

Shema: Always and Forever

Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

1. דברים ו:ד'-ט'

(ד) שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' | אֶחָד: (ה) וְאֶהְיֶה אֵת ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ כְּלֵל־לְבָבָהּ וּכְלֵל־נַפְשָׁהּ וּכְלֵל־מְאֹדָהּ: (ו) וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם עַל־לְבָבְךָ: (ז) וְשָׁנַנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ: (ח) וְקִשְׂרָתָם לְאָזְנוֹת עַל־יְדֶיךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ: (ט) וְכָתַבְתָּם עַל־מְזוּזֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ: (ס)

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

(4) Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. (5) You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (6) Take to heart these instructions with which I charge you this day. (7) Impress them upon your children. Recite them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up. (8) Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead; (9) inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

2. מנחות צ"ט ב:י"א-י"ב

המכניסים עומדים בצפון ופניהם לדרום והמוציאין עומדים בדרום ופניהם בצפון אלו מושכין ואלו מניחין וטפחו של זה כנגד טפחו של זה שנאמר (שמות כה, ל) לפני תמיד ר' יוסי אומר אפילו אלו נוטלין ואלו מניחין אף היא היתה תמיד

Menachot 99b:11-12

Those bringing the new shewbread **into** the Sanctuary **stand in the north and their faces are to the south, and those removing** the old shewbread **stand in the south and their faces are to the north. These priests draw** the old shewbread from the Table **and those** priests **place** the new shewbread on the Table, **and for each handbreadth of this** old shewbread that is removed from the Table a **handbreadth of that** new shewbread is placed upon the Table, so that the Table is never without loaves upon it, **as it is stated:** “And you shall set upon the Table shewbread **before Me always**” (Exodus 25:30). **Rabbi Yosei says: Even** if these priests were to **remove** the shewbread from the Table entirely, **and** only afterward **those** priests were to **place** the new shewbread upon the Table, this **too would** fulfill the requirement that the shewbread **always** be on the Table. It is unnecessary to ensure the uninterrupted presence of the shewbread upon the Table, as long as it does not remain a single night without shewbread upon it.

3. מנחות צ"ט ב:ט"ו-י"ז

גמ' תניא רבי יוסי אומר אפילו סילק את הישנה שחרית וסידר את החדשה ערבית אין בכך כלום אלא מה אני מקיים לפני תמיד שלא ילין שלחן בלא לחם אמר ר' אמי מדבריו של ר' יוסי נלמוד אפילו לא שנה אדם אלא פרק אחד שחרית ופרק אחד ערבית קיים מצות (יהושע א, ח) לא ימוש (את) ספר התורה הזה מפיו אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יוחי אפילו לא קרא אדם אלא קרית שמע שחרית וערבית

Menachot 99b:15-17

GEMARA: The mishna teaches that according to Rabbi Yosei, even if the priest first removes the old shewbread entirely, and only then places the new shewbread upon the Table, this fulfills the requirement that the shewbread always be on the Table. Moreover, **it is taught** in a *baraita* that **Rabbi Yosei says: Even** if the priest **removed the old** shewbread on the **morning** of Shabbat, **and arranged the new** shewbread toward **evening**, there is **nothing wrong with that. Rather, how do I realize** the meaning of the verse: “And you shall set upon the Table shewbread **before Me always**” (Exodus 25:30)? This means **that the Table should not be left overnight without bread** upon it. The *baraita* teaches that according to Rabbi Yosei, even if the old shewbread remained on the Table for a short while in the morning, and the new shewbread was placed on the Table toward evening, and even though it did not reside constantly on the Table, this fulfills the requirement that the shewbread should always be on the Table. **Rabbi Ami says: From Rabbi Yosei’s statement we may learn that even if a person learned only one chapter of the Mishna in the morning and one chapter of the Mishna in the evening, he has thereby fulfilled the mitzva of: “This Torah scroll shall not depart from your mouth, and you shall contemplate in it day and night, that you may take heed to do according to all that is written in it, for then you shall make your ways prosperous, and then you shall have good success” (Joshua 1:8). Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai: Even if a person recited only the recitation of Shema in the morning and in the evening, he has fulfilled the mitzva of: “This Torah scroll shall not depart from your mouth.” And it is prohibited to state this matter in the presence of ignoramuses [amei ha’aretz], as they are likely to get the impression that there is no need to study Torah beyond this. And Rava says: On the contrary, it is a mitzva to state this matter in the presence of ignoramuses, as they will realize that if merely reciting the Shema leads to such a great reward, all the more so how great is the reward of those who study Torah all day and night.**

4. אבודרהם, סדר תפילות החול, קריאת שמע וברכותיה ל"א

(לא) עוד תמצא עשרה מצות עשה קבועות בפרשה זו אחת קבלת עול מלכות שמים שנאמ' ה' אלקינו, שנית ייחוד השם שנאמ' ה' אחד, שלישית אהבת השם שנאמ' ואהבת את ה', רביעית תלמוד תורה שנאמ' ודברת במ, חמישית למוד בנים שנא' ושננתם לבניך, ששית ושביעית לקרוא ק"ש שחרית וערבית שנא' ובשכבך ובקומך, שמינית ותשיעית תפילין של יד ושל ראש שנא' וקשרתם לאות על ידיך והיו לטוטפות בין עיניך, עשירית מזוזה שנאמ' וכתבתם על מזוזות ביתך. עוד תמצא ראשי הגוף נזכרים בה שמע לאזנים, טוטפות לעינים, ודברת ללשון, ושננתם לשינים, וקשרתם וכתבתם לידיים ימין ושמאל, ובלכתך לרגלים, והלב והנפש, ובכלל הנפש האף שבה משיב הרוח, ואזהרה מיצר רע שנא' בשבתך בביתך ולא בבית רעך.

Abudarham, Weekday Prayers, Blessings on the Shema 31

...

5. The Framework of the Shema, Rav Michael Hattin, <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/framework-shema>

The Theme of Constancy as Expressed in the Shema's Observances

Examining its motifs more closely, a dominant theme emerges. God's oneness is tempered by the command to love Him, but these elemental ideas only constitute the first two verses of the Shema. What follows are four verses that together stress a single idea: constancy. Thus, we are enjoined to place 'these things' upon our hearts, to repeatedly teach them to our children, to speak of them always, to 'tie' them upon our hands and between our eyes, and to inscribe them upon our door posts.

