

## SHEMA YISRAEL

### **DEUT. 6:4 "HEAR, O ISRAEL: THE LORD IS OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE"**

Shema Yisrael: The first two words of its section in the Torah (Hebrew Bible).

This first verse is said to "Encapsulate the whole monotheistic essence of Judaism."

- The term "Shema" is used by extension to refer to the whole part of the daily prayers (Amidahs) as a Mitzot (Religious Commandment).
- Parents teach their children according to Deut. 6:6-9 Having them recite them before they go to bed at night and first thing in the morning at breakfast.
- As part of the scripture that is hidden in the Mezuzah (a small case) that is attached to the door posts of observant Jews, it is recited as they go out of their home and return.
- Many Jewish observers also touch the Mezuzah and then kiss their fingers that touched it as an expression of love and respect for God and his Mitzot (Commandments).
- The sections of Deut. 6:4-9, 11:13-21, and Numbers 15: 37-41 are read in the weekly Torah portions Va'Etchanan, Eikev, and Shlach, respectively.
- Finally, it is traditional for Jewish people to recite to the Shema Yisrael as their last words on their death bed. So it was for many of the martyrs, Jewish and Monotheistics during the European Inquisitions.
- Modern Kabbilistic Schools of the Hasidim, namely that of the Ari, teach that when you recite the last letter of the word "Ehad" (meaning one), you should intend to "die unto God" and become "one with Him.
- The first, pivotal words of Shema are, in the Hebrew: "Shema Yisrael YHWH Eloheinu YHWH Ehad."
- Rabbinic Judaism teaches that the Tetragrammaton, YHWH, is the ineffable and actual name of God, and as such, is NOT read aloud in the Shema, but is replaced with Adonai (Lord).
- For this reason, the Shema is recited aloud as:  
"Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Ehad "... Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One."
- Clearly, Jesus, when asked what was the greatest commandment, replied in the Gospel of Mark 12:29-30: "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."