Love, Unity (God's and Ours) and the Tabernacle

Why One is Not the Loneliest Number

Terumah and the Sh'ma 5774

Midrash Tanhuma:

A parable of two merchants: One has silk and the other peppers. Once they exchange their goods, each is again deprived of that which the other has. But if there are two scholars, one who has mastered the Order of Seeds and the other who knows the Order of Festivals, once they teach each other, each knows *both* Orders.

Sfat Emet:

The point is that each one of Israel has a particular portion within Torah, yet is also Torah which joins our souls together. We become One through the power of Torah. We receive from one another the distinctive viewpoint that belongs to each of us. **The same was true of the building of the Mishkan.** Each one gave his own offering (**Terumah**), but they were all joined together by the tabernacle, **until they became One**. Only then did they merit Shekhina's presence. The Oneness had to exist on three planes: **thought, word** and **deed**. The tabernacle and Temple represent deed, Torah stands for unity in word and God is the One of thought or contemplation. The word "Nefesh," used for the "seventy souls" (who went down to Egypt) appears to be singular. They all worshipped the same God, had the same longing and desire in their hearts. All of them were turned to Him and thus they became a single nation.

YOM KIPPUR LITURGY:

By the authority of the heavenly court. And by the authority of the earthly court, With the consent of the Omnipresent One. And with the consent of this congregation,We declare it lawful to pray with sinners.

The Venture Cyclist:

PLURALISM: a ***condition in which distinct groups, with various modes of expressing their Jewishness, are present and tolerated within a community, and the belief that such a condition is desirable or beneficial....to acknowledge and embrace the place of a person within the community even if we know they are wrong.***

Sh'ma Israel, Adonai Elohainu, Adonai Ehad. "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One."

Even though the verse of the *Sh'ma*, in the Torah, consists of only six words, the actual daily commandment of saying the *Sh'ma* includes two verses, the second one being, "Blessed is the glorious name of His kingdom forever."

In the Hebrew, like the *Sh'ma* itself, this verse consists of only six words. However, unlike the *Sh'ma* -- which has twenty-five letters -- this verse only has twenty-four.

The Zohar says that there should have actually been twenty-five letters in this verse as well. Why then does it only have twenty-four?

To answer this question, we have to know the origin of this verse as it is related in the Talmud:

Jacob, upon his deathbed, tried to reveal to his sons the date of the "End of Days." However, the prophecy left him at that specific moment, and he felt certain that it was due to the unworthiness of some of the recipients present. Therefore, Jacob (Israel) asked his sons: "Perhaps, God forbid, someone here is unworthy?"

His sons answered, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. Just as in your heart only [God is] One, so, too, in our hearts, there is only One."

At that moment, Jacob said, "Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever!" (Pesachim 56a)

Hence, the *Sh'ma* and its accompanying verse not only express the unity of God, but, also, the desired unity of the Jewish people, something which had been the problem with the tribes from the beginning.

This is why the final Jewish redemption is viewed in terms of the reconciliation of the Twelve Tribes:

The word of God came to me to say: "You, Son of Man, take one piece of wood and write on it, 'For Judah and the Children of Israel, his friends.' And another piece of wood and write on it, 'For Joseph, the wood of Ephraim and the entire House of Israel, his friends.' Bring them together, each to the other, to become one piece of wood, and they will become one in your hands. When they say to you, your people, 'What does this mean?' Tell them, so says God, 'Behold, I will take the wood of Joseph which is in the hand of Ephraim and the tribes of Israel, his friends, and I will put on them the wood of Judah and make them one wood, and they will become one in My hand...'" (Ezekiel 37:1)

So, why then did Jacob compose a verse of only twenty-four letters, and not twenty-five? After all, twenty-five is the number we previously identified (See: "Hear O Israel, Part One] as representing the special light that God made on the first day of creation, and subsequently hid for usage by righteous people only.

It is this light that the Jewish people are supposed to reveal to the world through their belief in God and Torah, and through the sincere fulfillment of the commandments. This is what it means to be a "light unto nations," and thus, it would have made sense to compose a prayer of twenty-five letters, and not twenty-four, as Jacob did.

The Zohar, though, quite mystically answers this question:

Jacob wanted to establish the "Mystery of Unity" below [on earth], and composed the twenty-four letters of, "Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever." He didn't make it twenty-five letters since the Tabernacle had yet to be built. Once the Tabernacle was built, the first word was completed ... With regard to this it says, "God spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying ..." (Leviticus 1:1), which has twenty-five letters. (Zohar 2:139b)

What does this mean?

The "Mystery of Unity" refers to the supernatural state of existence when all negative traits disappear -- traits that lead to division among people, such as hatred, jealousy, anger, and so on. This will be the "state of union" in the Messianic time, when the human inclination to do evil will be removed permanently.

The Tabernacle represented the potential fulfillment of the unity that Jacob wanted to draw upon way back in history, a unity that had begun to take hold once Joseph and his brothers made peace with one another. It was built in the desert following God's command to Moses: "They shall make for Me a Sanctuary and I will dwell in their midst."

Though the existence of the Tabernacle did not automatically usher in the Messianic time, it had tremendous potential to do so. **The building of the Tabernacle, represented a tremendous rectification of creation, and the potential to unify all existence.**

Thus, the verse from Leviticus to which the Zohar refers alludes to the potential perfection that the Tabernacle could bring about.

UNITY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

All mysticism aside, the Zohar is indicating that, **until the Jewish people get their act together, resolve all inner conflict, and return to God, history will not have achieved perfection.** We have tasted temporary moments of such perfection, as in the time the Tabernacle was first completed. However, like the two Temples that followed it, such moments were short-lived and they no longer exist, like the peace and tranquility they once facilitated.

It should be pointed out that the High Priest, as part of his Temple clothing, wore two shoulder plates upon which were written the names of all twelve tribes -- six on the right shoulder, and six on the left shoulder. Furthermore, the total number of Hebrew letters of each group of six was twenty-five, just like the two verses of the *Sh'ma* themselves, for a total of fifty.

In fact, the High Priest, whose role it was to preserve peace among the Jews and between God and His children below, was called a*kohen.* The word itself is actually spelled: *chof-heh-nun*. The first two letters have the combined numerical value of twenty-five, whereas the last represents the number fifty.

Hence, embodied in the first verse of the *Sh'ma*, and its accompanying praise of God's kingdom, is a profound allusion to the mission of the Jewish nation -- to be a light unto nations -- and the perfected state of the Jewish people, unified around the banner of Torah.

I'm not sure if anyone can remember all of this while saying the *Sh'ma* twice a day, especially without getting lost in introspective thought. However, at the very least, this explanation provides a glimpse into the beauty and detail of such a simple, but profound prayer.

http://www.aish.com/sp/pr/48945291.html

Ten Tapestries of Tikun

The Tabernacle exemplified the spiritual body of the Creation.

This week's Torah reading describes the various components and furnishings of the Tabernacle, which was a reflection of the structure of the spiritual worlds and is also paralleled in the structure of man's soul and body. The tent of the Tabernacle was formed from ten tapestries divided in into two sets of five each. Each set of five tapestries was sewn together and then draped over the framework of upright wooden

beams forming the walls. The two sets of tapestries were joined together by fasteners hooked through loops on the edges of each of the tapestries.

Make the Tabernacle out of ten tapestries....The two sets of tapestries can then be joined together, so that the Tabernacle will be one piece. (Ex. 26:1-6)

The *sefirot* of *Tohu*...shattered precisely because there was no unity and harmony among them....

Rabbi Chiya said: Here is the secret of unification [of the ten *sefirot*of the world of *Tikun,* to which the ten tapestries correspond]**. For the Tabernacle comprised a number of different levels** [each mirroring a different aspect of the structure of the spiritual worlds, and yet] ***"...the Tabernacle will be one piece".***

The unification [*yichud*] of the ten *sefirot* of the world of *Tikun* rectifies the discord and lack of unity of the *sefirot* of *Tohu*, which shattered precisely because there was no unity and harmony among them.

This [phrase, "the Tabernacle will be one piece"] **demonstrates that all its parts together form a single whole.**

In man too, there are a number of different limbs, upper and lower. Some are on the inside [such as the brain, heart, liver etc.]**, and some are on the outside** [such as the arms and legs]**. Yet all together they form one composite body called a man.**

Also the *mitzvot* form a composite harmonious unit....

So too with the Tabernacle, the components of which were all in the likeness of the supernal [worlds]**. When combined together they form what the verse describes as *"the Tabernacle will be one piece".***

In exactly the same way, the mitzvot of the Torah are the "limbs and organs" of the One above.

Also the *mitzvot* form a composite harmonious unit. The two-hundred forty-eight positive commandments of the Torah parallel the 248 limbs

and organs of the human body, so that a mitzvah is associated with each limb or organ of the human body. (See Zohar II p. 117b-118a; *Tikunei Zohar, Tikun* 30, p. 74a; *Tikun* 70, p. 131a.) When a person fulfills a positive commandment, "he draws down G-dliness and a radiation from the light of the Infinite One to the upper and lower worlds"(*Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh* 10, p. 114b).

When all of them fuse together they form a single mystery, the secret of the Tabernacle [i.e. the structure in which the Divine Presence becomes revealed], **comprising various limbs and parts that together form a "man" in the same way as the mitzvot of the Torah.**

The various parts of the Tabernacle...all form a composite whole that reflects the Divine Image....

In other words, the various parts of the Tabernacle, just like the 248 mitzvot and the 248 limbs of the human body, all form a composite whole that reflects the Divine Image in which man was created.

