how we may feel about it in that moment or any other. The commandment of that moment is literally to make that point in time the entire purpose of our whole lives. And here in lies the doing of the thing. Hearing, we received Instruction. Understanding, we realized what we have to change. But it is in obedience that we make that required movement in the right direction.

Room must be made in our hearts to hold this message holy and to have it always on hand. Yahshua, (known erroneously here in the west as 'Jesus'), told us that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand when He was here with us, and this is what He had in mind – the commandment of the Sh'ma. This is what He always had in mind, because the true “heart” of a person is not the organ that beats in the chest but the understanding abiding in the head. The physical heart pumps blood through our veins, but the spiritual heart sends life to the whole body; that heart is the mind, and when we keep the words demanded on that day long ago safely in mind at all times, we therefore have them upon our heart and ready in our hands. We have these ancient Commandments prepared to be put to good use for the Kingdom anytime they are needed. Thus we are keeping that Kingdom itself ever ready, close by, and set to break forth in saving grace. By doing as the Sh'ma has said, maintaining these words upon our hearts, we are keeping the Kingdom of our Father at hand... at hand, in hand, and on hand. We are vigilantly guarding the good things given to us in ages past, preserving them, and making certain that they retain the principle place in our eyes, guarding our ideas, directing our imaginations, and shaping our intentions against the measurement of the Word of YHWH.

To this end, the Sh'ma says to keep these words upon our hearts, but which words exactly? All that was said before and following the command to hear. Whatever we find ourselves doing, desiring, or deciding, we are commanded to keep in mind that YHWH is our Mighty One, that YHWH is One, that His NAME is holy, that His Kingdom is blessed, and that we are to love YHWH our Mighty One with all of our being and belief; YHWH, our Mighty One gave us the Sh'ma, so that we could commit it to memory and therefore hopefully to commit it to motion, for as it has been said, “You are what you think about all day long.” If we think in the language of the Sh'ma I, then all of our choices and thus all our daily actions will be selected by its judgment rather than our own. They will be scrutinized by this standard, vetted by its verity and so become virtuous. With the Sh'ma as our mental filter, our brain's benchmark for belief and behavior, YHWH allows us to become the Sh'ma itself, the living embodiment of the everlasting Commandments, a listening ear, an instructive tongue, and a faithful heart. “I think, therefore, I am.”

## YOU SHALL TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY TO YOUR CHILDREN

They say, “We learn by doing,” and the best way to learn is to teach. Why? Because to teach, we first must know ourselves our own subject, lest we further ignorance in our efforts to extend information instead. To know, we must learn, so we must take the time to study. Every teacher therefore is a student at heart, and as we have seen, the heart of the holy ones is the words of the Sh'ma. Both our subject and our teacher, the Sh'ma, diligently taught us the Torah of YHWH, His perfect Instructions for a principled existence and a prosperous life. Once we ourselves have learned the divine words and become the Sh'ma in living flesh, it then becomes our duty to others to teach them what we've been taught. Our solemn obligation is to give to every successive generation the genuine message the

Messiah gave to us, He Who is Living Torah in the flesh. Every word we learned, every Blessed commandment, must be communicated to the lost ones without Amendment or abridgment, lest we leave others after us less informed and ill prepared to live by what they hear from us.

The Sh'ma is not asking us alone to hear, no more than it called for the hearing solely of those present on the mountain millennia ago. When we have been made the Sh'ma personified, we are called to have others hear too. "How will they hear without a teacher?", Scripture asks. They cannot, just as we could not, which makes it our own responsibility to reach them with the Instructions we ourselves heard first. For their sake, we have to show ourselves dedicated to delivering the message. Otherwise they will not grasp the value it has vested within. Without the least sign of apathy or apostasy, we are chosen to bestow the knowledge of YHWH, on all comers deliberately and decisively. The diligence asked of us in this matter demands our own living out of the Sh'ma but that moreover we do so in the knowledge that all are watching us work, and everyone is wondering what this wondrous thing is all about.

Merely having claimed to belong to the Holy One and having pledged fealty to His NAME and His commands, we as a people and as individuals have unwittingly entered into a compact with the common people of our time. In this one sided covenant, we have promised all humankind that we have the answers to life's questions, the solutions to life's problems, and the one and only Way of Salvation, making a mandate for our character which we must earnestly and energetically expend every effort to make good upon. Our teaching of the masses means much more than merely telling them the truth in spoken words, but rather by careful attention and consistent application, we painstakingly demonstrate the dynamic example of excellence expected of those belonging to YHWH. We learn by doing, and we teach by living.

