

THE PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM ROADMAP TO PRAYER PROJECT

The Roadmap to Prayer

Lesson 14

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Krias She'ma¹ and the Asseres Hadibros (the 10 Commandments)

Sha'arei Teshuva
Elya Rabba

The *Sha'arei Teshuva* and the *Elya Rabba* cite the *Yerushalmi*² that says the reason why *Chazal* instituted to recite all three portions of *She'ma* is because they contain references to the *Asseres Hadibros* (The Ten Commandments). By reading the *She'ma* and reviewing the *Asseres Hadibros* each day, we are making an assurance not to transgress them.

1. השם אלוקינו *Hashem Elokeinu*

אנוכי השם אלקיך *Anochi Hashem Elokecha*

2. השם אחד *Hashem Echad*

לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים *Lo yihyeh lecha elohim acheirim*

3. ואהבת את השם אלוקיך *Ve'ohavta eiss Hashem Elokecha*

לא תשא את שם אלקיך לשוא *Lo sissa ess sheim Elokecha la'shov*

4. וכתבתם על מזוזות ביתך *U'chesavtom al mezuzos beisecha*

לא תחמד *Lo sachmode*

5. ואספת דגניך *Ve'asafita deganecha*

לא תגנוב *Lo tignove*

¹ Based on Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim *Simon 61 se'if 2*

² Berachos 9a, 9b

6. ואבדתם מהרה *Va'avadetem me'heira*

לא תרצח *Lo tirtzach*

7. למען ירבו ימיכם *Le'ma'an yirbu yemeichem*

כבד את אביך ואת אמך *Kibbud av ve'eim*

8. ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם
*Ve'lo sossuru acharei le'vavchem ve'acharei
eineichem*

לא תנאף *Lo tinaf*

9. למען תזכרו ועשיתם את כל מצותי *Le'ma'an tizkeru va'asisem ess kol mitzvosoye*

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו *Zochor ess yom hashabbos le'kadsho*

10. אני השם אלוקיכם *Ani Hashem Elokeichem*

לא תענה בריעך עד שקר *Lo ta'aneh be'rei'acha eid shakker*

An Added Measure of Kavanah (Concentration)

The Mishna Berura³ quotes the Pri Megadim who explains that it is improper for one to read the *She'ma* out of habit without paying attention to what one is saying. It is important that one concentrates on the simple meaning of what one is saying, at a pace that allows him to do so.

Accordingly, if one wishes to incorporate the practice of reviewing the Ten Commandments (*Asseres Hadibros*) while reciting the Shema Reading (*Krias She'ma*) one would have to review and practice where each commandment is hinted at. In order to facilitate this we will explain how we can properly put into practice the review of the Ten Commandments while saying the Shema.

The Ten Commandments and the Shema Reading

1. Hashem is the One and Only

השם אלוקינו - *Hashem Elokein*

אנכי השם אלוקיך *Anochi Hashem Elokecha*

³ S"K 5

The commandment (*Mitzvah*) is to believe in *Hashem's* existence. We are obligated to know that there is a Prime Being Who brought all existence into being, and continually sustains its existence. Furthermore, we must know that this being, whom we refer to as *Hashem*, is the Lord of the Universe, and He runs it with His limitless power.⁴

2. G-d is the One and Only

Hashem Echad השם אחד

Lo yihyeh lecha elohim acheirim al ponei לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים

The reference here is based in the command not to have any other idols. The term strange gods (*elohim acheirim*) as explained by Rashi in Chumash is that idols are ineffective and cannot reward their worshippers for their loyalty. Hence they are like strangers (*acheirim*) to their own followers.