Teaching One's Children

Significantly, tradition discerns at least four separate ritual activities that are associated with these verses. (1) "You shall repeat them to your children" refers to the obligation to instruct one's children in the laws and observances of the Torah. Remarkably, however, the Hebrew word used here for 'teach,' 'veShiNaNtam,' comes from a root associated with repetition. By extension, it is occasionally used as a verb to describe the act of sharpening or whetting a blade. In other words, the type of instruction of which this command speaks cannot be accomplished in a single lesson (inspiring though it may be and then promptly forgotten), for the pedagogical goal of the 'Shema' is to foster the discipline of constant awareness and unceasing attentiveness. For its message to be driven home, its tenets must be taught, repeated, and stated again. Living teachings, those that are intended to guide our lives, must be learned and learned well, but then must be memorized and retained so that they become part and parcel of our very fiber.

Self-instruction and the Recitation of the Shema

(2) " Speak of them when you dwell in your home, when you travel upon the way, when you lie down to sleep and when you arise." This phrase contains an amplification of the command concerning instruction considered above. This time, however, the teaching is to be directed primarily towards the self, and must also be all encompassing. There is no forum in which the words of the Torah are to be considered out of place. They are to be learned at home and abroad, before one retires for the night and immediately when one arises. This is of course an emphatic way of stating 'ALWAYS.' A similar formulation occurs in the Book of Yehoshua, when God instructs Yehoshua to remain cognizant of the Torah's teachings at all times:

"Be but strong and very courageous to carefully fulfill all of the teaching that Moshe My servant commanded you. Turn neither to the right nor to the left, in order that you will be successful in all of your endeavors. This Book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth, for you shall meditate upon it day and night, in order that you shall be careful to fulfill all that is written in it, for only then shall you be successful in your efforts" (Yehoshua/Joshua 1:7-8).

At the same time, the expression "when you lie down to sleep and when you arise" was understood to indicate a specific obligation to recite the words of the 'Shema' twice daily, at nightfall and at daybreak. There is much discussion in the early sources concerning the various elements and details of this command, but the basic requirement is straightforward enough: recite the words of this section twice a day, every day. Recite them once in the morning, and repeat them again at night. Let not a single day of your life go by without stating them.

Again, the ability to successfully integrate the content of the instruction is made a function of its mode of transmission. How the teaching is communicated is, in this case, as important as the teaching itself.

The Ritual of the 'Tefillin'

(3) "You shall tie them as a sign upon your hand and place them between your eyes" is a somewhat obscure verse that the Oral Tradition asserts refers to the command concerning the donning of Tefillin. The Tefillin consist of two small almost identical leather boxes containing a selection of Scriptural sections, including the Shema. One of these boxes is tied upon the arm, and the other is fastened on the head and centered. They are typically worn during the weekday morning service, but can be worn any time of the day. The Torah refers to them on four separate occasions: Shemot 13:9 and 13:16 where they are introduced as commemorations of the Exodus, and Devarim 6:8 and 11:18 where they are presented as constant reminders. Of course, the connection between these two groupings is obvious enough, for the Torah instructs us to remember the Exodus always.

Often, however, the above-quoted phrase was misinterpreted as expressing nothing more than a poignant metaphor. Such was the position of the Karaites, a sect founded in the 8th century that won many adherents during the following few hundred years, and whose creed was the rejection of 'Rabbinic' interpretations of the Biblical text. They explained these words, as well as the succeeding injunction concerning the doorposts, to refer to a non-specific command to be always aware of the words of the Torah. Based upon similar linguistic usages from the Book of Mishle/Proverbs that speak of 'wearing' words of instruction as a beautiful ornament around the head and neck (1:9), or 'tying' them around the neck and heart or 'engraving' them upon the heart (3:3, 6:21), the Karaites understood that the Torah here enjoins us to never forget the message of the Shema, AS IF they were tied upon our hands, placed between our eyes, or written upon our doorposts.

Now, it is the case that the Rashbam (12th century, France) explains in his commentary on Sefer Shemot (12:9) that the deep INTENT of this commandment is to indeed foster the sentiments of which the Karaites spoke. In glaring contrast to their rejection of the Oral Tradition, however, he maintains that the means of achieving that intent is through the fulfillment of the observance of the Tefillin. Significantly though, a more comfortable agreement between this all-embracing intent and the seemingly more limited ritual observance existed during the times of the Mishna and Talmud, when the Tefillin were often worn all day long. In fact, even today, there are pious individuals who fill their days with study, teaching, and prayer, and don the Tefillin constantly.

The ritual command of the Tefillin can therefore be understood as an integral part of this same rubric of constancy suggested by the Shema's larger framework. The Tefillin are worn as part of our daily attire and impress upon us the Shema's profound truth in tangible and substantial form.

The Observance of the 'Mezuza'

(4) "You shall write them upon the door posts ('mezuzot') of your home and upon your gates" is the final injunction of the section. It is understood as a command to inscribe the words of the Shema as well as of another

similar section ('VeHaya im shamo' – Devarim 11:13-21) upon a small piece of parchment, which is then rolled up and secured to the doorpost. Here, it is the home of the Jew that is provided with a constant reminder of God's teaching. According to traditional interpretation, almost all of the rooms of one's dwelling must be provided with a 'mezuzah,' excepting bathrooms and other similar areas. The mezuzah is fastened at approximately eye-height and is therefore an unavoidable visual cue when one enters or leaves a room. It is as if all of our home activities are lived in the presence of the Shema's instruction, as if no part of our private lives can be lived detached from its overarching message, as if entry, exit and dwelling can become Godly pursuits.

We have seen that the underlying theme of the Shema is the perpetual and ceaseless recognition of the Torah's instruction and teaching. This has found expression in requirements to learn, to teach, to wear a tangible reminder upon one's body, and to mark our homes with its message. There remain, of course, the two preliminary principles that introduce the Shema: God's Oneness and the command to love Him.

God's Oneness and the Command to Love

The Oneness of God is Judaism's greatest innovation and the foundation upon which all else depends. No idea of an Absolute Creator is possible in its absence. No concept of Divine incorporeality can exist without oneness, for perfect oneness is indivisible but all material bodies are composed of parts. God cannot be Absolute and Transcendent if He has material form, for all matter has limits of dimension, and all things concrete exist in time. The notion of a Perfect Being, Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent, Eternal and Everlasting, necessarily depends upon an acknowledgement of God's utter immateriality and ineffable oneness, as does the corollary of an absolute moral code. Oneness is at once the Torah's most profound as well as its most inaccessible and unfathomable concept concerning God.

The commandment to love Him with all of one's heart, soul and might seems, at first glance, equally unachievable. How are we to approach, let alone revere and love, a God so supreme and remote from our material and mortal lives? What common language do we share with a Being that embraces and transcends not only our individual or collective lives, not only this planet or the solar system, not only our constellation or the galaxy, but the very Universe itself?