For the *mitzvot* of the Torah are all the mystery of Man,[i.e. the Divine Image, comprising] **male and female** [the 248 positive commandments and the 365 prohibitions, corresponding to the arteries, veins and sinews of the human body]. **When these fuse together they form the secret of Man. If anyone would remove** [i.e. deny] **one of the *mitzvot* of the Torah, this would cause damage to the entire structure, for all the*mitzvot* are parts and limbs of the form of Man** [just as removing a limb or organ would at the very least disfigure a person]. **Accordingly they are all part of the same unity, and therefore the Jewish People are called "the one nation"**[i.e. all of them together constitute a single body,] **as the verse states, *"You are the flock that I pasture; you are a man"*(Ezekiel 34:31), and as it is written, *"Who is like Your people, the one nation on earth."* (Samuel II 7:23)**

[Zohar II, p. 162b, based on *Or Yakar*; translation and commentary by Moshe Miller]

" SPEAKING TORAH: SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS FROM AROUND THE MAGGID'S TABLE"

Terumah

Dibrat Shelomoh

> Tell the Israelites to take Me an offering; from every person whose heart is inspired you shall take My offering.
> (Ex. 25:2)

We like to think that the songs and praise we offer to the blessed Creator magnify and make Him even greater, as they would an earthly king. But this is not the case. The Midrash says that we embellish the praises of a king of flesh and blood beyond what he deserves, but the blessed Holy One is extolled and yet remains infinitely more (*Tanhuma Shemot* 2). Regarding this the Talmud teaches: the best thing of all is silence. Like an invaluable pearl, anyone who begins to speak its praise diminishes it (y. Berakhot 9:1).

All the prayers we offer God are a diminution indeed. We try to squeeze the indescribably great divine illumination and life-force into letters. In the words of the *Tikkuney Zohar*, no thought can grasp You at all. We have spoken of this struggle many times.

Yet even so our efforts are quite dear to God and much beloved. By way of a parable: It sometimes happens that when a father and child are playing, the child grabs hold of father's beard, hair, or some other part of his head. The child pulls it down to his little face in order to play with him. This gives the father great pleasure, enjoying it even though it might seem annoying and an affront to his dignity. Were anyone else to do this, it would hurt him. But since the parent loves his child, and sees that the child loves

him very much and longs for him as well, it is clear that the child does this out of love. The lesson is clear: even though our words and letters diminish the divine brilliance, [God cherishes them as an expression of our love]....

This is the meaning of **take Me an offering** [*terumah*]. "Even though [in prayer] you are bringing Me down to you, I consider this an act of great uplifting (*haramah*). Should you ask why, Scripture answers: **from every person whose heart is inspired.** I see their inspiration, great longing and their absolute dedication, and therefore **you shall take My offering.**" ...

This moving metaphor of father and child sounds so much like ones used by the Maggid himself. In our songs of praise we cannot hope to fully capture the majesty of the Divine, but the love and desire that infuse prayers can express an affection for our adoring Parent that transcends words.

There is something of this in the biblical story as well. The momentous revelation at Sinai was beyond all words and description. One of our first attempts to deal with that experience was the Golden Calf, a misguided search to concretize the ineffable. In response, God gave us the gift of the *mishkan.* The Tabernacle, with all of its sacrifices and services, is a sanctioned expression of our unending and fully requited love for God. Though our offerings are by definition inadequate, they are beloved indeed.

Or ha-Me'ir

> Take an offering for Me ... acacia wood.
> (Ex. 25:2, 5)

RaSHI asked how they would have had acacia wood available to them in the desert. [He quotes a Midrash teaching that] Rabbi Tanhuma said: Our father Jacob foresaw by the holy spirit that the Children of Israel were to erect a Tabernacle in the wilderness. He brought cedar trees into Egypt and planted them, commanding his descendants to take them along when they would depart from there. [RaSHI assumes the identity of the cedar and the acacia trees]....

We can see their words as pointing to the seven holy qualities that are given to us to repair. "The heavens are the heavens of Y-H-W-H, but the

earth has He given to humans" (Ps. 115:16). "Earth" here refers to those seven [earthly = emotional and moral] qualities given to humans. We need to repair them, to build them up; they are called cedars of Lebanon because they are drawn from the uppermost whiteness, the realm of [pure mind or] *binah* (*levanon/loven*).

Our father Jacob was teaching his children the way of God, how divinity flows forth through these qualities and the holy sparks that exist within all creatures. There is no place devoid of Y-H-W-H; the spark residing down in those lower places is that which gives life. It dwells in constraint and darkness, without a glimmer of light, until a sage comes along, one with an all-embracing and expansive mind, who finds a way to serve the Creator through it. This person devotes heart and soul to finding the source whence that quality is drawn, thus becoming aware of how to restore it to that place.

Now we can understand why the sages taught that father Jacob foresaw by the holy spirit the building of the *mishkan* in the desert. This refers to us. We Children of Israel are forever building up our entire selves to become dwelling-places for divinity. That is why they erected the *mishkan* from offerings there in the wilderness. This process has never ceased and goes on in every generation. We Israelites are called upon to build up the full form of *shekhinah* (= *mishkan*) by using our own entire selves. Thus our sages taught on the verse "Let them make Me a Tabernacle and I will dwell within them" (Ex. 25:8). The verse does not say "within it" but "within them"! This teaches that God dwells within every single one of Israel. This is what we have taught: that each of us must build up our entire self to be a fit dwelling for divinity. Then God indeed dwells within us.

This is what the holy *Zohar* meant when it taught that the form in which the world was created, the form of the *mishkan*, and the human form are all the same (2:149a–b)....

This reading of the *mishkan* as a symbol for the Tabernacle within each human heart is widespread in Hasidic teachings. Here the very earthly elements required for it are linked to the earthly struggles the *hasid* must undergo to build that inner chamber. The search for God everywhere is here directed within the self, seeking to find the root of one's own best inner qualities and to bring them to life. The seven qualities, though rendered in various ways, may most simply be named as love, fear, beauty, triumph, gratitude, righteousness, and authority. For certain members

of the Maggid's circle (the *Or ha-Me'ir* and the *Me'or 'Eynayim* in particular), it is the conversion and control of these, directed entirely to God's service, that makes one a *hasid*.

No'am Elimelekh

> Tell the people of Israel to bring Me an offering. Take these gifts from every person who is inspired to give.
> (Ex. 25:2–3)

The Mishnah teaches: "Do not be like servants who serve the master only for the reward. Be rather as servants who serve with no anticipation of reward" (Avot 1:3). Why were both halves of this sentence necessary?

There are righteous individuals who serve God by fulfilling the commandments. They are very careful not to transgress even the smallest commandment and do their best to observe it properly. Still, they are not at the level where these commandments bring about attachment and longing for God. Such people can anticipate a reward in the world-to-come.

Then there are righteous individuals who serve by means of their pure thoughts. They use the commandments to connect to the Creator with great passion and attachment, constantly witnessing the greatness of God. They draw the pleasures of the world-to-come to them and they enjoy (as it were) the light of the divine presence in this life. Such righteous ones do not anticipate the pleasures of the world-to-come because they are already enjoying them in this life.

... This is the explanation of the Mishnah: "Do not be like servants who serve the master only for the reward" refers to people who anticipate reward in the world-to-come. In saying "Be rather as servants who serve with no anticipation of reward," the Mishnah tells you to rise to the level where you are rewarded immediately at the moment of fulfilling the commandment, as we have explained. Use the commandments to cleave to God and draw pleasure to yourself.

This is the meaning of **bring *Me* an offering** (*terumah*, lit. "uplifting"). "Strive to enjoy the light of My divine presence in your life—uplift (*terumah*) and take it from the world-to-come." This is why RaSHI explains the words **bring Me** as "for My [name's] sake." The verse tells you to take and draw the blessed Creator to you and take pleasure in the divine presence. And to whom is this addressed? **Every person who is inspired** to serve the Creator

But Moses went again to intercede with God, and presently He agreed to accompany the Israelites into Canaan: "I will do the very thing that you have asked; for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name" (Exod. 33:17). God then told Moses to make a new pair of stone tablets so that He might write out the commandments once again. Moses did so and went back up Mount Sinai, once again asking God to forgive His people's sinfulness. What Moses received was more than he had asked for. God revealed to him His own essence: He is a God who is not indifferent, but fundamentally kind and merciful:

> Moses carved out two stone tablets like the first ones and rose early in the morning to go up on Mount Sinai as the LORD had commanded him, taking the two stone tablets in his hand. Then the LORD came down in a cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name "LORD." [That is,] the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in kindness and faithfulness, extending kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; yet He does not give up punishment completely, but [sometimes] visits the iniquity of the parents upon the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." Then Moses quickly dropped to the ground and bowed low.[3]
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> Exod. 34:4–8

Temples and the Gods

The incident of the Golden Calf was a horrible apostasy. Ironically, the narration of those events is sandwiched in the midst of God's instructions to Moses concerning the building of a special structure, the tabernacle, which was to serve as a kind of mobile temple or sanctuary during the Israelites' desert wanderings on their way to Canaan.

What was the purpose of such a mobile temple? Scholars have learned a great deal about temples in the ancient Near East over the past century. One thing is clear: the temple was not (as the word might seem to indicate to many people today) principally a place where the faithful assembled to pray or read Scripture. This is the main purpose of a synagogue or church, but not of an ancient temple. A temple in the ancient Near East was essentially the *house of the deity*. The god or goddess was actually deemed to take up residence inside the temple. Temples were therefore lavishly appointed, so as to provide truly royal surroundings in which the deity might abide in splendor. This same general conception of the temple is reflected in God's instructions to the Israelites to build the tabernacle:

> The LORD said to Moses: Tell the Israelites to bring Me an offering; from everyone whose heart so moves him shall you receive the offering for Me. This is the offering that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and copper; blue dye and purple, with crimson yarns, fine linen, and goats' hair; tanned rams' skins, fine leather, and acacia wood; oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; onyx stones and gems to be set in the ephod and for the breast-piece. *And have them make Me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them.* Exactly as I shall show you—the plan of the tabernacle and of all its furnishings—so you shall make it.
>
> Exod. 25:1–9

Of course, in the ancient Near East, the deity was not thought to exist just in that one place: he or she might also be somewhere else in the natural world or in the sky, or simultaneously in another temple (though how this was done was not explained). But the presence of the deity inside the temple meant that there would always be a spot within human reach where the deity could be approached and served, where people might go to offer gifts that would bring favor on them or to present their heartfelt requests for help.