3. You should not take the name of Hashem, your G-d, in vain

Ve'ohavta eiss Hashem Elokecha ואהבת את השם אלוּקִיךָ

Lo sissa ess sheim Elokecha la'shov לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים

The verse (*pasuk*) is imploring us not to verbalize G-d's holy Name in vain. This commandment (*Mitzvah*) emanates from our feeling of love towards *Hashem*. This prohibition applies to an oath made in any language. Hence, it reminds us of the *Mitzvah* to love *Hashem* – ואהבת את השם אלוּקִיךָ. The greatness of G-d transcends all existence, and His Name should be uttered only amid feelings of awe, and strictly for matters of the utmost importance. To invoke his Name for a needless oath is thus a serious affront to the honor of G-d.⁵

4. Write them on the doorposts of your House

U'chesavtom al mezuzos beisecha וכתבתם על מזוזות ביתך

Lo sachmode לא תחמד

The verse (*pasuk*) here is teaching us that we must affix a *mezuzah* scroll to the doorposts of our homes and dwellings. The commandment applies specifically to our

⁴ The Encyclopedia of the Taryag Mitzvoth, pg 40 - R' Dovid Wax, Editor - in - Chief

⁵ The Encyclopedia of the Taryag Mitzvoth pg. 160

own property, not anything stolen. Hence, the commandment of *Lo sachmode* - Do not covet someone else's house or property, is a form of acquiring something illicitly. One is forbidden to use any sort of pressure to convince a fellow Jew to surrender his property. The reason is that one who covets the property of another lacks faith in G-d. A person of faith trusts that G-d will provide him with his needs. Once who trusts in G-d's benevolence will feel no desire for the property of others.⁶

5. Do Not Steal

ואספת דגניך *Ve'asafa deganecha*

Lo tignove לא תגנב

The verse (*pasuk*) teaches us that we may only harvest our own grain, not that which may have been stolen.

6. Do not Murder

ואבדתם מהרה *Va'avadetem me'heira*

Lo tirtzach לא תרצח

This verse is teaching us that if we stray from the way of the Torah and transgress the *mitzvos* of *Hashem*, we will lose our right to remain in the Land of Israel. If we are subsequently exiled from our land, it will most likely come with death and destruction as it actually happened when the Temples were destroyed. Therefore, it reminds us of the commandment of *Do not Murder (Lo tirtzach)*. A further reason is that murder not only deprives the victim of his physical life but it ends his spiritual growth since he can no longer fulfill the Torah and *mitzvos* to achieve the perfection that is the purpose of life.⁷

7. Honor your Father and Mother

למען ירבו ימיכם *Le'ma'an yirbu yemeichem*

Kibbud av ve'eim כבוד את אביך ואת אמך

The *pasuk* teaches us to honor our father and mother and assist them with all their needs. Then, it ends with the promise of reward of longevity. A person must show

⁶ Ibid pg. 364

⁷ Ibid – pg. 278

his parents respect and gratitude for all the tireless effort they put forth into all of us. Reinforcing this recognition will naturally cause a person to understand how much appreciation he must have toward the Creator who created us and sustains all mankind. As a result of honoring ones parents we can now understand why our days on this world would be lengthened.⁸

8. You should not commit adultery

ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם *Ve'lo sossuru acharei le'vavchem ve'acharei eineichem*

Lo tinaf לא תנאף

This *pasuk* warns us not to follow our hearts and eyes, lest we fall into a trap and commit serious sins, namely adultery and lust. These sins are usually initiated by indiscriminate gazing at sights which arouse our base senses of immorality. This then corresponds to the commandment of “*Lo tinaf*” (you shall not commit adultery).⁹

9. In order that you should remember and do all of my mitzvos

למען תזכרו ועשיתם את כל מצותי *Le'ma'an tizkeru va'asisem ess kol mitzvosoye*

Zochor es yom hashabbos le'kadsho זכור את יום השבת לקדשו

Our Sages teach us that there are two *mitzvos* which correspond to all the *mitzvos* of the Torah. They are the *Mitzvah* of *Tzitzis* and the *Mitzvah* of *Shabbos*. When we recite in the final portion of *Krias She'ma* *למען תזכרו ועשיתם את כל מצותי*, this is referring to a *Mitzvah* that incorporates in it all the *mitzvos*. Accordingly, one should gaze at his *Tzitzis* which correspond to all the *mitzvos*. We are also reminded by this of another commandment to keep all the laws. That *Mitzvah* is the commandment to keep the laws of *Shabbos*, which is also a *Mitzvah* that corresponds to all the *mitzvos*.

