

# Biblical Hebrew 101

## *Learning to Read Biblical Hebrew*

### Lesson 6 - supplement

שְׁמַיִר ו

## The Shema



*Fellowshipping!*

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

### ***The Shema***

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

6.02 supplement Interesting Fact: the Shema

# שְׁמַע \* יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד \*

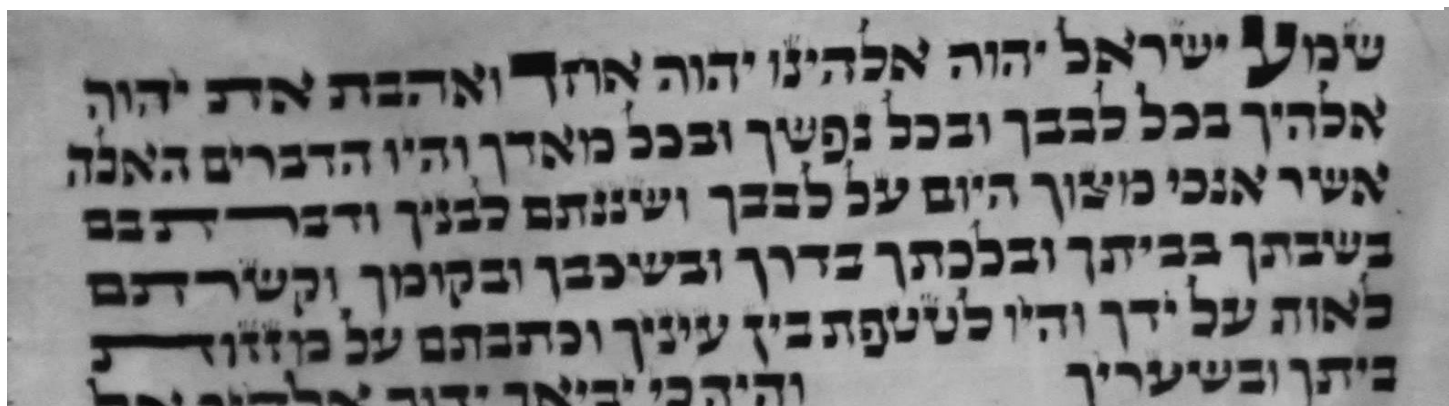
| Words from the first line of the Shema, שְׁמַע (Deut 6:4. In Mark 12:29, Yeshua quotes this.) |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Hebrew  | Translation  | Transliteration  |
|   |  | Note:<br>1. Vocal shevas (as in the ׀ below) are written using very small letters (as in <b>veh</b> below)<br>2. Accented syllable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

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

Why? Since there are no vowel markings on the Scroll, there are various explanations as to why these letters are enlarged.

- Some reason that these 2 letters (ayin ע and dalet ד) form the word עֵד, which means *witness* (also, *testimony & evidence*) (Gen 31:50, etc.). The Shema is indeed a witness to the sovereignty of God and that our primary duty is to love God with our whole heart and whole being.
- Others reason that, עד could be עֶד which is *forever, eternity* (Is 57:15, etc.). Truly, God's Word stands forever!

\*\* When vowels were added to the Biblical text, the vowel markings from names of God, including Adonai & Elohim, were overlayed onto יהוה. The intention was for the Name to never be said aloud. So, יהוה is often read as HaShem or Adonai. We have chosen to pronounce His Name, YahVeh (YHVH) and to spell יהוה with no vowels.



\* Note the enlarged ע and ד on picture above. This is a picture of the Shema on the CFS Torah Scroll, which 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?

<sup>28</sup>Yeshua was asked a profound question: “What commandment is the foremost of all?” (Mk 12:28)

<sup>29</sup>Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘HEAR, O ISRAEL! YHVH OUR GOD; YHVH IS ONE;’ <sup>30</sup>AND 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.’ <sup>31</sup> (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?

The Shema is comprised of three parts found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21 & Numbers 15:37-41. Let us remember that we, as followers of Yeshua, are instructed to follow in His footsteps, & 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 is 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 is 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 do we face east when saying the Shema?

Just as Daniel faced east, so we also face east toward God’s holy mountain (Zion) & the Temple when we recite the Shema. (Dan 6:10; Ps 5:7; 1Ki 8:29).