The Way to Find God

The Shema seems to raise uncomfortable questions that we are incapable of ever truly resolving. To only meditate at length on its profound and utterly abstract concepts is to live a life of frustration, for material beings can scarcely begin to conceive of utter immateriality, and mortal man can never truly fathom eternity. It is for this reason that these two related concepts of Oneness and love introduce the following verses that emphasize constant and concrete activities. There is a way to begin to comprehend the mystery of God's grandeur and to experience His ethereal but real presence, and it is through the recognition of our material lives – our children, our minds, our bodies, our homes.

God's Oneness and the command to love are indeed profound ideas, and we are obligated to utilize our analytical faculties and intelligence to ponder them and to attempt to comprehend them. Superficial pronouncements of doctrine and shallow rote declarations are anathema to the Torah's oft-repeated injunction to study and to learn. At the same time, though, we must not be detached from the material realities that bind us to worldly concerns and hold most of our attention.

The injunctions of learning, teaching, Tefillin and mezuzah provide a short list of man's most material concerns and most time-consuming pursuits. We spend countless hours with our children, with our thoughts, with the care of ourselves and with our homes. Constantly infuse those things with an awareness of God, unceasingly impress them with a sensitivity to His presence, never let the life experiences that they encompass be devoid of His teaching, and then the Ineffable will no longer seem so unapproachable, and the Absolute will suddenly be near.

"These things that I command you this day shall be upon your heart" – The Sifre (Chapter 33) explains: 'this verse enjoins upon us to love God, but how shall I love the Omnipresent? The section therefore continues: "These things that I command you this day shall be upon your heart," to suggest that by learning Torah and fulfilling its commands one comes to recognize the One Who by His word brought the Universe into being.'

6. Rabbi Shimon Shwab on Prayer, page 340-342

The Gemara, in three narratives to which we shall refer, illustrates for us that our *Chachamim* considered these three *mitzvos* to be absolutely vital to the very existence of our individual and national life.

7. מנחות צ"ט ב:ט"ו-י"ז

גמ' תניא רבי יוסי אומר אפילו סילק את הישנה שחרית וסידר את החדשה ערבית אין בכך כלום אלא מה אני מקיים לפני תמיד שלא ילין שלחן בלא לחם אמר ר' אמי מדבריו של ר' יוסי נלמוד אפילו לא שנה אדם אלא פרק אחד שחרית ופרק אחד ערבית קיים מצות (יהושע א, ח) לא ימוש (את) ספר התורה הזה מפיד אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יוחי אפילו לא קרא אדם אלא קרית שמע שחרית וערבית קיים לא ימוש ודבר זה אסור לאומרו בפני עמי הארץ ורבא אמר מצוה לאומרו בפני עמי הארץ

Menachot 99b:15-17

GEMARA: The mishna teaches that according to Rabbi Yosei, even if the priest first removes the old shewbread entirely, and only then places the new shewbread upon the Table, this fulfills the requirement that the shewbread always be on the Table. Moreover, **it is taught** in a *baraita* that **Rabbi Yosei says: Even** if the priest **removed the old** shewbread on the **morning** of Shabbat, **and arranged the new** shewbread toward **evening**, there is **nothing** wrong **with that. Rather, how do I realize** the meaning of the verse: "And you shall set upon the Table shewbread **before Me always**" (Exodus 25:30)? This means **that the Table should not be left overnight without bread** upon it. The *baraita* teaches that according to Rabbi Yosei, even if the old shewbread remained on the Table for a short while in the morning, and the new shewbread was placed on the Table toward evening, and even though it did not reside constantly on the Table, this fulfills the requirement that the shewbread should always be on the Table. **Rabbi Ami says: From Rabbi Yosei's statement we may learn that even if a person learned only one chapter of the Mishna in the morning and one chapter of the**

Mishna in the evening, he has thereby fulfilled the mitzva of: “This Torah scroll shall not depart from your mouth, and you shall contemplate in it day and night, that you may take heed to do according to all that is written in it, for then you shall make your ways prosperous, and then you shall have good success” (Joshua 1:8). **Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai:** Even if a person recited only the recitation of *Shema* in the morning and in the evening, he has fulfilled the mitzva of: “This Torah scroll shall not depart from your mouth.” **And it is prohibited to state this matter in the presence of ignoramuses [amei ha’aretz],** as they are likely to get the impression that there is no need to study Torah beyond this. **And Rava says:** On the contrary, it is a mitzva to state this matter in the presence of ignoramuses, as they will realize that if merely reciting the *Shema* leads to such a great reward, all the more so how great is the reward of those who study Torah all day and night.

8. ברכות ס"א ב:ה'-ט'

“ואהבת את ה' אלהיך”. תניא, רבי אליעזר אומר: אם נאמר “בכל נפשך”, למה נאמר “בכל מאדך”? ואם נאמר “בכל מאדך”, למה נאמר “בכל נפשך”? אלא אם יש לך אדם שגופו חביב עליו מממונו — לכה נאמר “בכל נפשך”. ואם יש לך אדם שממונו חביב עליו מגופו — לכה נאמר “בכל מאדך”. רבי עקיבא אומר: “בכל נפשך” אפילו נוטל את נפשך. תנו רבנן: פעם אחת גזרה מלכות הרשעה שלא יעסקו ישראל בתורה. בא פפוס בן יהודה ומצאו לרבי עקיבא שהיה מקהיל קהלות ברבים ועוסק בתורה. אמר לו: עקיבא אי אתה מתירא מפני מלכות? אמר לו: אמשול לך משל, למה הדבר דומה — לשיעל שהיה מהלך על גב הנהר, וראה דגים שהיו מתקבצים במקום למקום. אמר להם: מפני מה אתם בורחים? אמרו לו: מפני רשות שמביאין עלינו בני אדם. אמר להם: רצונכם שתעלו ליבשה, ונדור אני ואתם, כשם שדורו אבותי עם אבותיכם? אמרו לו: אתה הוא שאומרים עליך פקח שבחיות?! לא פקח אתה, אלא טפש אתה! ומה במקום חיותנו, אנו מתיראין, במקום מיתנו — על אחת כמה וכמה. אף אנחנו עכשיו שאנו יושבים ועוסקים בתורה, לשפתוב בה: “כי הוא תיך וארץ ימך”, כה, אם אנו הולכים ומבטלים ממנה — על אחת כמה וכמה! אמרו: לא היו ימים מועטים, עד שתפסוהו לרבי עקיבא ותבשוהו בבית האסורים, ותפסו לפפוס בן יהודה ותבשוהו אצלו. אמר לו: פפוס, מי הביאך לכאן? אמר לו: אשריך רבי עקיבא שנתפסת על דברי תורה. אוי לו לפפוס שנתפס על דברים בטלים. בשעה שהוציאו את רבי עקיבא להריגה זמן קריאת שמע היה, והיו סורקים את בשרו במסרקות של ברזל, והיה מקבל עליו עול מלכות שמים. אמרו לו תלמידיו: רבינו, עד כאן?! אמר להם: כל ימי הייתי מצטער על פסוק זה “בכל נפשך” אפילו נוטל את נשמתך. אמרת: מתי יבא לידי ואקיימנו, ועכשיו שבא לידי, לא אקיימנו? הנה מאריך ב’אחד’, עד שיצאתה נשמתו ב’אחד’. יצתה בת קול ואמרה: “אשריך רבי עקיבא שיצאה נשמתו באחד”.