10. Do not bear false witness against your fellow

אני השם אלוקים *Ani Hashem Elokeichem*

Lo ta'aneh be'rei'acha eid shaker לא תענה בריעך עד שקר

It is forbidden to give false testimony or to testify regarding an incident one did not personally witness, even if one heard about the incident from reliable sources.⁹ The

⁸ Ibid – pg. 246

⁹ Ibid. pg. 344

Jerusalem Talmud (*Yerushalmi*) states that one who testifies falsely against another individual is considered as denying that G-d created heaven and earth. Thus by saying this verse where G-d proclaims, that it is He Who is our G-d Who took us out of Egypt through all the miracles which He performed for us, we are reminded of the commandment not to testify falsely against another individual.

The Encyclopedia of the *Taryag Mitzvoth* eloquently summarizes the reasoning of the importance of this *Mitzvah* bringing to light that a healthy society depends on the preservation of justice; and judges depend on accurate testimony to determine the truth about disputed events, and to arrive at decisions that are just and fair. Bearing false witness sabotages this system.¹⁰

This device that memorializes the 10 commandments through the daily recitation of *Krias She'ma* is extremely useful and important. The *Yerushalmi* (Jerusalem Talmud¹¹) in *Berachos* relates that *Chazal* desired to incorporate the 10 commandments into the daily prayers as they are such important fundamental principles. The only reason that they refrained from doing so was because they were concerned that it may mislead people to believe that only the 10 commandments are important and it would lead them to become lax in fulfilling the many other Torah commandments. Now that we have this method to incorporate them into our daily routine, we no longer have such a concern and we could reap the benefit of incorporating them into our daily prayers in this manner... with practice.

With all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your resources

בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאודך

This commandment instructs us to follow *Hashem's* Torah and fully devote ourselves to its ideals. One is even required to forfeit one's own life if necessary, in order not to transgress the Torah precepts of the three cardinal sins of idolatry, incest and murder. Additionally, if one is forced to transgress a Torah command in public¹² one must give up one's life to avoid transgressing the Torah command in public¹³.

¹⁰ The Encyclopedia of the Taryag Mitzvoth – pg. 344

¹¹ Daf 9a, 9b

¹² In front of 10 adult Jewish males

¹³ The details of these laws are discussed in the Rambam *Yesodei Hatorah* 5: 2

Many *Seforim* write that one should concentrate during *Krias She'ma* that one is giving up one's life for the sake of *Hashem* and His Torah. By doing so, it is considered as if one has performed this *Mitzvah*, which is a great merit. Additionally, if one truly concentrates on this, one will be able to recite *Krias She'ma* with the proper *Kavanah* (concentration) and read the *Shema* according to the requisite that one should always read it as if it were a new message one receives from a King¹⁴, with fear, trepidation and trembling.

Baruch Sheim – Blessed is the Name

The origins for reciting the verse *Baruch sheim kevode malchusso etc.* after *She'ma Yisrael* is brought in the *Gemora Pesachim*¹⁵. The *Gemora* describes how *Yaakov Avinu* (The Patriarch, Jacob) had his sons gathered around his bed just before his death. At that moment he became fretful that perhaps his children, the progenitors of the Jewish Nation were possibly deficient in their belief in G-d. After expressing his concern very candidly to them they proclaimed in unison, *Shema Yisrael* - (listen *Yisrael* - our father¹⁶); *Hashem Elokeinu Hashem echad Hashem* is our G-d *Hashem* is the One (and Only)". Upon hearing this, *Ya'akov Avinu* responded, *Baruch sheim kevode malchusso Leohlom Va'ed* - "Blessed is the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever."

Saying it Quietly

The *Gemora* is in a quandary whether it is proper for us to follow *Ya'akov Avinu's* example and say the verse of *Baruch sheim* or maybe since the Torah doesn't mention it we should also not say it at all. The *Gemora* resolves this issue by saying that we should recite it quietly in an undertone.