Temples in the ancient Near East were a very, very old institution. The oldest surviving Mesopotamian remains of temples go back to the early fifth millennium BCE—long before there were written records of any kind—but it is quite likely that temples existed even before then, perhaps built out of perishable materials that have left no trace. As with any very ancient institution, trying to understand the place of temples and gods in the life of ordinary people is no simple task; once such an institution is established, most people soon stop speculating about why it exists or how it works. So is it also, for example, with prayer nowadays. Many Jews and Christians and Muslims pray to God regularly. But how many of them think consciously about what occurs when they pray? Does God "hear" them wherever they are—and can He hear and respond to millions of prayers simultaneously? Is it enough merely to *think* a prayer for God to hear it, or does a person actually have to whisper the words or speak them aloud? Is a prayer spoken by a hundred people simultaneously more likely to be answered than one spoken by a single individual? Different answers have been offered to all these questions by philosophers and theologians, but for the most part, ordinary people just don't think about them: prayer simply *exists*, it is how one speaks to God—the mechanics are not that important (and perhaps unknowable).

So was it with temples in the ancient Near East. They had always been there and, as far as anyone knew, always would be. The temple was where the god lived, in a special niche, embodied in a spindly little statue of wood overlaid with precious metals and cloth. The statue was not a *representation* of the god; the god was believed to have actually entered its wood and metal or

stone, so that now this *was* the god—he was actually right over there.[4] "Go before Enki," people would say, or, "Offer this to Marduk." The statue may have been small, but the god inside it radiated power. After all, the gods controlled all that was beyond human controlling, and humans fell before them in abject deference. People invoked the gods, implored the gods, named their own children after gods ("Marduk-Have-Mercy-on-Me," "Ishtar-Is-Heaven's-Queen," "Guard-Me-Shamash"), and even when people were not consciously thinking about the gods, they nonetheless lived every minute of their lives in the gods' shadow.

Animal Sacrifices

Inside the temple was a special coterie of the god's servants. These were the priests, who in many ways were comparable to the slaves or household staff of a high official or king. Their job was to do all that was possible to insure that the god was properly served and so was able to look to the prosperity and success of the city in which his temple stood. This involved, among other things, offering animal sacrifices to the god—and this, like the idea of the temple itself and the divine statues, is so far from the experience of most of us that it requires a willful act of imagination to recapture its essence.

Why did peoples of the ancient Near East (and elsewhere) pile the altars of their gods with the still-warm carcasses of sheep or bulls? Ancient texts themselves offer a host of explanations: this was the deity's food (indeed, in the Bible itself God refers to "My sacrifice, the food of My offerings by fire" [Num. 28:2]); the life of the slaughtered animal was offered as a substitute for the offerer's life (that is, "better it than me"); the animal was a costly possession given up as a sign of fealty or in the hope of receiving still more generous compensation from the deity.[5] To these traditional explanations have been added more recent ones that see the sacrifice as establishing a tangible connection between the sacrificer and the deity.[6] Others have sought to stress the connection of the sacred with violence or see the function of religion overall as defusing violence that would otherwise be directed at other human beings.[7]

Even if it were possible to recapture the original idea behind animal sacrifices—and it isn't—the search for such an original idea can tell us little about the function of sacrifices in Israel during the biblical period (or in any other ancient society). As one scholar has recently argued, that would be like trying to understand the meaning of a word by searching for its etymology: the word "silly" is an adjective originally derived from *sele,* a Middle English noun that meant happiness or bliss, and "silly" itself used to mean "spiritually blessed" or even "holy"—but that does not mean that the word nowadays has any such associations in the minds of English speakers. Similarly, the function of sacrifice—or any ritual act—cannot be understood by trying to reconstruct the original circumstances that gave rise to it.[8]

Moreover, such thinking betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of religious ritual. The ritual act itself is what is important, not its symbolism or purported meaning. To a certain way of thinking, ritual *does* something. (As the American writer Flannery O'Connor, a devout Roman Catholic, once said about the Eucharist: "If it's a symbol, the hell with it.")[9] Animal sacrifices in Israel were conceived to be the principal channel of communication between the people and God. In prayers, of course, people spoke to God, but for all that, prayer was not primary. The sacrifice—the passage of a small, palpable, breathing animal from life to death and from the world of the living upward through the flickering flames of the altar—spoke louder than any prayer. As Platonis Sallustius, a fourth-century philosopher and author of *On the Gods and the World,* observed, "Prayer without sacrifice is just words."[10]

Such was worship in biblical Israel and elsewhere in the ancient Near East. It is to be stressed that the temple itself was a world apart; the house in which the god lived was not conceived to be continuous with the world outside. It was separate, sealed off; and it radiated holiness. One interesting piece of testimony to this fact is the temple recently excavated at 'Ein Dara', in modern Syria.[11] The temple resembles others excavated from that part of the world (as well, incidentally, as Solomon's temple, according to its biblical description)—save for one striking feature. On the steps leading up to this temple's doorway, the builders carved a set of huge footprints, symbolically representing the god's entrance into his sanctuary. The footprints are sunk into the temple steps in the same way that human footprints might be sunk into mud or wet concrete—but the feet themselves are many times bigger than human feet, and the length of the stride they mark off is far greater than a human's stride. Archaeologists estimate that, on the basis of this stride, the god or goddess of that temple would have to have been some sixty-five feet tall! How could such a huge deity ever make its way through the rather normal-sized entrance of the temple? This, apparently, did not trouble the temple's otherwise careful planners. Why not? Because they knew that the inside of this temple, of every temple, was a world apart, a little condensed, time-stopped bit of eternity that was discontinuous with the everyday world that surrounded it, a world in which a spindly little statue could indeed *be* the same god that stood sixty-five feet high on the outside.

The Tabernacle and Modern Scholarship

Modern scholars note that the religion of Israel was a relatively late development in the ancient Near East. Long, long before there had even been an

Israel, the gods had been worshiped in temples that dotted the landscape of ancient Canaan and environs. Israel's own religion ended up being, in some respects, strikingly different from those of its neighbors; but modern scholars are equally attuned to the similarities. Thus, Solomon's temple as described in the book of Kings seems to have a floor plan altogether typical of West Semitic temples such as the ones excavated at 'Ein Dara' or Tel Ta'yinat in Syria; the different classes of sacrifices offered in Israelite temples used some of the same names found in ancient Canaanite texts; the priests were designated by the same word; and so forth. Indeed, even Israel's way of referring to its God parallels phrases and appellations used for Canaanite gods in texts discovered in northern Syria.

It is therefore not surprising that, like Solomon's temple, which eventually replaced it, the desert tabernacle that God commanded the Israelites to build (Exodus 25–27) should—in its dimensions, appurtenances, and the sacrifices that were to be offered within its precincts—resemble the sanctuaries found at neighboring sites in the ancient Near East and the worship conducted within them. About this tabernacle, however, modern scholarly opinion continues to fluctuate. To Julius Wellhausen and other late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century scholars, it seemed obvious that the tabernacle was simply a literary fiction. There never was a tabernacle. Long after the people of Israel had emerged—indeed, long after it had been decided that, instead of multiple holy sites dotting the landscape, there was to be a single, centralized temple in Jerusalem—some priest or scribe, in seeking to imagine the Israelites' desert wanderings after the exodus from Egypt, naturally supposed that they too had had a central shrine. But how could they if they were wandering all the time? It must have been a *portable* shrine, he supposed, a tent that could be packed up and moved from place to place. Thus was created, according to Wellhausen and others, yet another biblical fiction: the whole account of the desert tabernacle was a wholesale retrojection of the much later reality of temple worship in Judah.

More recently, some scholars have taken issue with this view. In particular, F. M. Cross has suggested that the whole idea of a tent shrine is actually borrowed from an ancient Canaanite notion, according to which the supreme god El dwells in a tent; the Israelite cherubim throne, the planks (*qerashim*), and other appurtenances, Cross and others have argued, are likewise borrowed motifs attested in the ancient writings of Ugarit.[12] This may not necessarily authenticate the biblical picture of a portable shrine, but it certainly could make the idea of such a shrine far older than Wellhausen supposed. Similarly, other scholars have suggested that, while such a tent shrine may not go back to the period of desert wanderings, the idea may have been based on an actual tent shrine in David's day or possibly on a tent sanctuary at Shiloh; its dimensions, others have noted, seem to match those of an ancient temple unearthed at Arad.[13]

When it comes to the actual details of how the Israelites built the desert tabernacle, most modern readers feel their eyes closing. The instructions given by God (Exodus 25–31) are themselves somewhat repetitious, and the account of these instructions subsequently being carried out (chapters 35–40) is, for pages and pages, virtually a verbatim recapitulation of the instructions themselves. Why all this verbiage, when the whole thing could have been summed up in a sentence or two? But for ancient Israelites, the tabernacle itself was highly significant, and the detailed account of its construction must have held a certain fascination. Here were the precise specifications of the structure that allowed God to take up residence once again in the midst of humankind—the first time He had done so since the Garden of Eden.

A Mysterious Death

With the tabernacle complete, the Bible next turns to what is supposed to go on inside it—laws governing the offering of different kinds of sacrifices and what the priests are to do to prepare them. All this occupies the first seven chapters of the book of Leviticus. (The book's name, incidentally, derives from the fact that priests and other temple officials were all said to descend from a single tribe, Levi.) Once those instructions have been imparted, the Israelites can begin their sacrificial worship of God. The tabernacle is made ready and anointed; the priests—Aaron and his sons—are given their special priestly vestments and consecrated; and then . . . the unthinkable happens.

> Now Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, each took his censer, put fire in it, and laid incense on it; and they offered unholy fire before the LORD, such as He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD meant when He said, 'Through those who are near Me I will be kept holy, and [thus] by all the people I will be honored.' " And Aaron was silent.
>
> Lev. 10:1–3

On what ought to have been one of the happiest days in Israel's history—the inauguration of the tabernacle service—two of Aaron's sons slip up somehow in priestly procedure and immediately die as a result. But was God really so severe as to kill two novices simply because they made a mistake on their first day on the job?