Berakhot 61b:5-9

We learned in our mishna the explanation of the verse: “**And you shall love the Lord your God** with all your heart and all your soul and all your might” (Deuteronomy 6:5). This was elaborated upon when **it was taught in a baraita: Rabbi Eliezer says: If it is stated: “With all your soul,” why does it state: “With all your might”?** Conversely, **if it stated: “With all your might,” why does it state: “With all your soul”?** Rather, this means that **if one’s body is dearer to him than his property, therefore it is stated: “With all your soul”;** one must give his soul in sanctification of God. **And if one’s money is dearer to him than his body, therefore it is stated: “With all your might”;** with all your assets. **Rabbi Akiva says: “With all your soul” means: Even if God takes your soul.** The Gemara relates at length how Rabbi Akiva fulfilled these directives. **The Sages taught: One time, after the bar Kokheva rebellion, the evil empire of Rome decreed that Israel may not engage in the study and practice of Torah. Pappos ben Yehuda came and found Rabbi Akiva, who was convening assemblies in public and engaging in Torah study. Pappos said to him: Akiva, are you not afraid of the empire? Rabbi Akiva answered him: I will relate a parable. To what can this be compared? It is like a fox walking along a riverbank when he sees fish gathering and fleeing from place to place.**

The fox said to them: From what are you fleeing?

They said to him: We are fleeing from the nets that people cast upon us.

He said to them: Do you wish to come up onto dry land, and we will reside together just as my ancestors resided with your ancestors?

The fish said to him: **You are the one of whom they say, he is the cleverest of animals? You are not clever; you are a fool. If we are afraid in the water, our natural habitat which gives us life, then in a habitat that causes our death, all the more so.**

The moral is: **So too, we Jews, now that we sit and engage in Torah study, about which it is written: “For that is your life, and the length of your days” (Deuteronomy 30:20), we fear the empire to this extent; if we proceed to sit idle from its study, as its abandonment is the habitat that causes our death, all the more so will we fear the empire. The Sages said: Not a few days passed until they seized Rabbi Akiva and incarcerated him in prison, and seized Pappos ben Yehuda and incarcerated him alongside him. Rabbi Akiva said to him: Pappos, who brought you here? Pappos replied: Happy are you, Rabbi Akiva, for you were arrested on the charge of engaging in Torah study. Woe unto Pappos who was seized on the charge of engaging in idle matters. The Gemara relates: When they took Rabbi Akiva out to be executed, it was time for the recitation of *Shema*. And they were raking his flesh with iron combs, and he was reciting *Shema*, thereby accepting upon himself the yoke of Heaven. His students said to him: Our teacher, even now, as you suffer, you recite *Shema*? He said to them: All my days I have been troubled by the verse: With all your soul, meaning: Even if God takes your soul. I said to myself: When will the opportunity be afforded me to fulfill this verse? Now that it has been afforded me, shall I not fulfill it? He prolonged his uttering of the word: One, until his soul left his body as he uttered his final word: One. A voice descended from heaven and said: Happy are you, Rabbi Akiva, that your soul left your body as you uttered: One.**

9. שבת מ"ט א:ז-ח'

ואמאי קרי ליה "בעל כנפים"? — שפעם אחת גזרה מלכות רומי הרשעה שמד על ישראל שכל המניח תפילין ינקרו את מוחו, והיה אלישע מניחם ויוצא לשוק. ראהו קסדור אחד רץ מפניו ורץ אחריו. וכינון שהגיע אצלו נטלן מראשו ואחזן בידו. אמר לו: מה זה בידך? אמר לו: כנפי יונה. פשט את ידו ונמצאו כנפי יונה. לפיכך קורין אותו "אלישע בעל כנפים". ומאי שנא כנפי יונה משאר עופות? משום דאמתיל כנסת ישראל ליונה, שנאמר: "כנפי יונה נחפה בכסף וגו'" — מה יונה כנפיה מגינות עליה, אף ישראל מצות מגינות עליהן.

Shabbat 49a:7-8

The Gemara asks: **And why did they call Elisha Man of Wings? Because on one occasion the evil kingdom of Rome issued a decree against Israel that, as punishment, they would pierce the brain of anyone who dons phylacteries.** Nevertheless, **Elisha would don them and defiantly go out to the marketplace.** One day, **an official [kasdor] who was appointed to enforce the decree saw him; Elisha ran away from him, and the official ran after him. When the official reached him, Elisha removed the phylacteries from his head and held them in his hand.** The officer asked him: **What is that in your hand? Elisha said to him:** It is merely a **dove's wings.** A miracle was performed: **He opened his hand, and, indeed, it was found to be a dove's wings. Therefore, in commemoration of this miracle, they would call him Elisha, Man of Wings.** The Gemara asks: **And what is different about doves' wings from those of other birds that led Elisha to say that he had doves' wings in his hand? The Gemara answers: Because the congregation of Israel is likened to a dove, as it is stated: “You shall shine as the wings of a dove covered with silver and her pinions with yellow gold” (Psalms 68:14). Just as this dove, only its wings protect it and it has no other means of protection, so too the Jewish**

people, only mitzvot protect them.

