

MT 6.9-10 ~ *Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

BD3: Line 2 (Response) – Shown in your children, your garbs, and your homes (DT 6.6-9)

The next section of the **DT 6** and **The Shema** continues to expand upon the principles stated simply, but profoundly above. One common mistake people make is trying to start by creating the emotion of love, and then expecting the actions of love to come from those feelings. But feelings are fleeting. Rather, God shows that our love for God is birthed out of and shown by our actions!

DT 6.6-9 ~ *And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

What did it mean to love God with all your heart? His teachings would live in their inner selves—always on their heart. **What did it mean to love God with all your soul?** Life was bound up in Him and His teachings—getting up and lying down (**The Shema’s** was pronounced twice a day)—ensuring that they’d continue through the lives of your children. **What did it mean to love God with all your mind and strength?** The Jews would wear phylacteries with scripture recorded within during their prayer across their heart and head and mount *mezuzh* (decorative cases with scripture recorded inside) on their doorpost. Rather, God is calling for them to live as though all their strength was dedicated to Him.

AP: Jesus shows its fulfillment in that we show our love for God through our treatment of others. We show God’s word is bound on our hearts when we give of ourselves to others, on our head when our thoughts are upon others, and on our hands when we do good to others. *The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (MK 12.31)* Ultimately, we show our trust and confidence in the oneness of God when it bears out in love, that bears out in our treatment of others.

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10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

CONCLUSION

While I don’t believe Christians should pray **The Shema** today, I do believe there is value in its message. After all, its largely nothing more than a repeating of the Scripture, itself—and there is nothing better than meditating upon the Word of God!

In this first section of **The Shema** we see the power of a God who is described clearly as one—a oneness that causes praise and appreciation of His majesty. And from that oneness is borne an all-encompassing love that is shown in our children, our garb, and our homes—in all that we are and have.

Next week, we’ll continue our look at **The Shema**—how God sought to make a mark on His people far deeper than the skin that begins with a acceptance of Him.

INVITATION

QUESTION: What can we learn from “the Shema”?

TRN TO DT 6

INTRODUCTION

ILL—Forming New Habits (it can be easy for us to fall into negative habits; but positive ones, however, seem to require a special effort; recommend focusing, rewarding success, setting reminders, and above all, being consistent) In many ways, this last one is the most important: if you’re going to change the way you live and behave, you need to be consistent. Making new habits is a lot easier if it’s something you do consistently: ideally, every day!

No one reminds me to take a shower, brush my teeth, or eat breakfast. **Why?** Because they are things I do every day, nearly without fail! **But what if we were to add to our habits not just cleanliness and eating, but communication with God, as well? What if we were to add a “daily prayer” to our repertoire?**

There are dozens of apps, websites, books, and videos out there focused on this exact thing: encouraging us to create a **“daily prayer”** routine. We find common calls to pray things like **“the Lord’s Prayer”**, or pre-written prayers made available by other devotional sites. I’d say I wonder what our Lord would say about such behaviors, but I believe he’s already told us: *“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” (MT 6.7-8)*

While thoughtless and repetitive prayers are justifiably warned against, there is something to be said for the value of improving our prayer life.

BACKGROUND – Its History

In some ways, our Jewish friends can seem so very close to us. After all: they have 2/3 of the holy writings we have—and, especially when speaking with the more orthodox members of the religion, we share many of the same priorities from a moral and even in many cases spiritual perspective. And yet, in other cases, it can feel like we are wholly different from one another—literally speaking a different language from one another.

One example of this is found in their daily prayer: called *The Shema* (so-called after the Hebrew word for **“Hear”**, the first word of the prayer), it is an ancient custom. While it wasn’t taught in the Old Testament, it contains many passages from the Old Testament, and dates back all the way to the 1st Century BC. That means that when Jesus came to the temple during His visits as a child and adult, it was likely actively being practiced at the time.

That makes **The Shema** of unique interest: **how often do we have prayers or songs or other such spiritual practices that date back so far—even to the era of our Lord, Christ?** Tonight, I’d like for us to take a look at *The Shema*—not as a lesson of a practice we should adopt, today, but as a reminder of the core Biblical principles that should bind us even today!

BD1: Line 1 - The Lord is One (DT 6.4)

וְאֵדָּהּ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלֻכּוֹתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד - *She-ma yisrael, adonai eloheinu, adonai echad*
DT 6.4 ~ *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.*

EX: Commonly recited with ones hand placed over ones eyes, this is a simple, but controversial passage. For remember, when these words were first written, the idea of a single god even within a single nation or religion was uncommon. All around them—from Egypt to Philistia to Babylonia—were nations that rose, raged, and fell under the assumption of a panoply of gods. And this didn't end in the years, BC.

AC 17.22-28 ~ *So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. ²³ For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. ²⁶ And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, ²⁷ that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, ²⁸ for "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we are indeed his offspring."*

EX: I'm not going to say that there were more gods than men in Athens, but let's just say the balance was a lot closer to 1:1 than it should have been. But to Paul and to Moses, the message was simple: as Jesus himself quoted in **MK 12.29** ~ *"The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.*

JUDAISM/The Shema/The Lord is One

PH 2.9-11 ~ *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

AP: The Jewish people have largely abandoned this—not seeking to convert; instead, expecting some other means by which God will be acknowledged as **"one"** in all the earth. There are countless **"gods"** in the world. And yet, the call today is still the same as done in the morning and evening prayers in the Jewish household:

שְׁמַי יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲדֹנָיֵינוּ, אֲדֹנָיֵי אֶחָד - *She-ma yisrael, adonai eloheinu, adonai echad*

DT 6.1 ~ *"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.*

BD2: Line 1 (Response) – Blessed Be His Kingdom (DT 6.5-9)

בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלָכּוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד - *(whispered) bah-rookh shem ki-vohd mahl-khoo-toh li-oh-lahm vah-ehd.*

Treated as a response to **DT 6.4**, the Jewish worshipper would then whisper in response, **"Blessed be the name of the glory of His kingdom forever and ever."** The idea is simple: God is great—God is singular. And the natural response to one of His people to His greatness should be humble worship.

EX 3.1-6 ~ *Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. ³ And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." ⁴ When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵ Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are*

standing is holy ground." ⁶ And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

AP: We have lost reverence for His power. We recognize **"What a Friend We Have in Jesus"**, but have lost recognition that **"Our God is an Awesome God!"**

RV 1.12-18 ~ *Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵ his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. ¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.*

BD3: Line 2 – Our Responsibility: You Shall Love the Lord with All Your Heart, Soul, Mind, and Might (DT 6.5)

וְהָיָה אִתְּךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לֵבְךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ - *Vah-hahv-tah ayt ah-doh-noi eh-loh-heh-khah bi-khohl li-vahv-khah, oov-khohl nahf-shkhah, oov-khohl moh-deh-khah.*

DT 6.5 ~ *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*

EX: This is a heady concept. People talk about the size of the universe and how much a trillion dollars is, and it seems near incomprehensible. When we think of His power, His majesty, and His oneness, it can result in a paralysis: **what ever can we do when confronted with a God so great and mighty and all-encompassing?**

Jesus recognizes this when giving the answer to the scribe who asked him in **MK 12.28b** ~ *"Which commandment is the most important of all?"* This is why, after answering that we recognize the first part of the Shema: that God is one, He continued with the next part of the verse—a reminder that we need to show that God is one in how we live: *And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.* ³¹ *The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."* (**MK 12.30-31**)

EX: They were to love Him with all their inner thoughts and feelings (their heart), their very life force (their soul), and every strength they possess (intellectual, physical, and financial).