The translation of *Baruch sheim* is that *Hashem's* Name should be blessed and recognized as the King of all mankind forever and ever. Although this has not become a reality yet, nevertheless, it will happen in the future when *Mashiach* will reveal himself to the world. However, as of today, this goal has not been realized. We as Jews of course already ascribe to G-d as the King of the entire universe; this is what we mean when reciting *Shema Yisrael* - Hear O Israel, since only our nation recognizes *Hashem* as King.

¹⁴ Mishna Berura 61: 3 citing the *Bach*

¹⁵ *Daf*56a

¹⁶ *Ya'akov* had a second name (*Yisrael*) given to him after he overcame the Angel (*Malach*) of *Eisav*;

Rav Shimshon Pinkus *zt"l* explains that the words of *Shema Yisrael* speak of A TRUTH THAT HAS NOT YET BEEN RECOGNIZED by the nations. That truth, that *Hashem* is *echad* – “One and only” is really unfathomable by the human mind and intellect. We see a world with many different species of both animal and plant life seemingly governed by what people dub as “Nature”, and we suddenly realize how well G-d has hidden Himself out of sight and out of mind. It becomes difficult for us to be aware of this principle during our daily routine. Therefore, after expressing this truth, we add the verse *BARUCH SHEIM KEVODE MALCHUSSO ETC.* as a prayer that this truth should become reality soon in our days.

Delving deeper into this, *Rav Pinkus* explains that *Ya'akov Avinu* upon seeing before him his twelve sons, who represented the future of the world, *Yaakov Avinu*, expressed his personal sentiment of how much he wished that this truth (about *Hashem*) become a reality. He longed for the day where everyone would routinely live by this truth and never let it become obscured by the subterfuges of “Nature”. Hence, although these words are not part of *Krias She'ma* as they are not recorded by *Moshe Rabbeinu* in the Torah, nevertheless, we recite it since it expresses the yearning of the Jewish soul to live presently in this world together with *Hashem*. Just as a nation glorifies its King by displaying the king's picture and his semblance on placards and emblems as well as on the nation's currency, we too wish to express our unique closeness to G-d in our daily affairs as well. *Baruch sheim kevode malchusso le'olam vo'ed* is a demonstration of the Jewish spirit in everyday matters just as the Jews in Egypt manifested their Jewish spirit by not changing their mode of dress, their language, or their names during their years of exile, even though they were never so commanded.

This is an important concept to understand when we relate to issues of modesty in dress. Not everything is a matter of being allowed or forbidden by *Halacha* as much as it is a matter of the Jewish spirit. As the saying goes, although it may not be a strict Jewish Law (*Halacha*) that men must don *yarmulkes* (head coverings) when they walk the streets, but one thing is sure, those who are not Jewish, or those who are estranged from their own Jewish heritage, walk around the streets without head coverings.

Therefore, it is important to add these special words expressed by *Ya'akov Avinu* as part of our daily recital of *Krias She'ma*.

The 248 Words of Krias She'ma

The Shema Reading (*Krias She'ma*) contains a total of 248 words as we say it today in our prayers. The significance of the number 248 is that it corresponds to the 248 parts that make up the human body as described in the *Mishna* in the Tractate in Coverings (*Meseches Ohalos*¹⁷). By reciting these words we give spiritual nurture to our bodies as well as to our spirits. The twice daily Shema Reading (*Krias She'ma*) infuses us with an immeasurable dose of spirituality that invigorates our *Avodas Hashem* (service of G-d).

Although the Shema Reading (*Krias She'ma*) itself does not contain this amount of words, together with "Blessed is the name of His glorious Kingdom forever and ever" (*Baruch sheim kevode malchusso etc.*) and the three words, "G-d, King, Who is trustworthy" (*Keil Melech ne'eman*) at the beginning, or the three words "Hashem your G-d is true" (*Hashem Elokeichem Emmes*), which the *Chazzan* repeats at the end of the Shema Reading (*Krias She'ma*), we have a total of 248 words.