10. דברים י"א:י"ג

(יג) והיה אם-שמעו תשמעו אל-מצותי אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום לאהבה את-ה' אלהיכם ולעבדו בכל-לבבכם ובכל-נפשכם:

Deuteronomy 11:13

(13) If, then, you obey the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day, loving the LORD your God and serving Him with all your heart and soul,

11. רש"י על דברים י"א:י"ג:ה'

(ה) ולעבדו בכל לבבכם. עבודה שהיא בלב, וזו היא תפלה, שהתפלה קרויה עבודה, שנאמר "אלקו די אנת פלח לה בתדירא" (דניאל ו'). וכי יש פלחן בכבל? אלא על שהיה מתפלל שנאמר (שם) "וכניו פתיחו לה וגו'"; וכן בדרך הוא אומר (תהילים קמ"א) "תכון תפלתי קטרת לפניו":

Rashi on Deuteronomy 11:13:5

(5) AND TO SERVE HIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART — i.e. to serve Him with a service that is in the heart: that is prayer, for prayer is termed service (עבודה), as it is said, (Daniel 6:17) “Thy God whom thou servest continually”. But was there service (i.e. sacrificial service, the technical term for which is עבודה) in Babylon? But the term is used because he offered prayer there, as it is said, (Daniel 6:11) “Now his windows were open [in his upper chamber towards Jerusalem and he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed]”. And so, too, it states in the case of David (Psalms 141:2): “Let my prayer be set forth as incense before Thee” (incense being part of the sacrificial service) (Sifrei Devarim 41:25-27).

12. משנה ברכות ה':א'

(א) אין עומדין להתפלל אלא מתוך פחד ראש. תמידים הראשונים היו שוהים שעה אחת ומתפללים, כדי שיכוננו את לבם למקום. אפלו המלך שואל בשלמו, לא ישיבנו. ואפלו נחש כרוך על עקבו, לא יפסיק:

Mishnah Berakhot 5:1

(1) One should not stand up to say Tefillah except in a reverent state of mind. The pious men of old used to wait an hour before praying in order that they might direct their thoughts to God. Even if a king greets him [while praying] he should not answer him: even if a snake is wound round his heel he should not stop.

אפילו המלך שואל בשלומו לא ישיבנו. אמר רב יוסף, לא שנו אלא למלכי ישראל, אבל למלכי אומות העולם — פוסק. מיתבי: המתפלל וראה אגס בא פנגדו, ראה קרון בא פנגדו — לא יהא מפסיק, אלא מקצר ועולה! לא קשיא, הא דאפשר לקצר (יקצר. ואם לאו — פוסק). תנו רבנן: מעשה בחסיד אחד שהיה מתפלל בדרכו. בא הגמון אחד ונתן לו שלום, ולא החזיר לו שלום. המתין לו עד שסיים תפלתו. לאחר שסיים תפלתו, אמר לו: ריקא, והלא כתוב בתורתכם "רק השמר לה ושמר נפשך", וכתוב "ונשמרתם מאד לנפשתיכם". כשנתתי לה שלום למה לא החזרת לי שלום? אם הייתי חותף ראשך בסייף, מי היה תובע את דמה מידי?! אמר לו: המתן לי עד שאפניסך בדברים. אמר לו: אילו היית עומד לפני מלך בשר ודם, ובא חברך ונתן לה שלום — היית מחזיר לו? אמר לו: לאו. ואם היית מחזיר לו, מה היו עושים לה? אמר לו: היו חותכים את ראשי בסייף. אמר לו: והלא דברים קל וחומר, ומה אתה שהיית עומד לפני מלך בשר ודם, שהיום כאן ומחר בקרב — כך. אני שהייתי עומד לפני מלך המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא, שהוא חי וקיים לעד ולעולמי עולמים — על אחת כמה וכמה. מיד נתפייס אותו הגמון, ונפטר אותו חסיד לביתו לשלום. אפילו נחש כרוף על עקבו, לא יפסיק. אמר רב ששת: לא שנו אלא נחש. אבל עקרב — פוסק.

Berakhot 32b:26-31-33a

Additionally, we learned in the mishna: **Even if the king greets him while he is praying, he should not respond to him** as one may not interrupt his prayer. In limiting application of this principle, **Rav Yosef said: They only taught this mishna with regard to kings of Israel**, as a Jewish king would understand that the individual did not fail to respond to his greeting due to disrespect for the king. **However, with regard to kings of the nations of the world, he interrupts** his prayer and responds to their greeting due to the potential danger. The Gemara **raised an objection** to Rav Yosef's statement: **One who is praying and saw a violent person, feared by all, coming toward him, or a carriage coming toward him and he is in the way, he should not stop his prayer but rather abridge it and move out of the way.** The Gemara responds: This is **not difficult**. Rather, **this** that teaches to abridge one's prayer rather than stopping, refers to a case **where it is possible to abridge** his prayer and complete it in time, in which case he **should abridge** it. **And if it is not** a situation where he can abridge his prayer, **he interrupts** his prayer. **The Sages taught:** There was a related incident, involving a particular pious man who was praying while traveling along his path when an officer [hegmon] came and greeted him. The pious man did not pause from his prayer **and did not respond with a greeting**. The officer waited for him until he finished his prayer.

After he finished his prayer, the officer said to him: You good for nothing. You endangered yourself; I could have killed you.

Isn't it written in your Torah: "Take utmost care and guard yourself diligently" (Deuteronomy 4:9)?

And it is also written: "Take therefore good heed unto yourselves" (Deuteronomy 4:15)? Why did you ignore the danger to your life?

When I greeted you, why did you not respond with a greeting?

Were I to sever your head with a sword, who would hold me accountable for your spilled blood? The pious man said to him: **Wait for me until I will appease you with my words.**

He said to him: Had you been standing before a flesh and blood king and your friend came and greeted you, would you

return his greeting?

The officer said to him: No.

The pious man continued: And if you would greet him, what would they do to you?

The officer said to him: They would cut off my head with a sword.

The pious man said to him: Isn't this matter an a fortiori inference?

You who were standing before a king of flesh and blood,

of whom your fear is limited because today he is here but tomorrow he is in the grave,

would have reacted in that way;

I, who was standing and praying before the Supreme King of kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He,

Who lives and endures for all eternity,

all the more so that I could not pause to respond to someone's greeting. When he heard this, the officer was immediately appeased and the pious man returned home in peace. We learned in the mishna that even if a snake is wrapped around his heel, he may not interrupt his prayer. In limiting application of this principle, Rav Sheshet said: They only taught this mishna with regard to a snake, as if one does not attack the snake it will not bite him. But if a scorpion approaches an individual while he is praying, he stops, as the scorpion is liable to sting him even if he does not disturb it.