The text did offer some clues as to what went wrong. To begin with, Nadab and Abihu are said to have brought "unholy fire" right before God. The word "unholy" here (*zarah*) actually means something closer to "foreign" or "strange," but in the context of the tabernacle, it designates anyone

Entering the Love Song

Calling on the Presence of *Ahavah* in Creation

We are loved by an unending love.

We are embraced by arms that find us,
even when we are hidden from ourselves.
We are touched by fingers that soothe us,
even when we are too proud for soothing.
We are counseled by voices that guide us,
even when we are too embittered to hear.

We are loved by an unending love.

We are supported by hands that uplift us,
even in the midst of a fall.
We are urged on by eyes that meet us,
even when we are too weak for meeting.

We are loved by an unending love.

Embraced, touched, soothed, and counseled,
ours are the arms, the fingers, the voices;
ours are the hands, the eyes, the smiles;

We are loved by an unending love.

(Rabbi Rami Shapiro)

Listening to the Voice of Creation

The *Shema* and Her Blessings

Listen – Listen – Listen to my heart-song
I will never forget you. I will never forsake you.

אֶחָד יָחִיד וּמְאֻחָד

Echad Yachid, u-M'uchad

One • Every single one • Each one joined and united in the One!

אֵל *El*
מֶלֶךְ *Melech*
נֶאֱמָן *Ne'eman*

God is the Enduring Source

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד

בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Shema Yisrael יהוה *Eloheynu,* יהוה *Echad !*

Baruch Shem K'vod Malchuto l'Olam Va-ed

Comprehend with a Total Comprehension,
all of you who "*Yisra-El* – Wrestle-with-God,"
יהוה, The-Breath-of-Life-of-all-Being, Is Our God
יהוה is the Eternal Infinite Oneness! All That Exists!
Through Time and Space Your Glory Shines Majestic One!

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A SIDDUR FOR SHABBAT MORNING ~~X~~ RABBI MARCIA PRAGER

Shema Yisrael

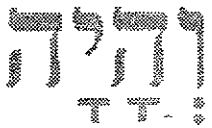
(Interpretive translation by Reb Zalman Schacter-Shalomi)

Listen you *Yisrael* person, יהוה who Is, is our God.
יהוה who Is, is One, Unique, All there Is.

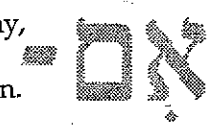
Through Time and Space Your Glory Shines Majestic One!

Love יהוה, who is your God,
in what your heart is in, in what you aspire to,
in what you have made your own.
May these values which I connect with your life
be implanted in your feelings.

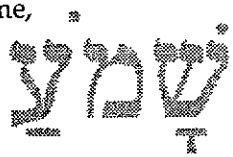
May they become the norm for your children,
addressing them in the privacy of your home,
on the errands your run.
May they help you relax,
and activate you to be productive.
Display them visibly on your arm.
Let them focus your attention.
See them at all transitions,
at home and in your environment



How good it will be when you really listen
and hear my directions which I give you today,
for loving יהוה who is your God,
and acting Godly with feeling and inspiration.



Your earthly needs will be met at the right time,
appropriate to the season.
You will reap what you have planted
for your delight and health.
Also your animals will have ample feed.
All of you will eat and be content.



Be careful – watch out!
Don't let your cravings delude you.
Don't become alienated.
Don't let your cravings become your gods.
Don't debase yourself to them,
because the God-sense within you will become distorted.

Heaven will be shut to you. Grace will not descend.
Earth will not produce.
Your rushing will destroy you!
And Earth will not be able to recover her good balance,
in which God's gifts manifest.

May these values of mine reside in your feelings and aspirations,
marking what you produce, guiding what you perceive.
Teach them to your children,
so that they be addressed by them in making their homes,
in how they deal with traffic;
when they are depressed, and when they are elated.
Mark your entrances and exits with them,
so you will be more aware.

Then you and your children will live out on earth,
that divine promise given to your ancestors,
to live heavenly days right here on this earth.

יהוה who Is said to Moshe
"Speak, telling the *Yisrael* folks to make *tzitzit*
on the corners of their garments,
so they will have generations to follow them.

On each *tzitzit*-tassel let them set a blue thread.
Glance at it, and in your seeing,
remember all the other directives of יהוה who Is,
and act on them!

This way you will not be led astray,
craving to see and want,
and then prostitute yourself for your cravings.
This way you will be mindful to actualize my directions
for becoming dedicated to your God,
to be aware that I AM יהוה who is your God –
the One who freed you from the oppression
in order to God you.
I am יהוה your God.

That is the truth!

MY PEOPLES PRAYERBOOK

VOL 1

THE SH'MA & ITS BLESSINGS

MARC BRETTLER

B.C.E.) which contains the decalogue as well as Deuteronomy 6:4–5. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Bible from Alexandria, as well as the Nash papyrus introduce the *Sh'ma* with a verse not found in the Hebrew, but intended to highlight the *Sh'ma*'s growing importance: "These are the laws and the rule which Adonai commanded Israel in the desert when they left Egypt."

The introduction ("Hear O Israel") is a typical opening for a speech in Deuteronomy, occurring not only here, but also in vv. 5:1, 9:1, 20:3, and 27:9, and might have been one of the ways of introducing what some have called "a sermon." This particular sermon makes two points: "Adonai is our God" and "You shall love Adonai your God." There then follows a chain of implications: Internalizing these commandments and teaching them to your children, binding them upon your arms and head, and writing them upon your doorposts.

ELLIOT N. DORFF

order of the Torah's books (since Numbers, the fourth book of the Torah, precedes Deuteronomy, the fifth). Although all the parts of the *Sh'ma* appear in the Torah, then, the prayer as we have it is not biblical in origin, but rather a prayer created by the Rabbis. Why then did the Rabbis choose these paragraphs, not others (the Ten Commandments, say) for this central prayer? And why did they put these paragraphs in the order they did?

One reason they chose the first two paragraphs is undoubtedly because they contain verses requiring that "you should speak about these things when you lie down and when you stand up." In context, "these things" refers to the entire covenant described in Deuteronomy, which we are to speak of always. I prefer my own translation here ("*Speak of* them" not "*use* them," and "when you lie down and when you *rise* up," not "when you *stand* up") because "when you lie down and when you rise up" is a "merism," a literary device by which the Torah specifies two ends of a spectrum and means everything in between as well. Here, then, we are to think and speak about the words of the Torah during every waking moment. (Another famous example of that literary device is the opening verse of Genesis: "When God began to create the heaven and earth" — meaning everything in between as well.) A narrow reading of these verses, however, leads to the view that every night and every morning we should recite the paragraphs where those verses are embedded, and this is undoubtedly one of the reasons motivating the Rabbis to use the first two paragraphs of the *Sh'ma* as we have it.

That, though, only pushes the question back to the next level, namely, why did the Rabbis choose to interpret these verses in that narrow way rather than in their broader and probably more accurate meaning? And how are we to understand the choice of the third paragraph, where this demand to speak of "them" day and night does not appear?

The Siddur serves as the handbook of theology for the Jewish masses. The Rabbis deliberately chose these paragraphs primarily because *they were convinced that these*

paragraphs articulated the heart of Jewish faith. They say explicitly (M. Ber. 2:2) that the first paragraph proclaims the sovereignty of God; the second, the duty to obey the commandments; and the third, the obligation to heed the commandments specific to the day time (because of the verse, "When you see it," which, in the days before electricity, presupposed daylight). I agree with their understanding of the first two paragraphs, although for a somewhat different reason than they provide, but I disagree with their explanation of what the third paragraph was meant to add. After all, if you are already obligated by the second paragraph to obey all the commandments, why do you need the third paragraph to restate your duty to obey only part of them?

Understanding the point of the first two paragraphs demands attention to the antecedents of their pronouns. In each, we are called upon to teach "them" to our children. In the first paragraph, though, the verses preceding that command (which tell us what we should teach) speak of our belief in one God and our duty to love and be loyal to that One God. In the second paragraph, the obligation to teach our children is preceded by the demand that we obey the commandments. We must, then, teach our children, and affirm ourselves, both Jewish beliefs and Jewish practices.

The third paragraph then establishes the educational system by which we are to remember these assertions of faith and these demands of action: we are to use tassels, an unusual dress, as a reminder system — a communal string around our fingers, as it were. The Torah then explicitly spells out the educational process that a tassel will enable: "When you see it, you shall remember all of Adonai's commandments and do them." A concrete and odd object called a tassel will be a physical reminder of your obligations to God; just seeing them will jar your memory of what you are to do. In case you missed the rationale the first time, the paragraph repeats, "Thus you will remember and do all of Adonai's commandments."

That paragraph also specifies the ultimate promise in doing so — that we will be holy to our God. English is a Christian language: those who created it were Christian, and to this day over 90% of those who speak it as their native tongue are Christian. It should not be surprising, then, that English words, especially religious words — like "messiah," "savior," "salvation," and even "holy" — have Christian connotations. Although I am a rabbi and have studied the Jewish tradition extensively, when I say "holy," I still think of "the Holy Ghost." The Hebrew word "*kadosh*," however, means set apart from all others, as in the Hebrew word for betrothal, *kiddushin*, which declares that bride and groom set each other apart from all other potential mates. The Prophets take this human phenomenon of marriage as the model for the relationship between God and the People Israel. Being holy to God means being in a monogamous relationship together.

The first paragraph of the *Sh'ma* is phrased in the second person *singular*, while the second paragraph refers to some of the same commandments (teaching children, *t'fillin, m'zuzah*) in the second person *plural*. Both individually and collectively, then, we affirm the beliefs and obey the commandments articulated in the *Sh'ma*, so as to merit the promise contained in the third paragraph of being God's People.

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SUSAN L. EINBINDER

the experience of religious martyrdom known technically now as *k'dushat hashem*, "sanctification of the name [of God]."