Intimations רמז

The *Chidah* in his *sefer Machzik Bracha* writes that in the first portion of Shema, from - ואהבת - *Ve'ohavta* (and you shall love) until - ובשעריך - *U'visharecha*, (and in your Gates), there are a total of 42 words.

In the second portion from והיה אם - *Vehoya im* - (and if you) until ושמתם - *Vesamtem* (and you should place) there are another 71 words counting itself it adds another 1 bringing it to a total of 72.

From ושמתם – *Ve'samtem* (and you should place) until על הארץ - *Al ha'aretz* (on the ground) is 50.

In the final portion of שמע - *She'ma* there are another 72 words.

These intimations hint to lofty concepts beyond the scope of this work. Just to give a little initiation to the significance of these numbers we will write a short description as explained by Rav Pinkus.

¹⁷ 1: 8

The number 42 is associated with the 42 letter arrangement of the holy Name of G-d. They are hinted in the verses of the prayer of *Ah nah beko'ach* (We beg you with the strength)¹⁸.

The number 72 refers to another combination of letters that formulate other Names of *Hashem*. This is explained by *Rashi* in *Talmud Sukkah 45a*, which are based in three verses of The Song of the Sea (*Shiras Hayam*) – *Az Yashir*.

The number 50 symbolizes the 50 levels of insight and wisdom.

Rav Pinkus adds that the arrangement here is 42 - 72 - 50 - 72. The arrangement of 50 that represents wisdom is between two numbers of 72 which represent *Hashem's* Names.

He refers us back to *Bereishis* where *Hashem* had caused it only to rain after *Adam Harishon* (Adam the first Man) was created and appreciated the need for rain and proceeded to pray for it. In truth, it did rain once before. That was when *Hashem* created *Adam Harishon* from the earth; He caused it to rain so that He could form him from the mud. So we have here a combination of first *Hashem* gives us the *Divine influence* as a gift, then we recognize the gift and attribute it back to *Hashem* which in return *Hashem* rewards us with more rain, more *Divine influence* etc. This is the "Torah-life ecosystem"; receiving benevolence from *Hashem*, acknowledging it and singing praise and prayer to *Hashem*, receiving even more benevolence from *Hashem* etc.

Things to Keep in Mind

It is important to mention the following during the blessing of "True and firm" (*bracha* of *Emmes ve'Yatziv*). They are:

- Š *Yetzias Mitzrayim* - The Exodus
- Š *Malchus* - *Hashem* is King
- Š *Krias Yam Suf* - The Splitting of the Red Sea
- Š *Makkas Bechoros* - The Death of the First-Born Egyptians

¹⁸ It can be found in any Siddur in a number of places. It can be easily found right before the Friday night prayer of *Lecha Dodi*.

One who omitted these must repeat them except for *Makkas Bechoros* which is questionable.

The *Maharil* would stand up when he reached the words of *Tehilos Le'keil elyon* as so indicated in most Prayer Books (*Siddurim*) by the bold print¹⁹. A reason for this is because the whole reason for saying the *Pesukei De'Zimrah* was to preface the *Amidah - Shemoneh Esrei* with praise to G-d, so now that we are ready to start the *Amidah* we stand up by the words *Tehilos Le'keil elyon* (Praises to G-d the Most High) which is an expression of praise.

The Concluding Blessing of Shema Yisrael Emess Ve' Yatziv - Go'al Yisrael

Semichas Ge'ulah le'Tefila – The Blessing of Redemption next to Shemoneh Esrei

The final blessing of the Shema Reading begins with *Emess Ve'yatziv* and concludes with *Go'al Yisrael*, which emphasizes the redemption of the Jewish people and immediately brings us into saying the *She'moneh Esrei*.