(א) וְדַרְיוֹשׁ מְדַיָּא קַבֵּל מַלְכוּתָא כְּבַר שְׁנֵי שָׁנִים וְתַרְתֵּינֵי: (ב) שְׁפַר קָדָם דְּרַוְשׁוּשׁ וְהַקִּים עַל-מַלְכוּתָא לְאַחַשְׁדָּרְפָּנֵי מֵאַה וְעִשְׂרֵינֵי דֵי לְהֵן בְּכַל-מַלְכוּתָא: (ג) וְעֵלָא מְנַהֵן סְרַכְיֵן תְּלַתָּא דֵי דְנִיָּאל חֲדָּמִנְהֵן דִּי-לְהֵוּ אַחַשְׁדָּרְפָּנֵי אֵלֵי וְהִבְיֵן לְהֵוּן טַעְמָא וּמַלְכָּא לֹא-לְהֵנָּה נֹזֵק: (ד) אֲדִין דְנִיָּאל דְנָה הֵנָּה מְחַנְצָח עַל-סְרַכְיָא וְאַחַשְׁדָּרְפָּנֵי כְּלִי-קַבֵּל דֵי רוּחַ וְתִירָא בֵּיהּ וּמַלְכָּא עֲשִׂית לְהַקְמוּתָהּ עַל-כֹּל-מַלְכוּתָא: (ה) אֲדִין סְרַכְיָא וְאַחַשְׁדָּרְפָּנֵי הֵוּן כְּעִין עֵלָה לְהַשְׁפִּתָּה לְדְנִיָּאל מִצַּד מַלְכוּתָא וְכַל-עֵלָה וְשַׁחֲתָהּ לֹא-יִכְלִין לְהַשְׁפִּחָה כְּלִי-קַבֵּל דִּי-מֵהֵימֵן הֵוּא וְכַל-שְׁלוֹ וְשַׁחֲתָהּ לֹא הַשְׁתַּכַּחַת עֲלוּהֵי: (ו) אֲדִין גְּבַרְיָא אֵלְף אִמְרֵי דֵי לֹא נִהַשְׁפַּח לְדְנִיָּאל דְנָה כְּלִי-עֵלָה לְהֵוּן הַשְׁפַּחְנָה עֲלוּהֵי בְּדַת אֵלְקָה: (ז) אֲדִין סְרַכְיָא וְאַחַשְׁדָּרְפָּנֵי אֵלֵן הֲרַגְשׁוּ עַל-מַלְכָּא וְכוּן אִמְרֵי לֵה דְרַגִּישׁ מַלְכָּא לְעַלְמֵינֵי חַיִּי: (ח) אֲתִיעֻטּוּ כֹל א סְרַכְיָא מַלְכוּתָא סְגִיָּא וְאַחַשְׁדָּרְפָּנֵי הַדְּבַרְיָא וּפְחִוּתָא לְמִימָה קִיָּם מַלְכָּא וּלְתַקְפָּה אִסְרָא דֵי כְּלִי-דִי-יִבְעָה בְּעֵי מִן-כְּלִי-אֵלָה וְאִנְשׁ עַד-יוֹמֵינֵי תְּלַתִּין לְהֵוּ מִנְּהּ מַלְכָּא יִתְרַמָּא לְגַב אַרְוֵתָא: (ט) כְּעֵן מַלְכָּא תְּקִים אִסְרָא וְתַרְשֵׁם כְּתָבָא דֵי לֹא לְהַשְׁנִיגָה כְּדַת-מְדֵי וּפְרַס דִּי-לֹא תַעֲדָא: (י) כְּלִי-קַבֵּל דְנָה מַלְכָּא דְרַוְשׁוּשׁ רִשְׁם כְּתָבָא וְאִסְרָא: (יא) וְדְנִיָּאל כְּדֵי יַדַע דִּי-רִשְׁמֵי כְּתָבָא עַל לְבַיְתָהּ וְכוּיָן פְּתִיחָן לֵה בְּעִלְיָתָה נְגִיד יְרוּשָׁלַם וְזִמְנִין תְּלַתָּה בְּיוֹמָא הֵוּא א בְּרַח עַל-בְּרַכּוּהֵי וּמִצְלָא וּמוֹדָא קָדָם אֵלְקָה כְּלִי-קַבֵּל דִּי-לְהֵנָּה עֲבִיד מִן-קְדַמַת דְנָה: (יב) אֲדִין גְּבַרְיָא אֵלְף הֲרַגְשׁוּ וְהַשְׁפַּחוּ לְדְנִיָּאל כְּעֵא וּמְחַנְצָן קָדָם אֵלְקָה: (יג) בְּאֲדִין קְרִיבֵי וְאִמְרֵי קָדָם-מַלְכָּא עַל-אִסְרָא מַלְכָּא הֵוּא אִסְרָא רִשְׁמֵי דֵי כְּלִי-אִנְשׁ דִּי-יִבְעָה מִן-כְּלִי-אֵלָה וְאִנְשׁ עַד-יוֹמֵינֵי תְּלַתִּין לְהֵוּ מִנְּהּ מַלְכָּא יִתְרַמָּא לְגַב אַרְוֵתָא עֵנָה מַלְכָּא וְאִמְרָא יִצְיָבָא מִלְתָּא כְּדַת-מְדֵי וּפְרַס דִּי-לֹא תַעֲדָא: (יד) בְּאֲדִין עֵנָה וְאִמְרֵי קָדָם מַלְכָּא דֵי דְנִיָּאל דִּי מִן-בְּנֵי גִלוּתָא דֵי יְהוּד לֹא-שָׁם עֲלִיד [עֵלְף] מַלְכָּא טַעַם וְעַל-אִסְרָא דֵי רִשְׁמֵי וְזִמְנִין תְּלַתָּה בְּיוֹמָא כְּעֵא בְּעוּתָהּ: (טו) אֲדִין מַלְכָּא כְּדֵי מַלְתָּא שְׁמַע שְׂגִיָּא בְּאִשׁ עֲלוּהֵי וְעַל דְנִיָּאל שָׁם כֹּל לְשִׁיבּוּתָהּ וְעַד מְעַלִּי שְׁמַשָּׂא הֵנָּה מִשְׁתַּדַּר לְהַצְלוּתָהּ: (טז) בְּאֲדִין גְּבַרְיָא אֵלְף הֲרַגְשׁוּ עַל-מַלְכָּא וְאִמְרֵי לְמַלְכָּא דַע מַלְכָּא דִּי-דַת לְמְדֵי וּפְרַס דִּי-כְּלִי-אִסְרָא וּקִיָּם דִּי-מַלְכָּא יְהִיבָא לֹא לְהַשְׁנִיגָה: (יז) בְּאֲדִין מַלְכָּא אִמְרָא וְהִתִּירוּ לְדְנִיָּאל וְרַמָּו לְגַבָּא דֵי אַרְוֵתָא עֵנָה מַלְכָּא וְאִמְרָא לְדְנִיָּאל אֵלְקָה דֵי אַנְתָּה [אַנְתָּה] פְּלַח-לֵה בְּתַדִּירָא הֵוּא יְשִׁיבּוּבָּד: (יח) וְהִתִּיתָ אֲבוֹן תְּדָה וְשַׁמַת עַל-פִּם גְּבַא וְחַתְמָה מַלְכָּא בְּעַזְקָתָהּ וּבְעַזְקָתָה רְבַרְבְּנוּהֵי דֵי לֹא-תִשְׁנָא צְבוּן בְּדְנִיָּאל: (יט) אֲדִין אֲזַל מַלְכָּא לְהִיכְלָה וּבַת טוֹת וְדַחְנָן לֹא-הִנְעֵל קַדְמוּהֵי וְשַׁנְתָּה בְּדַת עֲלוּהֵי: (כ) בְּאֲדִין מַלְכָּא בְּשַׁפְרָפְרָא יְקִים בְּנִיגְתָּא וּבַהַתְּבַהֲלָה לְגַבָּא דִּי-אַרְוֵתָא אֲזַל: (כא) וּכְמַקְרָבָה לְגַבָּא לְדְנִיָּאל בְּקַל עֲצִיב זַעַק עֵנָה מַלְכָּא וְאִמְרָא לְדְנִיָּאל דְנִיָּאל עֲבִיד אֵלְקָה תִּיָּא אֵלְקָה דֵי אַנְתָּה [אַנְתָּה] פְּלַח-לֵה בְּתַדִּירָא הִיכַל לְשִׁיבּוּתָהּ מִן-אַרְוֵתָא: (כב) אֲדִין דְנִיָּאל עַם-מַלְכָּא מִלְּל מַלְכָּא לְעַלְמֵינֵי חַיִּי: (כג) אֵלְקָה שְׁלַח מַלְאָכָה וּסְגַר פִּם אַרְוֵתָא וְלֹא חַבְלוּנֵי כְּלִי-קַבֵּל דֵי קַדְמוּהֵי זְכוּ הַשְׁתַּכַּחַת לֵי וְאַף קַדְמוּד [קַדְמוּד] מַלְכָּא חַבְלוּהָ לֹא עַבְדַת: (כד) בְּאֲדִין מַלְכָּא שְׂגִיָּא טַעַב עֲלוּהֵי וּלְדְנִיָּאל אִמְרָא לְהַנְסָקָה מִן-גְּבַא וְהַסֵּק דְנִיָּאל מִן-גְּבַא וְכַל-חַבֵּל לֹא-הַשְׁתַּכַּח בֵּיהּ דֵי הֵימֵן בְּאֵלְקָה: (כה) וְאִמְרָא מַלְכָּא וְהִתִּירוּ גְּבַרְיָא אֵלְף דִּי-אַכְלוּ קַרְצוּהֵי דֵי דְנִיָּאל וּלְגַב אַרְוֵתָא רַמָּו אֲבוֹן בְּנִיגְתָּא וּבְשִׁיחָן וּלְאִמְטָא לְאַרְעִית גְּבַא עַד דִּי-שְׁלַטּוּ כְּהֵוּן אַרְוֵתָא וְכַל-גְּרַמְיָהוּן הַדְּקוּ: (כו) בְּאֲדִין דְרַגִּישׁ מַלְכָּא פְּתַב לְכַל-עַמְמַיָּא אִמְרָא וּלְשַׁנְגָּא דִי-אַרְוֵי [דִּי-רַוְיֵן] בְּכַל-אַרְעָא שְׁלַמְכוּן וְשָׂגָא: (כז) מִן-קְדַמִּי שְׁמֵי טַעַם דֵי א בְּכַל-שְׁלַטְוֵן מַלְכוּתֵי לְהֵוּן זַאעִין [זַאעִין] וְחַתְלֵי מִן-קָדָם אֵלְקָה דִּי-דְנִיָּאל דִּי-הֵוּא א אֵלְקָה תִּיָּא וּקִיָּם לְעַלְמֵינֵי