Ashkenaz Jewry at the end of the eleventh century and into the twelfth was a thriving community of urban centers; recent scholarship stresses the degree that Jewish attitudes and behaviors reflect the general cultural "renaissance" that characterize the period. The intellectual atmosphere gave rise to new critical attitudes towards interpreting texts — hence our great Jewish commentator, Rashi (Solomon ben Isaac of France, 1040–1105) and the school of commentators he developed, known as the Tosafists. It also spawned new types of writing, like the prose narrative, and a new interest in the portrayal of individuals and their inner thoughts. At the same time, however, religious extremism in the Christian culture found expression in a series of crusading expeditions, and these too found their Jewish analogue in an extreme response of martyrdom. The First Crusade, in particular, cut a path of destruction through the major Jewish communities along the Rhine. Both Christian and Jewish chroniclers describe the Christian decision to attack the Jews in the same way: "Behold we travel to a distant land to do battle . . . to kill and to subjugate all those kingdoms that do not believe in the Crucified. How much more so [should we kill and subjugate] the Jews, who killed and crucified him!" (translation, Robert Chazan, *The Destruction of European Jewry*). To a degree even more remarkable for its lack of precedent in Jewish history (medieval Jews did not even know the story of Masada), Jewish men, women and children chose martyrdom, either at their own hands or at the hands of their slaughterers. Over and over, their rallying cry at death is the single verse of the *Sh'ma*. Like their Sefardic counterparts, and medieval Muslims, Ashkenazi Jews understood the Christian concept of the divine Trinity as a case of polytheism; thus their insistence on God's unity is a vehement repudiation of Christian doctrine.

Furthermore, three surviving Hebrew prose records narrate the ravages of the First Crusade (1096) on the Rhine Jewish communities. For all of them, the martyrs' proclamation of God's unity in the *Sh'ma* has a literary force as well, emerging from the multitude of voices that compose a human community — men, women and children; rich and poor; learned and unlearned; communal leaders and marginal characters; those who fight valiantly, those whose defiance is passive, and even those who try to run away. All of this human variety is "unified" itself in the moment it meets its God. The story of the Jews of Worms makes this point vividly. Having sought shelter in the bishop's chambers, the Jews are attacked there by the Christian mob, and they choose willingly to die. Some are killed by the mob and some take their own lives. The chronicle of Solomon ben Simson continues: "Indeed fathers also fell with their children, for they were slaughtered together. They slaughtered brethren, relatives, wives and children. Bridegrooms [slaughtered] their intended and merciful mothers their own children. All of them accepted the heavenly decree unreservedly. As they commended their souls to their Creator, they cried out: "Hear O Israel! Adonai is our God; Adonai is One!" (Chazan translation).

JOEL M. HOFFMAN

quial "listen up," or the scholarly "N.B." Accordingly, a more accurate translation might begin, "Hear this," "Listen up" or "Please note." By the time it was introduced into the liturgy, however, the first line of the *Sh'ma* had became a familiar quotation; so reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that our translation remains familiar. So the usual "hear" is retained, along with the archaic vocative "O Israel" that follows (as in FOP, GOP, SLC, Birnbaum, SSS and Artscroll; KH uses simply "Israel.") As for "Adonai is one," KH has "Adonai alone," an accurate enough rendering of the meaning, but missing the affect of the parallel structure in the Hebrew *Adonai eloheinu, Adonai echad* — which is captured nicely in "Adonai is our God, Adonai is one." Artscroll suggests "the one and only."

"Blessed is the One . . ." Almost every aspect of this line is problematic. At a word-for-word level, the sentence — literally, "Blessed name glory his-kingdom forever" — is almost ungrammatical. The only possible grammatical reading ("Blessed is the One the name of the glory of whose kingdom is everlasting") is so convoluted that it is unlikely to represent the original intention. Lawrence Hoffman suggests that we may have two sentences here, *barukh shem* ("Blessed is the name [of God?]") followed by *k'vod malkhuto l'olam va'ed*, "The glory of his kingdom is everlasting." Birnbaum notes that *Barukh shem k'vod* was "regularly used in the Temple," again suggesting that we have incorrectly punctuated the line by not breaking it up. But because current tradition and practice presupposes a single sentence, we ignore this possibility; for ease of reading, however, the sentence is rewritten.

Other translations include, "Praised be his glorious sovereignty throughout all time" (SS); "Blessed be the name and glory of God's realm, forever" (KH); and "Blessed be the name of his glorious majesty forever and ever" (Birnbaum). We have retained "kingdom," because its connotations are far more majestic than are those of the rivals "realm," "sovereignty" or "majesty."

We also face the particular problem that we do not know fully what "name" (*shem*) connoted in antiquity. It surely meant more than it does today. A change in name was a change in essence, for example (as with Abram/Abraham and Sarai/Sarah), so declaring God's name to be blessed was tantamount to acknowledging God's very being.

LAWRENCE A. HOFFMAN

VERSE (DEUT. 6:4), "HEAR O ISRAEL . . ." AND THE RESPONSE, "BLESSED IS . . ." STAND OUT LITURGICALLY AS AN APT SUMMARY OF JUDAISM'S BASIC MONOTHEISTIC PRINCIPLE AND THE HOPE FOR ALL HUMANITY THAT FLOWS FROM IT.

"Reform congregations say 'Hear O Israel . . .' and 'Blessed is . . .' standing" Halakhah prescribes sitting not standing for the *Sh'ma*. The issue goes back to a debate between Bet Hillel and Bet Shammai, in which Bet Hillel ruled (successfully) that the *Sh'ma* should be said in whatever position one happened to be when the time of its recitation arrived. In the ninth century, the Babylonian Gaon, Amram, enforced that position, as part of

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his religio-political attack on the Palestinians who still said the *Sh'ma* standing. His successful championing of the Hillelite perspective eventually entered the codes of Jewish law, which justified the Hillelite-Amram position with a variety of *ex post facto* arguments, that became standard Halakhah. When the Crusaders overran Palestine, destroying native Palestinian Jewish custom in the process, the Palestinian practice of standing died too, so that Jews round the world now sat for the *Sh'ma* as Amram had insisted.

Reform Jews, however, saw the *Sh'ma* as central to their claim that Judaism's uniqueness lay in its discovery of ethical monotheism. Wanting to acknowledge the centrality of the *Sh'ma*, and recognizing that people generally stand for the prayers that matter most, they began standing for the *Sh'ma* despite the Halakhah. They justified their position by arguing that the halakhic *act* of sitting for the "watchword of Jewish faith" was inconsistent with the halakhic *principle* of accepting the yoke of heaven: how could one not stand to proclaim God one?

Simultaneously, they began reciting the second line "Blessed be . . ." aloud as well, whereas traditional practice insisted on saying it quietly. They reasoned (with the Halakhah) that the second line was an accessory statement to the first, a verbal acceptance of God's reign, and should likewise be recited with full intentionality, but (against the Halakhah) that doing so could not be accomplished if it was recited quietly.

"God, steadfast ruler (El melekh ne'eman)" The phrase is cited in the midrash and the Talmud, because the Hebrew initials of these three words spell *amen*. "Resh Lakish said, 'If you say *amen* with all your might, the gates to the Garden of Eden will be open to you.' What does *amen* mean? Rabbi Chanina said, 'God steadfast ruler'" (Shab. 119b). The Tosafot (12th-century France) explain, "Whenever you say *amen*, you should think, "God steadfast ruler." By the time of the Tosafot, however, the phrase had become associated with the *Sh'ma* as well, on account of a ninth-century midrashic teaching: "Let the recitation of *Sh'ma* not be light in your eyes, for its 248 words tally with the 248 parts of a human body. God says, 'If you guard the 248 words of the *Sh'ma* by reading them right, I will guard your 248 anatomical parts." Eleventh-century rabbis in Italy and France noted, however, that the midrashist's count was off! The *Sh'ma* has only 245 words. They therefore advocated adding *El melekh ne'eman* to make up the missing three. By the twelfth century, the practice spread to Provence, where a visiting Spanish rabbi, Zerachiah Halevi, encountered it. He brought it back to Spain with him, where he encountered fierce opposition. Most Spanish authorities (including the Zohar) railed against the custom, and by the sixteenth century, it was dying. Joseph Caro omitted it from his *Shulchan Arukh*, and Moses Isserles, the chief Polish authority who made the *Shulchan Arukh* decisive for Ashkenazi Jews too, mentions it only to caution against it. Joel Sirkes of Poland (1561–1640) says, "The custom has ceased; we do not say 'God steadfast ruler.'" Technically speaking, therefore, Neither the Spanish-Portuguese rite nor the Ashkenazi rite officially includes it, but Sefardi custom did retain it, and the practice is so widespread today despite the sources opposing it that we include it here.

"Hear O Israel" The *Sh'ma* comprises three biblical passages: Deuteronomy 6:4–9 — "accepting the yoke of the kingdom of heaven" (*kabbalat ol malkhut shamayim*);

Deuteronomy 11:13–21 — "accepting the yoke of the commandments" (*kabbalat ol hamitzvot*); and Numbers 15:37–41 — "the section on tassels" (*parashat tsitsit*), where *tsitsit* are described as a visible reminder that "I am Adonai your God," precisely what "Hear O Israel: Adonai is our God; Adonai is One" asserts.

Jews were saying the *Sh'ma* twice daily as early as the first century (though possibly without all three paragraphs, at first).

The first line is often written with a large *ayin* (the last letter of *Sh'ma*), and a large *dalet* (the last letter of *echad*). Tradition explains it as an attempt to spell out *ed*, "witness," since the *Sh'ma* is a testimony to the one true God. Others hold that the two enlarged letters prevent heretical error, since the *ayin* might be confused with an *alef* (which sounds similar), and the *dalet* might be read as a *resh* (which looks similar) — giving us, "*SHEma* (written with *alef*) *yisrael, Adonai eloheinu Adonai acher*, "Maybe, Israel, Adonai our God is another deity."

"Blessed is the One the glory of whose kingdom is renowned forever" Again, a doxology (see above, "Blessed be Adonai who is blessed forever and ever"), this one patterned after the end of the second book of Psalms (Ps. 72:19), "Blessed be his glorious name forever" (*Barukh shem k'vodo l'olam*). It also follows a pattern laid down in Nehemiah 9:5: "The Levites said, 'Arise and bless the Lord your God from everlasting to everlasting; Blessed be your glorious name that is high above all blessing and praise."