Specifically, however, the order of the Sh'ma has not directed our attention toward outsiders, though this will prove an inevitable result. We are commanded instead to instruct our children in The Way, to impress upon them the importance of these immortal words and the wonders awaiting all who would strive for this Immaculate standard. Our family are the focus of our tutelage, children over all else, for it is the young among our household who will behold most closely whether or not we really believe what we claim. Our kids will see first hand how faith can shape our lives before anyone else, and kids see everything. Every gesture we make is making faith or taking it away from the next generation. The choices we make will be mimicked or mocked by the little ones, which means that whether or not our children know YHWH as the only mighty one, that He is One, that His NAME is holy, that His Kingdom is blessed, that we are to love Him with all of our being, and that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, is entirely to our eternal credit or to our everlasting shame. May our children, therefore, honor YAH, that we may know that we have taught them how, and hopefully either our actions or theirs will lead others to believe likewise. Hopefully more people will hear, not with their ears alone. We would have them here with their hearts based upon the witness we have borne before them, or better, based on the witness borne by us in our children.

## YOU SHALL SPEAK OF THEM WHEN YOU SIT IN YOUR HOUSE, WHEN YOU WALK ON THE ROAD, WHEN YOU LIE DOWN, AND WHEN YOU RISE

Constance. Vigilance. Endurance. These are the means by which we diligently teach others the true worship of YHWH, especially our children. Over and over and over again, we recite the righteous commandments, till the words are writ on their hearts and echoing in their minds. Keeping caution as our name, we strive in such a way as to make our own Father proud of our efforts, being careful never to be lax or apathetic toward His orders.

And however hard the road may be, and however tough the course, we overcome all obstacles, glorifying the Almighty Elohim against all odds.

According to the Sh'ma, there is never to be a moment we are without the Torah, never a second when we can afford to forget, for in that instant, there the evil one will appear to try us in our weakness. Our only strength is in the NAME of our Father and in The Way of His Anointed One. Therefore, our reliance on Torah to enable us to remain true requires we maintain a sacred discipline of meditating on it everywhere we go and under all possible conditions of our existence. Sitting, standing, lying still, or walking around, at home or abroad, alone or among the multitudes, wherever we should find ourselves, whatever we find ourselves doing, and whenever we find ourselves lost, lonesome, or longing, whether loathed or loved, the commandments of YHWH ought to be there and the central event.

Whether it's convenient or not, comfortable or not, or costly or not, the Sh'ma is to be the focus of it all, and not just mentally assented to either. The Sh'ma is to be vocalized, everywhere we are and at every when; it is to be actualized in all our deeds. This is how our children will come to the knowledge of their Heavenly Father. By our persistence in living with Torah observance, they will hear and see and feel and believe, because they will have shared in our own experience of the truth. As it is written, "Taste and see that YHWH is good." or as it is also written, "Be still and know that I am Elohim." All of these are actions, faith put to work to prove our invisible Creator to our children. We have tasted, seen, heard, felt, sat still, and moved, and from all these acts, with the Sh'ma at their center, we have come to know YHWH. And since we have exercised every one of them in the sight of our offspring, and not in hiding, living alone, they have been given the unique opportunity to have partaken of the same experience as we.

All the principles of the Sh'ma shall be brought to bear in this way: YHWH is our Mighty One. YHWH Is One. Blessed is His NAME. Blessed is His Kingdom. You shall love YHWH with all that you are. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. These words are to be the governing law within our homes and should rule over our bodies when we venture into the world beyond. From dawn to dusk, the Sh'ma should consume us, as it corrects our steps and completes our faith. The Sh'ma should be the first words a child hears spoken over him or her at birth. It should be held ready as the last utterance on our lips as we die. Sh'ma should be the first thing said in the morning and the last thing said at night. Midday, these words should grace our lips and anytime we wake at night. At every holy convocation and on all special moments both solemn and celebratory, let this precious creed be proclaimed; May it be passed to all who hear, pondered by all who understand, and preserved by all who are willing to obey.

## YOU SHALL BIND THEM AS A SIGN UPON YOUR HAND, AND THEY SHALL BE AS REMINDERS BETWEEN YOUR EYES

Because we so easily forget even our most precious treasures, our human frailty requires that we forge physical objects to recall our thoughts back to our obligation to be holy. We may repeat the Sh'ma without fail for untold days on end, and yet one day when our feelings get in our way, we may not remember to say it and to let it shape our choices. Those are the times when more must be done to save us, beforehand, so we are prepared. We know how bad we are at being faithful, therefore, when we are in our right mind, memorials must be set to remind us to remain loyal, when we would rather not.

