

Biblical Hebrew 101
Learning to Read Biblical Hebrew
Lesson 6 - supplement
לְשֵׁוּר ו
The Shema



Fellowshipping!

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!”
Psalm 133:1 ESV

The Shema

6.07 supplement *The Shema: first line of the Believer’s confession of YHVH*

6.08 supplement *Interesting Fact: the Shema*

שְׁמַע * יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד * :

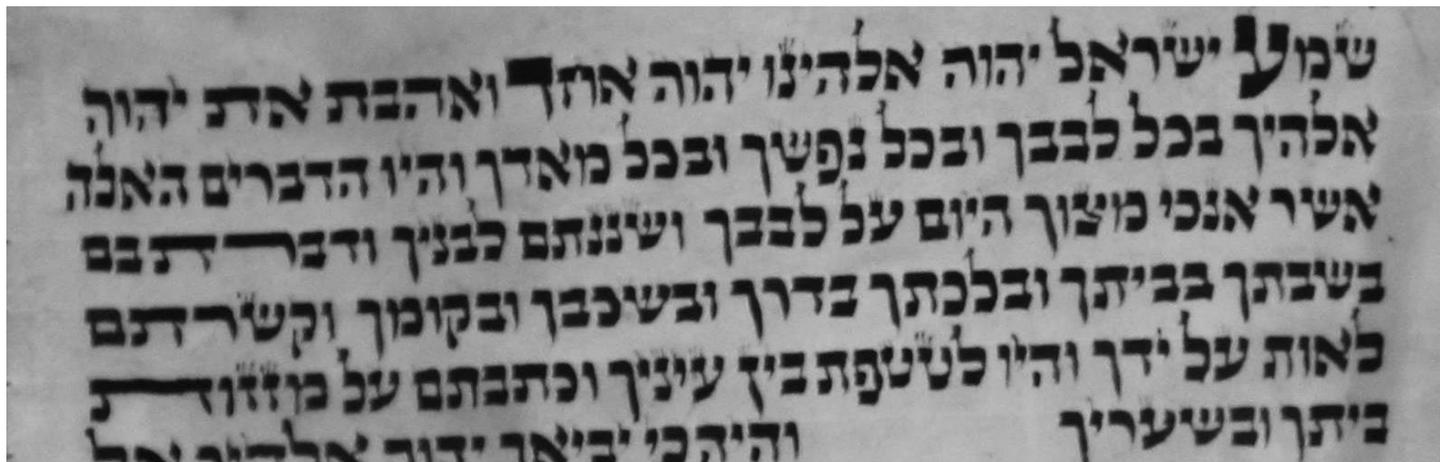
Words from the first line of the Shema, שְׁמַע (Deut 6:4. In Mark 12:29, Yeshua quotes this.)		
Hebrew	Translation	Transliteration
		Note: 1. Vocal shevas (as in the ׀ below) are written using very small letters (as in veh below) 2. Accented syllable is bolded
שְׁמַע	Hear (as in hear, <u>understand</u> & <u>obey</u>)	sheh- mah (commonly pronounced: sh' mah)
יִשְׂרָאֵל	Israel	Yees-rah- ehl
יהוה **	YHVH	YH VH (Yaveh or Adonai **)
אֱלֹהֵינוּ	our God	Eh-loh- hay -noo
יהוה **	YHVH	YH VH (Yahveh or Adonai **)
אֶחָד	one (in this context: one, as in together or unity)	eh- chahd

* Notice how the letters ayin ע and dalet ד are super-sized on the Torah Scroll picture below. (Virtually every kosher Scroll will have these 2 letters enlarged in the passage containing the Shema.)

Why? There are various explanations as to why these letters are enlarged.

- Some say these 2 letters form the word עֵד, which means *witness* (also, *testimony* & *evidence*) (Gen 31:50, etc), the Shema is a witness to the sovereignty of God and that our primary duty is to love God with our whole heart and whole being.
- Another thought since there are no vowel markings on the Scroll, עד could be עֵד which is *forever, eternity* (Is 57:15, etc). God's Word stands forever!

** This spelling, with these vowel markings, יהוה was never to be pronounced. Commonly HaShem or Adonai are substituted. In the Biblical Hebrew classes, we use this spelling יהוה and pronounce His Name, YahVeh (YHVH).



* Note the enlarged ע and ד. This is a picture of the Shema on the CFS Torah Scroll. This scroll was written in Romania in the 1930s during the early days of the Holocaust.

The Shema is similar the U.S Pledge of Allegiance. In that, the words of each represent more than the meaning of the individual words.

What did Yeshua say about the Shema?

²⁸Yeshua was asked a profound question: “What commandment is the foremost of all?” (Mark 12:28)

²⁹Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘HEAR, O ISRAEL! YHVH OUR GOD IS ONE YHVH; ³⁰AND YOU SHALL LOVE YHVH YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.’ ³¹” (Mark 12:29-30; Yeshua quotes Deut 6:4).

“The second is this, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ (Yeshua quotes Lev 19:18 NASB). There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:31).

Yeshua, all His Jewish disciples, Apostles, as well as Paul and James all recited the Shema! If our desire is to ‘do what Jesus did,’ why don’t all Believers regularly recite the Shema today?

The Shema needs to be understood in its entirety, based on the context of the Torah. The Shema is comprised of three parts found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41. Let us remember that we, as followers of Yeshua, are required follow in His footsteps, and to declare our allegiance.

Since the Shema points to the Father and Yeshua, everyone who repeats this creed is declaring allegiance to the Father and proclaiming their personal faith.

As you read the Shema, meditate on what our Messiah’s creed declares!

And remember “Yeshua is the Word (Torah) made flesh”

The Shema is the Confession of our faith:

The Shema (Deut. 6:4-5) is the confession of our faith & said by those in covenant with YHVH. When Yeshua was asked “of all the commandments which is the most important? ‘The most important one,’ answered Jesus [Yeshua], ‘is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, YHVH our God, YHVH is One. Love YHVH your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (Mark 12:28-31a NIV quotes Deut.6:4-5 NIV and Lev 19:18 NIV).

The Shema is the first prayer a Jewish child learns and the last prayer a dying person says. How much more should we, as believers, understand and confess that which Yeshua Himself stated was the most important commandment!”

Why did Daniel and why do we face east when saying the Shema?

When reciting the Shema, we face east toward God’s holy mountain, Zion, and the Temple. (Dan 6:10; Ps 5:7; 1Ki 8:29)