The added concept "kingdom" intrudes upon the syntax to make translation difficult, if not impossible. It may be, then, that this new element, a single word in Hebrew (*malkhuto*) is a late addition. Originally, the invitation, "Hear O Israel," evoked a psalm-like doxology without it: "Blessed be his glorious name forever and ever" (*Barukh shem k'vodo l'olam va'ed*).

The accent on God's ultimate reign on earth is usually viewed as a response to Roman rule. Jesus too preached "the coming of the kingdom" which must have been an important doctrine as early as the first century, and became more so, as the wars against Rome were fought.

This particular doxology was said in the Temple, following the high priest's recitation of the ineffable name of God (M. Yoma 3:8), possibly as two sentences: "Blessed be the name" (*Barukh shem*). "The glory of his kingdom is renowned forever" (*K'vod malkhuto l'olam va'ed*).

LAWRENCE KUSHNER
NEHEMIA POLEN

known also as *Ba'al Hatanya* — "author of *The Tanya*," the masterwork of Chabad Chasidism) maintains that nothing exists but God. This "acosmism" denies the reality of the cosmos. God is not only the basis of reality, God is the *only* reality; God is all there is. Creation is continuously brought into being through the divine word. If our eyes could

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truly see reality we would see no material world at all, but instead, behold God's continuous utterance of the Hebrew letters, the real matrix of all being.

In such a radical monism, the *Sh'ma*, the declaration of God's unity, means effectively that nothing exists besides God.

> "In the heavens above and on the earth below, *Ein od* — there is nothing else [besides G-d]." This means that even the material earth, which appears to the eyes of all to be actually existing is naught and complete nothingness in relation to the Holy One, blessed be He.

As his editor explains in the English translation: "The unity of God does not mean only that there are no other gods, but that there is nothing apart from God, i.e., there is no existence whatsoever apart from God's existence; the whole Creation is nullified within God as the rays of the sun within the orb of the sun. This is the meaning of *yichuda ila'a* ('higher unity')."

But how do we reconcile the apparent contradiction between this acosmic theory of reality and the inescapable experience of living in an obviously material world? Anyone can have a vision of the unity of all creation. It could be in a forest or by the shore of the sea. It could be during the concluding service of Yom Kippur or at the birth of a child. The questions is how do we bring the awareness of that higher unity into the everyday reality of *this* world? That is the challenge of sacred living: to realize more unity — with patience and devotion, to make *this* world resemble the one on High. And this is where Judaism parts company with the religions of the East. Judaism understands this yearning as a sacred obligation, a requirement for holy living, a commandment.

This is the problem that the Ba'al Hatanya teaches is solved with the second line of the *Sh'ma*, the *Barukh shem* which is not in the biblical text itself, but was added by the Rabbis as a congregational response. The *Barukh shem*, he says, is our attempt to bring back into this world the supernal unity spoken of in the first line. We have a vision of ultimate unity when we utter *Sh'ma Yisra'el Adonai Eloheinu Adonai echad* ("Hear O Israel, Adonai is our God; Adonai is One"). And when we recite *Barukh shem k'vod malkhuto l'olam va'ed* ("Blessed is the One the glory of whose kingdom is renowned forever"), we try to bring that unity into everyday reality.

"We may now understand," he suggests, "the statement in the Zohar (2:134a) that the verse *Sh'ma Yisra'el* is *yichuda ila'a* ('higher Unity'), and *Baruch shem k'vod malkhuto l'olam va'ed* is *yichuda tata'a* ('lower unity')." The Ba'al Hatanya's editor goes on to explain that according to traditional rules of Hebrew grammar, the alphabet is divided into groups of letters, such that the letters in any single group are interchangeable with one another. The letters *alef, hay, vav,* and *yod* fall into one group, permitting *alef* to be interchanged with *vav*. The letters *aleph, chet, hay,* and *ayin* fall into another group, permitting *chet* to be interchanged with *ayin*. In this way *echad* (*alef, chet, dalet*) becomes *va'ed* (*vav, ayin, dalet*).

So the *echad* of the *Sh'ma* is the *yichuda ila'a*, the higher unity, seemingly unattainable in this world, only a dim memory of a sacred moment. But the *va'ed* of the *Baruch shem k'vod* is the *yichuda tata'a*, the lower unity, our bringing the oneness of the Holy One into our daily lives. Now we are ready to recite the *Sh'ma* and its response.

of these 3 make up 248, the number of positive *mitzvot*. In public recitation the prayer leader repeats the last three words, *a-do-nai e-loheikhem emet* to produce the desired total.

"Hear O Israel" The *Sh'ma* is prior to the *Amidah*, not only in the time of its recitation, but also in halakhic importance, as the *Sh'ma* comprises two biblically ordained laws while the *Amidah*, and perhaps even prayer itself, is only rabbinically commanded. The habitual recital of the *Sh'ma* (known as *K'riyat Sh'ma*, and sometimes shortened to "the *k'riyah*") renews and confirms the believer's faith, and frames the day by explaining how the world is to be perceived. There are actually two *mitzvot* here, one doctrinal and one ritual.

The *doctrinal mitzvah* is the affirmation of God's unity, as commanded in the first verse (Deut. 6:4). By unity, we mean that God is incorporeal, indivisible and utterly unique (Maimonides [1135–1204], Jacob Emden [1697–1776]) and that the God of Israel will eventually be the God of the entire world (Rashi [1040–1105]).

The *ritual mitzvah* is the actual recitation which is also termed *l'yached et hashem*, "to unify the name [of God]," or *l'kabel ol malkhut shamayim*, "to accept the yoke of the kingdom of heaven." This *mitzvah* applies passively to *B'nai Noah* ("descendants of Noah," that is, covenanted non-Jews) also, for they may not practice idolatry. But unlike Jews, they are not required to affirm God's unity actively. Maimonides calls this the "great principle upon which everything is predicated."

Sh'ma requires *kavvanah*, meaning "direction" (literally), and by extension, "intent." An ongoing halakhic debate questions whether *mitzvot* in general require *kavvanah*, or whether they "count" even if performed without it. But in any case, this *mitzvah* which affirms God's unity presupposes thoughtfulness, so must be accompanied by *kavvanat halev*, "heartfelt intentionality." If we fail to achieve this full intentionality, we do not fulfill the *mitzvah*, and must wait a moment — so as to avoid the semblance of affirming two gods — and then repeat the *Sh'ma* with proper intention.

Minimally, this *kavvanah* must accompany the first sentence of *Sh'ma*, the verse that affirms God's unity. The next line, *Barukh shem*, though post-biblical and therefore recited silently, is also understood as a reflection upon God's unity, so it too requires *kavvanah*. Ritually speaking, people who do not understand Hebrew, and so cannot attain intentionality when they read it, may use any language that they "hear," that is, "understand," but should use the Hebrew names for God. From a doctrinal point of view also, an exact rendering into another language fulfills the *mitzvah*, but a proper translation may be unavailable or even impossible in practice. Halakhah thus prefers using the original liturgical Hebrew for doctrinal purposes. One need not know the exact translation of the words, since all that is required is a sense of the general content of what is being said, and the liturgical context alone is assumed to provide that basic understanding, since one recognizes at least that this is the liturgical place where we affirm God's unity. The presence

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of translation and commentaries on the Siddur page enhances *kavvanah* by providing fuller comprehension.

Kavvanah also demands vocal articulation and certain body language. The plain sense of "Hear" implies saying *Sh'ma* loudly enough to be heard, and *kavvanah* generates the requirement to say it ourselves, rather than to depend on "hearing" it from others in the congregation, even the prayer leader. Ordinarily, "hearing a blessing from another obligated person is the same as saying it oneself," but the *Sh'ma* differs, because we require each person's own active acceptance of the yoke of the kingdom of heaven. Custom today actually demands shouting the first verse in a full voice. The loud shout breaking through one's regular whispered chant drives home this special intent of affirming God's unity, and satisfies the characterization of the *Sh'ma* that we find in the *Tur* (code of Jewish law, 14th cent.), where it is called a "proclamation" ordered by our King out of "reverence and trepidation."

Doctrinally speaking, we need only recite the first verse with full *kavvanah*, but ritually considered, we do so as part of a *k'riyah*, a "recitation," that includes three biblical citations and the *Barukh shem* response. Opinions vary on how much of all this is the necessary minimum to count as a *k'riyah*. Early authorities cite either the first verse alone, the first paragraph, or the first two paragraphs. Maimonides includes the third paragraph too, while most everyone else agrees that the third paragraph was included liturgically in order to fulfill the daily commandment to remember the Exodus, but not, strictly speaking, as part of the *mitzvah* of reciting the *Sh'ma*. Some even hold that no specific paragraph is specified, and that any section of Torah would do! The final halakhic decision is that the *k'riyah* requires all three paragraphs.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (1903–1993) differentiates *k'riyat Sh'ma* from other biblically ordained portions that are to be read, the priestly benediction, for instance. These others must be read exactly as they appear in the Torah, so that if even one word or letter is skipped, it is as if we have performed no *mitzvah* at all. With the *Sh'ma*, however, even though we must say it as written, if we do not complete the portion, we still fulfill the obligation of "reciting." To be sure, we do not thereby do all we should: We do not fulfill the complete obligation to recite the three portions. But we do fulfill the *mitzvah* of *k'riyat Sh'ma*.

But Rabbi Soloveitchik differentiates *ex post facto* fulfillment (*b'di'avad*) from the *ab initio* ideal (*l'chatchilah*). Ideally, the *Sh'ma* should be recited with every word pronounced properly. Successive words that share the same consonant at the end of the first and the beginning of the second (like *b'khol l'vav'kha*) should be separated clearly. Words inadvertently slurred, misspoken or omitted should be corrected either on the spot or by returning to the beginning of the verse and continuing again from there. The portions should be read in the order of the Siddur, with its imposed hierarchy of value: first, the *mitzvot* of affirming God's unity, loving God and learning Torah; second, accepting all *mitzvot*; and third, the *mitzvah* of *tsitsit*, specifically, as a reminder of the other *mitzvot*.