The word for "reminder" in the Bible is "Tophaphah" Meaning "to go around or bind." In other words, the idea is to actually affix something to our foreheads, some sort of filet or ribbon, to remind us who we are, should we ever confuse our position. Always, it should serve as an allusion to the crown of the high priest and what was written there to proclaim his unique purpose and ours. On the high priest's crown it said, "Kodesh La YHWH," meaning, "Holy to YHWH." And so it should bring to our memory that we are to be likewise. Maybe in our day,

this would involve some sort of hat or headband, or perhaps something else, but the point of whatever it is must be to bring us back to obedience if we should stray from the way of Sh'ma. It is even possible that this reminder need not be wound around our own heads above the glabella but could technically be fashioned to anything beyond ourselves which could be set before our eyes. The entire idea is to get these words inside our heads, by whatever means necessary, and thereafter to bring them out again in the form of character and attributes.

This is the meaning behind the command to “bind then as a sign upon your hand.” In Scripture, the word “bind” is actually, “Qashar”. Not so much the concept of wrapping or tying but literally, “to knit or join together, to make stronger, bring into compact.” Qashar is the same notion as being “in love or securing a belt”. It is an act of conspiracy. The Sh'ma orders us to bring these words together with ourselves in such a way that we are no different than they. There should be no telling where we end and Torah begins, no disconnect between our actions and the orders of YHWH. He says, and we do. That is the sign to all who see us, saying we are set apart as sacred to Him.

In Hebrew, the word for, “sign” is “Owth” meaning, “token or mark, signal, beacon, omen, or miracle.” It is “the flag, prodigy, evidence, or monument” of something promised, proclaimed, or prophesied. By binding this as a sign on our hands, the Sh'ma is calling us to interweave its words in and through all our actions as the proof of our proclamations. Because we have put forth the boast of holiness and dared declare that YHWH alone is Elohim, that His NAME is holy, and that His Way is love. All who have heard these words will be watching, wondering if there is any truth to them, or are they so much hot air, all the noise and nonsense of every other religion. They will want to know if we really could be carrying the only hope for Creation, or are we only hypocrites and holy rollers. Yes, we should be binding something to our hand to show others that we are not like them, an item of some importance to impress upon onlookers the quality they each can expect of us, but that is not wholly the notion needing to be expressed by this part of the Sh'ma. What it is saying is that we should be that impressive thing ourselves, that important item in their midst making the impossible happen daily before their eyes. In other words, it is up to us to wave the flag of that country yet to come, to let our lives be the monument of the Most High in this lowly place; It is our duty to be a miracle moment by moment, to make the Sh'ma a mark upon us and to make us the mark of the Sh'ma upon the world.

## YOU SHALL WRITE THEM UPON THE DOORPOSTS OF YOUR HOUSE AND UPON YOUR GATES

One of the many duties of the king of Israel was to hand write a copy of the Torah personally, not by dictation, not utilizing a scribe, not having some representative work the pen on his behalf. Every man who wore the crown in Jerusalem was commanded by the Torah to duplicate the Torah, first in script and thereafter in character. The mandate for kings to copy the Law was primarily to promote literacy; If one can neither read nor write, how then can he pen a copy of the Law of the land? Secondly, however, this order obligates the king to know the commandments for himself as the chief Law enforcer, ensuring that he himself will be without excuse for his actions, good or evil. He has seen the Law, read it, and written it out; He will thereafter, either live by its dictates and judge his people by its principles, or he himself will become condemned by his own hand. Having worked the quill with his own hand, the hope of the Torah is that the king will be giving his assent to every order of the Torah as he scrolls them out. And this concept differs little from the order for all Israelites to write the words of the Sh'ma on our doorposts and gates.

Unlike the king of Israel, we do not have to handwrite the entire Torah for ourselves, but as every man is king of his own home, he is obligated to affix the Torah to his house. What gives the king the right to his throne is the Torah, and if he does not copy it down, as it demands he do, he has no right to kingship; the same is so for every man in Israel. The Scriptures say we have the throne of our home, and they order that we write the commandments on our homes. Should we fail to perform this practice, we can be sure, we will lose all right to

our authority over that house, since our authority depends upon the recognition of a higher authority. The demand of the Sh'ma for writing out its words also desires, that we too like Israelite kings, should be a literate populace. Being able to read and write ourselves, we will be a free and independent people, forced to rely on no one for our Instruction, for we can study the Scriptures personally. No one can lie to us about what is in the Law, and we can hold the king to account when he would stray from Scripture. Perhaps most importantly of all, we will be able to teach the Torah to our children. Our ability to read and write holy writ, affords us all responsibility in this life for our actions and for those of our children after us.