וּמְלֻכוֹתָהּ דִּי־לָא תִתְחַבֵּל וְשִׁלְטָנָהּ עַד־סוּפָא: (כח) מְשִׁיבֵי וּמְצַלֵּי וְעִבְדֵי אֲתִין וְתַמְהִינן בְּשִׁמְעָא וּבְאַרְעָא דִּי שִׁינִיב לְדַנְיָאֵל מִרְגַּל אַרְגָּוֹתָא: (כט)
וְדַנְיָאֵל דִּנְהָ הִצִּילָח בְּמַלְכוּת דְרַגְיִשׁ וּבְמַלְכוּת כּוּרְשׁ פַּרְסִיא [פְּרָסְאָה]: (פ)

Daniel 6

(1) and Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old. (2) It pleased Darius to appoint over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps to be in charge of the whole kingdom; (3) over them were three ministers, one of them Daniel, to whom these satraps reported, in order that the king not be troubled. (4) This man Daniel surpassed the other ministers and satraps by virtue of his extraordinary spirit, and the king considered setting him over the whole kingdom. (5) The ministers and satraps looked for some fault in Daniel's conduct in matters of state, but they could find neither fault nor corruption, inasmuch as he was trustworthy, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him. (6) Those men then said, "We are not going to find any fault with this Daniel, unless we find something against him in connection with the laws of his God." (7) Then these ministers and satraps came thronging in to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! (8) All the ministers of the kingdom, the prefects, satraps, companions, and governors are in agreement that a royal ban should be issued under sanction of an oath that whoever shall address a petition to any god or man, besides you, O king, during the next thirty days shall be thrown into a lions' den. (9) So issue the ban, O king, and put it in writing so that it be unalterable as a law of the Medes and Persians that may not be abrogated." (10) Thereupon King Darius put the ban in writing. (11) When Daniel learned that it had been put in writing, he went to his house, in whose upper chamber he had had windows made facing Jerusalem, and three times a day he knelt down, prayed, and made confession to his God, as he had always done. (12) Then those men came thronging in and found Daniel petitioning his God in supplication. (13) They then approached the king and reminded him of the royal ban: "Did you not put in writing a ban that whoever addresses a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, during the next thirty days, shall be thrown into a lions' den?" The king said in reply, "The order stands firm, as a law of the Medes and Persians that may not be abrogated." (14) Thereupon they said to the king, "Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, pays no heed to you, O king, or to the ban that you put in writing; three times a day he offers his petitions [to his God]." (15) Upon hearing that, the king was very disturbed, and he set his heart upon saving Daniel, and until the sun set made every effort to rescue him. (16) Then those men came thronging in to the king and said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that any ban that the king issues under sanction of oath is unalterable." (17) By the king's order, Daniel was then brought and thrown into the lions' den. The king spoke to Daniel and said, "Your God, whom you serve so regularly, will deliver you." (18) A rock was brought and placed over the mouth of the den; the king sealed it with his signet and with the signet of his nobles, so that nothing might be altered concerning Daniel. (19) The king then went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and his sleep fled from him. (20) Then, at the first light of dawn, the king arose and rushed to the lions' den. (21) As he approached the den, he cried to Daniel in a mournful voice; the king said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, was the God whom you served so regularly able to deliver you from the lions?" (22) Daniel then talked with the king, "O king, live forever! (23) My God sent His angel, who shut the mouths of the lions so that they did not injure me, inasmuch as I was found innocent by Him, nor have I, O king, done you any injury." (24) The king was very glad, and ordered Daniel to be brought up out of the den. Daniel was brought up out of the den, and no injury was found on him, for he had trusted in his God. (25) Then, by order of the king, those men who had slandered Daniel were brought and, together with their children and wives, were thrown into the lions' den. They had hardly reached the bottom of the den when the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. (26) Then King Darius wrote to all peoples and nations of every language that inhabit the earth, "May your well-being abound! (27) I have hereby given an order that throughout my royal domain men must tremble in fear before the God of Daniel, for He is the living God who endures forever; His kingdom is indestructible, and His dominion is to the end of time; (28) He delivers and saves, and performs signs and