Since the *k'riyat Sh'ma* is bracketed by blessings, many authorities extend the biblical obligation to include the blessings as well. Ordinary conversation is banned, for example, in between the paragraphs of the *Sh'ma* (unless it is undertaken out of fear that failure to initiate it will result in punishment from the person slighted, or if the conversation is a response to someone who deserves honor); so too it is disallowed between the *Sh'ma* and its blessings, or between the blessings themselves.

The integrity of the *Sh'ma* and Its Blessings raises other issues too. Why, for example, is there no introductory blessing of command, as we find with other ritual obligations: Something like, " . . . who has sanctified us with his commandments and has commanded us to recite the *Sh'ma*"? Moreover, we saw above that the *mitzvah* of affirming God's unity (in the first sentence) requires *kavvanat halev*, deep intention of the heart. There is, however, a simpler form of intentionality to consider: *kavvanah latseit*, the intention simply to fulfill the *mitzvah* in question. The *Chazon Ish* rules that if someone recites *k'riyat Sh'ma* in the proper liturgical order, even without the intention of fulfilling the *mitzvah*, the obligation has nonetheless been fulfilled, since the very doing of the *mitzvah* (that is, reciting the blessings with the biblical paragraphs embedded within them) assumes that one had the prior purpose of fulfilling it, at least implicitly. Regarding the absent blessing, then, we might say that the explicit formulation of command that a blessing would convey is implicitly present in the very saying of the *Sh'ma* within its liturgical structure.

Various customs are attached to the recitation of the first line.

1. It is said in a loud voice, initiated by the prayer leader, with all following together as befits the coronation of the King.
2. Care is taken not to run words together, especially *Yisra'el* and *A-do-nai*, and *A-do-nai* and *echad*.
3. *Echad* is recited with a slight elongation of the *chet*, and greater elongation of the *dalet*, emphasizing that the last letter is not a *resh*, since instead of *echad* ("one") we would have *acher* ("other") as if to say that God is "the other deity." The *dalet*, however, should not be pronounced with excessive force, lest it become gibberish, like *echadeh*.
4. *Sh'ma Yisra'el* is recited with the right hand covering the eyes, to achieve *kavvanah*.
5. We say it in awe and trepidation, with a sense of newly proclaiming God king, and with the resolve that we would give up life rather than violate this belief.

Other than the doctrinal and the ritual *mitzvot* mentioned above, we find in the *Sh'ma* also the following commandments: 1) Loving God ("You shall love A-do-nai your God" [Deut. 6:5]). This means directing one's heart to the reality of God as our ultimate source of joy. Desire for any material object or affirming any spiritual goal that does not make love for God central violates this commandment. 2) *Talmud torah*, "learning and teaching Torah" ("Instruct them to your children" [Deut. 6:7]). Our obligation is first to our own children, but students become honorary children. We should learn Torah all our life and teach Torah to all Jews. The community is

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obliged to establish schools that every Jew may learn the texts and practices of our people.

Some say the *Sh'ma* while using the following words within it to remind them of the Ten Commandments (not in order of the Decalogue itself):

From paragraph 1: "A-do-nai your God" = 1st commandment ("I am A-do-nai your God"); "A-do-nai is One" = 2nd commandment ("You shall have no other Gods before Me"); "You shall love" = 3rd commandment ("Do not take A-do-nai's name in vain"); "Your house" = 10th commandment ("Do not covet your neighbor's house)."

From paragraph 2: "Gather your grain" = 8th commandment ("Do not steal"); "You will quickly perish" = 6th commandment ("Do not murder"); "That your days and your children's days . . . may be numerous" = 5th commandment ("Honor your father and mother that your days may be numerous").

From paragraph 3: "And not follow your mind and eyes" = 7th commandment ("Do not commit adultery"); "Thus will you remember" = 4th commandment ("Remember the Sabbath Day"); "I am A-do-nai your God" = 9th commandment ("Do not bear false witness" — the Midrash explains, "God knows when we lie").

"Blessed is the One . . ." Being post-biblical, *Barukh shem* is recited in an undertone, after a short pause, with the intent of saying that God's reign is eternal.

JUDITH PLASKOW

that God is One? On the simplest level, the *Sh'ma* can be understood as a passionate rejection of polytheism. In the context of the commandment, "You shall have no other gods besides Me," it is a polemic against foreign worship. It is reminiscent of the familiar midrash (which, like the *Sh'ma*, is also often learned early) that depicts Abraham destroying his father's idols because he knows instinctively that there is only one deity.

Viewed in this way, the *Sh'ma* supports a popular (although inaccurate) reading of Jewish history, according to which Israel, from its very beginnings, brought to the world the idea of one God who was creator and ruler of the universe.

This understanding of the *Sh'ma*, however, does not address the issue of God's oneness. It defines "one" in opposition to "many," but it never really specifies what it means to say that God/Adonai/the One who is and will be is one. Is God's oneness mere numerical singularity? Does it signify simply that rather than many forces ruling the universe, there is only one? A simple numerical definition of oneness is compatible with idolatry, if it is just the worship of one finite God imaged as infinite — as if the chief deity of the Canaanite pantheon were suddenly elevated to the only one, the king of all the earth.

We can, of course, say that we associate numerical uniqueness with our particular God, Adonai, affirming here both 1) that there is only one God, and 2) that Adonai is

his (sic) name. On this view, however, attempts to name God in new ways or to broaden the range of imagery used for God are experienced as assaults on monotheism. If God is so singular as to necessitate identification with a particular image, other images must be assumed to refer to other deities.

There is another way to understand oneness, however, and that is as inclusiveness. In Marcia Falk's words, "The authentic expression of an authentic monotheism is not a singularity of image but an embracing unity of a multiplicity of images." Rather than being the chief deity in the pantheon, God includes the qualities and characteristics of the whole pantheon, with nothing remaining outside. God is all in all. This is the God who "forms light and creates darkness, who makes peace and creates everything," because there can be no power other than or in opposition to God who could possibly be responsible for evil. This is the God who is male and female, both and neither, because there is no genderedness outside of God that is not made in God's image. On this understanding of oneness, extending the range of images we use for God challenges us to find God in ever-new aspects of creation. Monotheism is about the capacity to glimpse the One in and through the changing forms of the many, to see the whole in and through its infinite images. "Hear O Israel": despite the fractured, scattered, and conflicted nature of our experience, there is a unity that embraces and contains our diversity and that connects all things to each other.

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וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-
לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדֶךָ.
וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה, אֲשֶׁר
אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם, עַל-לְבָבֶךָ.
וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ, וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם
בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתֶךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ,
וּבְשָׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמֶךָ. וּקְשַׁרְתָּם

4 You shall love Adonai your God with all your mind and body and strength. 5 Keep these words, which I command you today, in mind. 6 Instruct your children about them. 7 Use them when you sit at home and when you walk about, when you lie down and when you stand up. 8 Bind them to your hand as a sign and set them between your eyes as a symbol. 9 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

לְאוֹת עַל-יָדֶךָ, וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטָפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ,
וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל-מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתֶךָ, וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ.

MARC BRETTLER

"You shall love Adonai your God" The central, and most misunderstood, section of the *Sh'ma* is its commandment to love God fully and completely. As in the previous "You have loved us most lovingly" (see above) a particular kind of love is intended. In its current liturgical framework, Israel is the child returning appropriate love to the loving, caring father. As such, the passage is likely subsumed under the metaphor of God as father (e.g. Exod. 4:22; Deut. 32:6). But that metaphor is relatively rare in the Bible, and in any event, it is quite *(p. 101)*

odd to command a child to love a parent. It thus seems appropriate to understand this love in a different way.

The covenant of Deuteronomy arose originally within the context of the vassal-suzerain (dependent-overlord) treaties of the ancient Semitic world. (Indeed, the Hebrew word *b'rit* means not just "covenant" but "treaty" in some contexts.) Thus, Israel is God's vassal, and the commandments of Deuteronomy are obligations owed toward God, the overlord. In return, God as suzerain has treaty obligations toward the vassal, such as protection from third-party invasions.

These treaties customarily use the term "love." For example, the vassal treaties of the early-seventh-century B.C.E. Assyrian (northern Mesopotamian) king, Esarhaddon, which have significant similarities to Deuteronomy, call on the vassal to "love the crown prince designated Ashurbanipal, son of your lord, Esarhaddon, king of Assyria as you do your own lives." In fact, the main point of the text is that Ashurbanipal alone shall be recognized as king, an idea quite close to the initial verse of the *Sh'ma*.

"Love" here is therefore a technical term for acceptance of treaty obligations. In our case of Deuteronomy, the expected love is quite extreme. We are to "love" God with all of our "mind, body and strength"; express this love by keeping the commandments in mind always ("when you sit, walk about, lie down and stand up"); and instruct them to the next generation. We are expected also to surround body and house with reminders of them: "Bind them to your hand . . . and set them between your eyes . . . Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

The ancient near east had amulets, but these written signs, symbols or door-writings are not among them, since these have no protective power. They are to remind Israel, as vassal, that God is the overlord (see above, "You shall love Adonai your God"). The measures are intentionally extreme, in part because Deuteronomy was written to remind Israel not to imagine there were other deities as well as Adonai (see esp. 1 Kgs. 18:21). In addition, the *Sh'ma* makes the point that God is more powerful than other human political overlords, for God controls earthly kings.

The use of a political metaphor here is therefore subversive, undermining loyalty to human rulers, relative to God. It is God's commandments which must be fully obeyed.

DAVID ELLENSON

"You shall love" The major twentieth-century prayer books of American Reform Judaism — *The Union Prayer Book* and *Gates of Prayer* — follow the example set by David Einhorn's *Olath Tamid* from over a century ago, by including as their *Sh'ma* only the first of the three traditional paragraphs (Deut. 6:4–9), along with the conclusion of the third (Num. 15:41). In so doing, they affirmed only those parts of the *(p. 102)*

LAWRENCE A. HOFFMAN

THE REST OF DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9 NOW FOLLOWS.