While the command to write the Sh'ma on our homes makes certain we will be able to read and write, one might ask why it is to be written specifically on our doorposts and gates. Why not scrawl on the wall? Why not a big sign on the roof? The answer simply is that only doorposts and gates bear full significance to the weight of the Law over our life. By affixing these words to doorposts, we are declaring Torah as the Law over our living space, and by attaching the commandments to the gates of our property, we are telling the world that YHWH reigns in our domains. Beyond that however, since doors and gates are points of access, they are reminders to all who enter our land and our home that they are, if no other place, we serve YHWH, and we live by His Word. Doors and gates can also be shut and locked against unwelcome persons, particularly, any who would do evil in our house or on our ground, where only the Law of the Living Elohim is acceptable behavior.

More than a mere warning to strangers and guests, it should be noted that these writings on our doors and gates serve also as reminders to ourselves in like manner to those bound on our hands and heads. In both Jewish and Natzorim Custom, a small device containing Scripture is attached to the right hand door post of every home. In Hebrew this is called a mezuzah, which simply means "door post", and in Greek it is called a graphomai, meaning, "it is written." Both are recognized when entering or leaving the home by kissing ones right hand and touching the mezuzah or graphomai, a sign of recognition for the commandments of YHWH. In this way, we acknowledge our all encompassing responsibility to obedience, both at home and away, and also we affirm when we touch the door post and the gate that we have done our utmost to be faithful while we were wherever we have been.

And even more significantly, doorposts with the commands of YAH adorning them, symbolically tell of the Passover all year round and our redemption in the shed blood of the lamb. Just as the ancient Israelites were ordered by the Most High to apply the blood of the lamb to the doorposts of their homes, so we are instructed by the same elohim to apply his commandments to our doorframes, that death in both cases may pass over our homes and only life will reign therein. Both orders of application require faith and the work of that faith, in response to that grace, is what provides salvation. As with Israel long ago, slaughtering the lamb did nothing to save them, but only its blood being put to the doorposts. In like manner, the Messiah dying means nothing to us if His blood is not put to the doorposts of our hearts. By keeping the commands of our father and king, we show the reality of our faith in his son. Even in applying the commandments to our physical doors, we are demonstrating the blood of Yahshua applied to the spiritual doors of our hearts.

And finally, the commandments of the Sh'ma, being inscribed on our door frames and gateways, gives gratitude to our Heavenly Father for all his many gifts and blessings. When Israel lived in tents in the wilderness, wandering for 40 years, they had no doorframes and no gateways. They had only temporary dwelling places until they conquered the promised land. Therefore, the order to apply these precepts to our doors and gates is a way of thanking our savior for sustaining us in times of sorrow and for bestowing on us every blessing we bear.

## HEARING AND BEING HEARD

The Sh'ma means all of this to us, but it ought yet still mean one thing more. Sh'ma is not only the obligation to right action on our part, though that is the primary purpose. Moreover, it is a promised response from our Creator as well. The same Word that YHWH uses to call us to hear, Scripture also uses to assure us we have

been heard, and this should be especially hopeful for all of us born abroad beyond Israel, born to the Nations who came into the world beyond the covenant. The first time the Bible says that YHWH heard us is when his ‘Angel’ calls to Hagar to tell her to return to Abraham and Sarah, and He promised her a son. YHWH told her to call her son, Ishmael “the Mighty One hears.” From that first record of YHWH hearing, even the stranger to the covenant (Hagar), our Mighty One has not failed to hear every anguished cry for aid, every plea for mercy, every shout of praise, and every whisper of repentance.

When we were enslaved in Egypt, YHWH heard our groaning and set us free. When Solomon asked that YHWH would always answer those who prayed toward His Temple, the Mighty One heard him and promised that His Eyes, Heart, and NAME would always be there. And when men turned against the Almighty, declaring it far better to be sinful, YHWH heard those who feared Him still, and He promised through the prophet, Malachi, that He would remember those who fear Him and honor His NAME. That was when He promised to send Messiah as well, the Sun of Righteousness rising with healing in His Wings.

Still today YHWH calls us to hear Him through His ‘Son’, and He has heard and will hear all who call on Him in truth. Let us hear the Word and hope in Him that the promised life of wondrous prosperity and piety will be ours in our faithful obedience to the Torah He taught us. Make the Sh’ma this day your priority, remembering to put all your effort to its application in your life, knowing what it truly means to hear, understand, and obey and assured you will always be heard.

שמע