It is extremely important to recite *She'moneh Esrei* immediately after the blessing (*bracha*) of *Go'al Yisrael*. The Gemora in *Berachos* has great praise for this. Any interruptions between *Go'al Yisrael* and *Shemoneh Esrei* is according to Jewish Law (*Halachically*) incorrect and as Rashi explains, one who interrupts between the two can be compared to someone who approaches the king for an important matter, knocks on his door, and then leaves before the king comes to the door leaving him at the door looking to see who had just knocked.

Therefore, one may not even interrupt for Kaddish, Kedusha, Borchu and according to some Rabbinical Authorities (*Poskim*) may not even answer for the Amen to this very *bracha* if he hears it from the *shali'ach tzibbur*.

Ways to Avoid Responding to Amen of Go'al Yisrael

In order not to have an issue with responding *Amen* to the blessing (*bracha*) of *Go'al Yisrael* of the one leading the prayers of the congregation (*the shali'ach tzibbur*) one can do any of the following:

§ One can end the *bracha* simultaneously with the *shali'ach tzibbur*

¹⁹Mishna Berura 95: 3

- Š One may start *Shemoneh Esrei* ahead by reciting just the introductory phrase of *Hashem sefasaye tiftach*²⁰.
- Š Alternatively, the *shali'ach tzibbur* can end the *bracha* in a whisper so that no one will hear him.

²⁰ One must be careful not to start *she'moneh esrey* proper ahead of the *tzibbur*

Questions:

- 1) What connection is there between the *Asseres Hadibros* (The Ten Commandments) and our daily *Krias She'ma* (Shema Reading)?
- 2) With which *Mitzvah* does *ואספת דגניך Ve'asafa deganecha* (" You may gather in your Grain") correspond?
- 3) With which *Mitzvah* does *ואבדתם מהרה Va'avadetem me'heira* ("You will swiftly be banished") correspond?
- 4) Which 2 *mitzvos* represent all the *mitzvos* of the Torah?
- 5) What is the issue and how does the *Gemora* resolve the issue of adding *Baruch sheim kevode malchusso le'olam vo'ed* into the order of *Krias She'ma*?
- 6) What is the significance of the number 248?
- 7) How do we arrive at this number when we recite the Shema?
- 8) Explain briefly the concept that we dubbed as the "Torah-life ecosystem".
- 9) In what way is an interruption between *Go'al Yisrael* and *Shemoneh Esrei* stricter than an interruption during the *Birchos Krias She'ma*?
- 10) What can one do to avoid such an interruption for the *Shali'ach Tzibbur's* (congregational prayer leader) bracha of *Go'al Yisrael*. (2)

Answers:

- 1) The *Asseres Hadibros* are hinted in the three *parshiyos* (segments) of *Krias She'ma*.
- 2) It corresponds to the commandment of Do not steal (*Lo Tignov*) לא תגנוב.
- 3) It corresponds to the commandment of Do not kill (*Lo Tirtzach*) לא תרצח.
- 4) The *mitzvah* of *Tzitzis* and the *mitzvah* of *Shabbos*.
- 5) The issue is adding *Baruch sheim kevode malchusso le'olam vo'ed* since it's not a verse from the Torah and it should not be inserted into the *mitzvah* of *Krias She'ma*. On the other hand we want to say it because this was the response of *Yaakov Avinu*. The compromise is to recite but in a low tone.
- 6) It represents the amount of limbs and parts in a man's physical makeup. These are the amount of words in the manner we recite *Krias She'ma*.
- 7) The three segments that we read for the *mitzvah* of *Krias She'ma* together with the added *Baruch sheim kevode malchusso le'olam vo'ed* and the three words of *Hashem Elokeichem emmes* gives us the number 248.
- 8) This refers to the fact that *Hashem* bestows us with His beneficence and we then pray for His continued benevolence and then *Hashem* responds with more benevolence.
- 9) We cannot even interrupt to respond to *Kaddish*, *Kedusha* or *Borchu*.
- 10) Either one should start *Shemoneh Esrei* by saying the first verse *Hashem sefasaye tiftach* alone. Or one can finish the *bracha* of *Go'al Yisrael* together with the *Shali'ach Tzibbur* (congregational prayer leader).