DANIEL LANDES

"You shall love" Some congregations sing the entire *Sh'ma* or read it in unison. Either custom is proper, as long as it is not discordant or distracting.

"Today, in mind" We pause after "today" (*hayom*) so as not to imply that only "today" we keep the commandments "in mind."

"When you lie down and when you stand up" This verse refers to the time of reciting *Sh'ma*, not the position in which it is recited. The traditional practice is thus to sit, not stand. The *Tur* contrasts God's demand that we proclaim Him king with a similar order by earthly kings, who ask that their kingship be affirmed "while standing," as a sign of a person's servility.

The halakhic point of sitting is not sitting per se, but the absence of a requirement to stand. Thus, if we are *(p. 103)*

JOEL M. HOFFMAN

"You shall love" "Love" (*v'ahavta*) is functionally an imperative, even though grammatically a future verb. We maintain "shall" to attempt to capture the ancient style (ancient even for the Rabbis).

"Mind and body and strength" The Hebrew *levav, nefesh,* and *m'od* suggest that the Bible conceived of human-ness differently than we do. We divide ourselves into "mind," "body" and (perhaps) "soul," representing, respectively, our cognitive capacity, our physical matter and our holy essence. We also distinguish between thought *(p. 102)*

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DAVID ELLENSON

Sh'ma that they thought had been part of the original liturgy, and that, coincidentally, they believed with all their heart anyway: the Jewish community's wholehearted devotion to God and the central event in Jewish history — the Exodus from Egypt.

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JOEL M. HOFFMAN

(cognition) and feeling (emotion). The Bible, however, groups thought and feeling together under *levav*; soul and body together under *nefesh*; and perhaps physical strength or endurance under *m'od*. When *levav* (or *lev*, from the same root) refers to an organ, it is the heart but the heart is metaphorically akin to the English "mind." For example, when biblical characters "think," they say they have something "in *lev*" (see, e.g., Deut: 15:9) — roughly translatable as "said to himself," or, less idiomatically, "said in his mind." For something to be "on your *levav*" (below) is what we would call to "have it in mind." *Levav*, then, refers at once to emotion and to intellect, a conceptual combination that English lacks. *Nefesh*, most often translated here as "soul" (SSS, Birnbaum, SLC, FOP) or "breath" (KH) is used biblically the way we might use "person": Deut. 24:7 speaks of a "person who steals another person," using *ish* "man" in the first instance but *nefesh* in the second. Similarly, it is the *nefesh* that transgresses (Lev. 4:2) and eats (Lev. 7:27). Yet every creature, it seems, has (or is) a *nefesh*. God's covenant with Noah is established with every *nefesh* ("every living being"?) and the laws of *kashrut* forbid eating any "living *nefesh* in the water" (Lev 11:10). *Nefesh*, then, is paradigmatically a person, yet refers to that which people have in common with all animals. Neither "breath of life," nor "soul" captures this meaning. (We use "soul" with a vaguely similar notion of "person" in the English expression "not a soul.")

Furthermore, *nefesh* and *levav* together form an idiom in biblical Hebrew (here, Deut. 11:13, 11:18, and 13:4; Josh. 22:5 and Josh. 23:14 etc.), probably used to represent the entirety of human existence, much the way we use "mind and body," or sometimes, "body and soul" depending on the context, but always in order to mean "the whole person." In Joshua, the combined term "*nefesh* and *levav*" modifies both "to serve" and later "to know," suggesting that the connection between "love" here and "heart" is at most a play on words, and probably a coincidence of our modern understanding of these words. Accordingly, we use the common English phrase "mind and body" for the corresponding Hebrew "*levav* and *nefesh*."

M'odekha seems to have been tacked on here, since it is missing from Deut. 11:13, for instance, which follows. Similarly secondary, relative to "mind and body" is our English "strength." SSS, Birnbaum, SLC and FOP have "might"; GOP offers "being," KH "what you have" and Artscroll "your resources."

"In mind" *Levav*, translated here, as above, as "mind." The repetition of *levav* raises the interesting conjecture that this paragraph is a three-fold elaboration of the ways God

is to be loved: 1) keeping God's instruction in mind (representing *levav*); 2) teaching children or acting on them ourselves (perhaps what one does with the *nefesh*); and 3), associating them with hand, eye and doorpost (the *m'od*).

"Instruct your children about them" Not "teach"; "teach" is reserved below for a different verb. The Hebrew verb here (*v'shinantem*) derives from the root for "tooth," a connotation missed in the English translation. The frequently used adverb "diligently" would add little, and so is omitted here.

"Use them" The usual translation is "speak of them," from *v'dibarta bam*. The verb *v'dibarta* (from the root *d.b.r*) usually refers to the communicative aspect of language, in contrast to *amar*, the vocal aspect of language. For instance, the common phrase, *Vay'daber adonai el Moshe leimor*, usually translated, "God spoke to Moses, saying," is really, "God communicated to Moses, using speech to do so." But *d.b.r* does not take a *bet* before its object, whereas here, we have just that *bet* (*bam*, not *otam*). We assume that the *bet* is instrumental, giving us, "Communicate, using them [these words]," or equivalently, "Use them."

"When you sit at home . . . when you stand up" The four Hebrew words rendered by "sit," "walk," "lie down" and "stand" represent four postures, and ought to do so in English. "When you . . ." is used to create the possibility of mimicking the Hebrew parallel structure: thus, "when you sit, when you walk, when you lie down, when you stand up." Others prefer "rise (up)," but the emphasis here seems to be on bodily posture, not the act of rising.

"To your hand . . . between your eyes" Both "to your hand" and "between your eyes" are almost certainly idioms, and so might be better translated idiomatically in English ("keep them at hand and in sight") were it not for the (current, but probably not biblical) association between these phrases and *t'fillin*.

"As a symbol" Others, "frontlets." But for most readers "frontlets" is enigmatic. Is is not clear that the original intention was anything more than metaphoric.

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DANIEL LANDES

out walking when the time arrives to say *Sh'ma*, we need not sit down. We just halt momentarily, and say it standing. Even a worker up a tree just pauses from work. A driver in an automobile can say *Sh'ma* without stopping, as long as proper intent is present. We may not lie down, however, since lying face-down is servile, and lying face-up is arrogant.

"Bind them to your hand as a sign and set them between your eyes" Wearing *t'fillin* constitutes testimony to the *Sh'ma*'s doctrine. Traditionally, not to wear them is held to constitute self-indictment as giving false testimony. When reference is made to the

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arm, we touch the arm *t'fillin* (*t'fillin shel yad*); similarly, with the *t'fillin* on the forehead (*t'fillin shel rosh*). Then we kiss our fingertips.

The *t'fillin* are boxes that contain paragraphs from the Torah written by a scribe on parchment. They are considered two separate *mitzvot*, but a person fulfills the dual *mitzvah* by using only one, if a) only one is available, or b) in cases of physical disability, such as a paralyzed arm. Since they are "a sign" they are not worn on Shabbat and holidays which themselves are signs of the covenant between God and Israel. The wearing of *t'fillin* requires physical cleanliness and pure thoughts.

"Doorposts" "Doorposts" implies the *m'zuzah*, a cylinder attached to the upper right doorpost of the gates of the city, the outer doorways of our homes, and all residential rooms there. The first and second paragraphs of the *Sh'ma* are placed within it.

23

MARC BRETTLER

"If you carefully heed my commandments" With the commandments (or treaty stipulations) given in the first paragraph of the *Sh'ma*, we move on in the second paragraph to the implications of observing or not observing them. The reward *(p. 106)*

LAWRENCE A. HOFFMAN

WE ARRIVE AT THE SECOND BIBLICAL SECTION OF THE SH'MA: *DEUTERONOMY 11:31-21, KNOWN AS "ACCEPTANCE OF THE YOKE OF THE COMMANDMENTS"* (KABBALAT OL HAMITZVOT).

ELLIOT N. DORFF

"If you carefully heed my commandments" Abiding by God's commandments seems to guarantee reward; disobeying them incurs God's punishment. As the Rabbis themselves painfully noted, this poses the problem that in life "the righteous suffer and the evil prosper" (*tzaddik v'ra lo, rasha v'tov lo*). They consequently devised a variety of ways *(p. 107)*

[10]וְהָיָה אִם-שָׁמֹעַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל-
מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם
הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת-יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
וּלְעָבְדוֹ בְּכָל-לְבַבְכֶם וּבְכָל-
נַפְשְׁכֶם. וְנָתַתִּי מְטַר-אַרְצְכֶם
בְּעִתּוֹ יוֹרֶה וּמַלְקוֹשׁ וְאָסַפְתָּ
דְגָנֶךָ וְתִירֹשְׁךָ וְיִצְהָרֶךָ. [11]וְנָתַתִּי

[10]If you carefully heed my commandments, the ones I command you today, to love Adonai your God and worship Him with all your mind and body, then I shall grant your land's rain in its season, in the autumn and in the spring, that you might gather your grain, wine and oil. [11]I shall *(p. 106)*

DANIEL LANDES

"Today, to love" We pause after "today" (*hayom*) so as not to imply that we "love" God only "today."

JUDITH PLASKOW

"If you carefully heed my commandments . . ." The second paragraph of the *Sh'ma* asserts a connection precious to the Deuteronomist but disputed elsewhere in the Bible and contested by everyday experience: "As you sow, so shall you reap." Reward and punishment flow directly from human deserving; those who obey God prosper, and those who defy God perish. This theology of suffering — "for our sins we are punished" — has *(p. 109)*

DAVID ELLENSON

"If you carefully heed my commandments" The commentary in the present-day Reconstructionist *Kol Haneshamah* aptly describes the problem in this paragraph: Its detailed description of the "bountiful or *(p. 108)*

JOEL M. HOFFMAN

"I command you" Plural ("ye" or "y'all"), perhaps in contrast to the singular above. Here it is particularly unfortunate that Modern Standard English cannot convey this distinction, because the paragraph alternates oddly (and perhaps even in error) between singular and plural. *(p. 109)*