

Deuteronomy 6:1-25

Common English Bible

¹ Now these are the commandments, the regulations, and the case laws that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you to follow in the land you are entering to possess, ² so that you will fear the Lord your God by keeping all his regulations and his commandments that I am commanding you—both you and your sons and daughters—all the days of your life and so that you will lengthen your life. ³ **LISTEN** to them, Israel! Follow them carefully so that things will go well for you and so that you will continue to multiply exactly as the Lord, your ancestors' God, promised you, in a land full of milk and honey.

⁴ Israel, **LISTEN**! Our God is the Lord! Only the Lord!

⁵ Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your being, and all your strength. ⁶ These words that I am commanding you today must always be on your minds. ⁷ Recite them to your children. Talk about them when you are sitting around your house and when you are out and about, when you are lying down and when you are getting up. ⁸ Tie them on your hand as a sign. They should be **ON YOUR FOREHEAD** as a symbol. ⁹ **WRITE THEM ON YOUR HOUSE'S DOORFRAMES** and on your city's gates.

¹⁰ Now once the Lord your God has brought you into the land that he swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give to you—a land that will be full of large and wonderful towns that you didn't build, ¹¹ houses stocked with all kinds of goods that you didn't stock, cisterns that you didn't make, vineyards and olive trees that you didn't plant—and you eat and get stuffed, ¹² watch yourself! Don't forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ¹³ Revere the Lord your God, **SERVE** him, and take your solemn pledges in his name! ¹⁴ Don't follow other gods, those gods of the people around you— ¹⁵ because the Lord your God, who is with you and among you, is a passionate God. The Lord your God's anger will burn against you, and he will wipe you off the fertile land. ¹⁶ Don't test the Lord your God the way you frustrated him at **Massah**. ¹⁷ You must carefully follow the Lord your God's commands along with the laws and regulations he has given you. ¹⁸ Do what is right and good in the Lord's sight so that things

Language Notes & Textual Connections

LISTEN שמע pronounced "shema" :: to hear with attention, interest, listen to, give heed to, to understand, to obey. The Hebrew implies that if you listen, and hear...then you will obey. This greatest commandment is traditionally called the Shema (after the Hebrew word).

ON YOUR FOREHEAD - Phylactery, Hebrew tefillin, also spelled tephillin or tfillin, in Jewish religious practice, one of two small black leather cube-shaped cases containing Torah texts written on parchment, which, in accordance with Deuteronomy 6:8 (and similar statements in Deuteronomy 11:18 and Exodus 13:9, 16), are to be worn by male Jews 13 years of age and older as reminders of God and of the obligation to keep the Law during daily life. The name phylactery is derived from the Greek phylakterion, meaning amulet.



WRITE THEM ON YOUR HOUSE'S DOORFRAMES -

In mainstream Rabbinic Judaism, a **MEZUZAH** is affixed to the doorpost of Jewish homes to fulfill the mitzvah (Biblical commandment) to "write the words of God on the gates and

will go well for you and so you will enter and take possession of the wonderful land that the Lord swore to your ancestors, ¹⁹ and so the Lord will drive out all your enemies from before you, just as he promised.

²⁰ In the future, your children will ask you, "What is the meaning of the laws, the regulations, and the case laws that the Lord our God commanded you?" ²¹ Tell them: We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt. But the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. ²² Before our own eyes, the Lord performed great and *awesome deeds of power* against Egypt, Pharaoh, and his entire dynasty. ²³ But the Lord brought us out from there so that he could bring us in, giving us the land that he swore to our ancestors. ²⁴ Then the Lord commanded us to perform all these regulations, revering the Lord our God, so that things go well for us always and so we continue to live, as we're doing right now. ²⁵ What's more, we will be considered *RIGHTEOUS* if we are careful to do all this commandment before the Lord our God, just as he commanded us.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

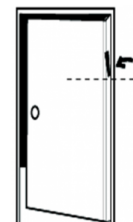
- **What engaged you, enraged you, or surprised you in the text?**
- **What legacy do the Israelites have? How did they acquire it? What are they to do with it; or because of it?**
- **What legacy do we – you – have? How did you (we) acquire it? What are you (we) to do with it; or because of it?**
- **How is the Spirit of God inviting you to serve God and the purposes of God with your legacy?**

...doorposts of your house" (Deuteronomy 6:9).

The word MEZUZAH literally means "doorpost," but it actually refers to the scroll -- or klaf -- enclosed in the ornamental case. On this handwritten parchment is the **SHEMA**, a central Hebrew prayer reminding us of God's presence in our lives.

SHEMA, (Hebrew: "Hear"), the Jewish confession of faith made up of three scriptural texts (Deuteronomy 6:4–9, 11:13–21; Numbers 15:37–41), which, together with appropriate prayers, forms an integral part of the evening and morning services.

The **SHEMA** (Shema Israel or Sh'ma Yisrael; Hebrew: שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל; "Hear, O Israel") is a Jewish prayer, and is also the first two words of a section of the Torah, and is the title (better known as **THE SHEMA**) of a prayer that serves as a centerpiece of the morning and evening Jewish prayer services. The first verse encapsulates the monotheistic essence of Judaism: "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one" found in Deuteronomy 6:4.



Observant Jews consider **THE SHEMA** to be the most important part of the prayer service in Judaism, and its twice-daily recitation as a mitzvah (religious commandment). Also, it is traditional for Jews to say the Shema as their last words, and for parents to teach their children to say it before they go to sleep at night.

SERVE :: עָבַד pronounced "abad" :: meaning "to work, serve, or worship." In Hebrew language and thought all three actions are interconnected.

Massah:: the name given by Moses to a place in the desert where the Israelites complained and quarreled about God, wishing that they were back in slavery in Egypt where there was plenty of water. (Exodus 17:1-7). It's a reminder of how fickle human nature can be.

RIGHTEOUS :: צְדָקָה pronounced [tsedaqah] :: meaning righteousness, justice, honest, truthful – it's a being like God.