wonders in heaven and on earth, for He delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.” (29) Thus Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and during the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

15. ספר חסידים תשפ"ז

(א) הנה מעשה בחסיד אחד שהיה מתפלל ולא היה פוסק בשביל ההגמון הרי אדם מחמיר ע"ע בתפלה אע"פ שמסתכן בנפשו בטוב עושה כמו שעשה דניאל אף על פי שגזר המלך שלא יתפללו וכן אמרו אפי' נחש כרוך על עקבו לא יפסיק:

16. רמב"ם הלכות מזוזה פרק ו הלכה יג

חַיב אָדָם לְהַזְהֵר בְּמִזְוֵזָה מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהִיא חֻבַּת הַכֹּל תְּמִיד. וְכֵן זְמַן שֶׁיִּפְּנֶס וְיֵצֵא יִפְגַּע בְּיַחֲוֹד הַשֵּׁם שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְיִזְכֹּר אֶתְּחַבְּתוֹ וְיַעֲזֹר מִשְׁנֵתוֹ וְשִׁגְיוֹתָיו בְּהַבְּלֵי הַזְּמַן. וְיִדַּע שֶׁאֵין דְּבַר הָעוֹמֵד לְעוֹלָם וְלְעוֹלָמֵי עוֹלָמִים אֲלֵא יְדִיעַת צוּר הָעוֹלָם. וּמִיָּד הוּא חוֹזֵר לְדַעְתּוֹ וְהוֹלֵךְ בְּדַרְכֵי מִישָׁרִים. אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים הָרִאשׁוֹנִים כָּל מִי שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ תַּפְלִין בְּרִאשׁוֹ וּבְזָרוּעוֹ וְצִיצִית בְּבִגְדוֹ וּמִזְוֵזָה בְּפֶתְחוֹ מְחַזֵּק הוּא שֶׁלֹּא יִחַטָּא שֶׁהָרִי יֵשׁ לוֹ מְזַכְרֵיו רַבִּים וְהֵן הֵם הַמַּלְאָכִים שֶׁמְצִילִין אוֹתוֹ מִלְחַטָּא שְׁנָאֲמַר (תהילים לד ה) ("חֲנֻה מְלֵאךְ וְיִסְבִּיב לִירְאָיו וְיִחַלְצֵם").
בְּרִידָה כְּתוּבָה דְּסִיעוֹן :

A person should pay heed to the precept of the *Mezuzah*; for it is an obligation perpetually binding upon all. Whenever one enters or leaves a home with the *Mezuzah* on the doorpost, he will be confronted with the Declaration of God's Unity, blessed be His holy name; and will remember the love due to God, and will be aroused from his slumbers and his foolish absorption in temporal vanities. He will realize that nothing endures to all eternity save knowledge of the Ruler of the Universe. This thought will immediately restore him to his right senses and he will walk in the paths of righteousness. Our ancient teachers said: He who has phylacteries on his head and arm, fringes on his garment and a Mezuzah on his door may be presumed not to sin, for he has many monitors—angels that save him from sinning, as it is said, ([Psalms 34:8](#)) "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them".

17. Religious Insecurity and its Cures, Harav Yehuda Amital, Translated by Gila Weinberg

We all are familiar with the beraita in Torat Kohanim:

"Love your neighbor as yourself" (Vayikra 19:18) -

Rabbi Akiva said: This is a great principle of the Torah.

Ben Azai said: "This is the book of the generations of man" (Bereishit 5:1) is a greater principle than that.

In his book *Netivot Olam* (Netiv Ahavat Ha-Re'a), the Maharal of Prague brings an addition to this midrash, cited by the "Perush Ha-Kotev le-sefer Ein Ya'akov:"

Ben Zoma says: We have found a more inclusive verse, and it is, "Shema Yisrael."

Ben Nanas says: We have found a more inclusive verse, and it is, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Shimon Ben Pazi says: We have found a more inclusive verse and it is, "The first lamb you shall sacrifice in the morning and the second lamb you shall sacrifice in the evening" (Shemot 29:39).

Rabbi Ploni stood up and said: The halakha is in accordance with Ben Pazi, as it is written, "As all that I display to you, the structure of the Mishkan."

What does the topic of two lambs have to do with the greatest principle of the Torah? The Maharal explains:

A person who worships God consistently proves that he is a servant of God.

Stability and consistency are a great principle in the Jewish system of education. "One lamb in the morning, one lamb in the evening" - "the daily sacrifices according to their order." These represent perpetual and regular service. If this educational principle is relevant in untroubled times, how much more so in our day.

We live in trying times. Scarcely a week passes without a terrorist attack. We must ask ourselves how we ought to behave in these days. What can we, simple citizens, frequenters of the Beit Midrash, do? The answer can be found in stability, in consistency, in continuity, as the verse describes, "The first lamb you shall sacrifice in the morning and the second lamb you shall sacrifice in the evening." This is a vital message for our brethren in the Diaspora as well. Despite all the turmoil around us, our religious lives must continue to function with regularity and constancy.