

## The Centrality of Shema

### First Passage of Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4)

<p>Hear O Israel the Lord our God the Lord is One.</p>	<p>שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֶחָד</p>
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### Second Passage of Shema

<p><b>Deuteronomy 6: 5-9</b></p> <p>You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.</p> <p>Take to heart these instructions with which I charge you this day.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead;</p> <p>inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>דברים ו, ה-ט</b></p> <p>וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ:</p> <p>וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוְנֶךָ הַיּוֹם עַל-לִבְבְּךָ:</p> <p>וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבִיָּיִךְ וּדְבַרְתָּ בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלַכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשָׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ:</p> <p>וְקָשַׁרְתָּם לְאָזְנוֹת עַל-גִּידְךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ:</p> <p>וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל-מְזוּזֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ: (ס)</p>
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### Third Passage Deuteronomy 11:13-21

<p>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,</p> <p>I will grant the rain for your land in season, the early rain and the late. You shall gather in your new grain and wine and oil—</p>	<p>וְהָיָה אִם-שָׁמַעְתֶּם תְּשִׁמְעוּ אֶל-מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוְנֶה אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּלְעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּכֶם וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁכֶם:</p> <p>וְנָתַתִּי מְטַר-אַרְצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ יוֹרֵה וּמִלְקֹוֹשׁ וְאֶסְפַּתְּ דָגְנְךָ וְתִירֹשֶׁךָ וַיִּצְהַרְךָ:</p> <p>וְנָתַתִּי עֵשֶׂב בְּשָׂדֶךָ לְבַהֲמֹתֶיךָ וְאֶכְלַת וּשְׂבַעְתָּ:</p>
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<p>I will also provide grass in the fields for your cattle—and thus you shall eat your fill.</p> <p>Take care not to be lured away to serve other gods and bow to them.</p> <p>For the LORD's anger will flare up against you, and He will shut up the skies so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its produce; and you will soon perish from the good land that the LORD is assigning to you.</p> <p>Therefore impress these My words upon your very heart: bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead,</p> <p>and teach them to your children—reciting them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up;</p> <p>and inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates—</p> <p>to the end that you and your children may endure, in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers to assign to them, as long as there is a heaven over the earth.</p>	<p>הַשָּׁמַרְוּ לָכֶם פֶּן יִפְתָּה לְבַבְכֶם וְסַרְתֶּם וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם:</p> <p>וְחָרָה אַף־יְהוָה בְּכֶם וְעָצַר אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה מָטָר וְהָאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת־יְבוּלָהּ וְאֶבְדַּתֶּם מְהֵרָה מֵעַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה נָתַן לָכֶם:</p> <p>וְשַׁמְתֶּם אֶת־דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹהֵי לְבַבְכֶם וְעַל־נִפְשׁוֹכֶם וְקִשְׂרֹתֶם אֹתָם לְאוֹת עַל־יְדֵיכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם:</p> <p>וְלִמְדַתֶּם אֹתָם אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בָּם בְּשַׁבָּתְךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ:</p> <p>וּבְמִתְבָּתֶּם עַל־מִזְוֹנוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:</p> <p>לְמַעַן יִרְבּוּ יְמֵיכֶם וְיָמֵי בְנֵיכֶם עַל־הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נָשָׁבַע יְהוָה לְאַבְתֵּיכֶם לֵאמֹר לְהֵם כִּימֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם עַל־הָאָרֶץ: (ו)</p>
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<p><b>Babylonian Talmud Berachot 2a</b></p> <p>From what time may one recite the Shema in the evening?</p> <p>From the time that the priests enter [their houses] in order to eat their terumah* until the end of the first watch, the words of Rabbi Eliezer.</p> <p>The sages say: until midnight.</p>	<p>מֵאִמְתֵּי קוּרְיִן אֶת שְׁמַע בְּעֶרְבִית.</p> <p>מִשְׁעָה שֶׁהַכֹּהֲנִים נִכְנְסִים לְאָכַל בְּתְרוּמָתוֹ, עַד סוּף הָאֲשִׁמוּרָה הָרִאשׁוֹנָה, דְּבַר רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר.</p> <p>וְחֻכְמִים אוֹמְרִים, עַד חֲצוֹת.</p> <p>רַבִּן גַּמְלִיאֵל אוֹמֵר, עַד שִׁיעֻלָּה עֲמוּד הַשָּׁחַר.</p>
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<p>Rabban Gamaliel says: until dawn. Once it happened that his sons came home [late] from a wedding feast and they said to him: we have not yet recited the [evening] Shema. He said to them: if it is not yet dawn you are still obligated to recite.</p> <p>And not in respect to this alone did they so decide, but wherever the sages say “until midnight,” the mitzvah may be performed until dawn. The burning of the fat and the pieces may be performed till dawn. Similarly, all [the offerings] that are to be eaten within one day may be eaten till dawn. **</p> <p>Why then did the sages say “until midnight”? In order to keep a man far from transgression.</p>	<p>מעשה שבאו בניו מבית המשתה, אמרו לו, לא קרינו את שמע. אמר להם, אם לא עלה עמוד השחר, חִבֵּין אתם לקרות.</p> <p>ולא זו בלבד, אלא כל מה שאמרו חכמים עד חצות, מצותן עד שיעלה עמוד השחר. הקטר חלבים ואברים, מצותן עד שיעלה עמוד השחר. וכל הנאכלים ליום אחד, מצותן עד שיעלה עמוד השחר.</p> <p>אם כן, למה אמרו חכמים עד חצות, כדי להרחיק את האדם מן העברה :</p>
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**1. How many start times can there be?**

<p>In our mishna, <b>the Master said:</b> The beginning of the time for the recitation of the evening <i>Shema</i> is: <b>From the time when the priests enter to partake of their <i>teruma</i>.</b></p> <p><b>Contradiction Beraita 1:</b>The Gemara <b>raises a contradiction</b> to this opinion from a <i>baraita</i> that states that the time for the recitation of the evening <i>Shema</i> is: <b>From when a poor person enters to eat his bread with salt until he rises from his meal.</b></p> <p><b>Possible Explanation:</b> The Gemara begins its analysis by clarifying whether there is an actual contradiction here, or whether different expressions are being employed to describe the same time. <b>The latter clause</b> of the <i>baraita</i>, which established that the time for the recitation of the evening <i>Shema</i> ends when a poor person rises from his meal, <b>certainly disagrees with our mishna.</b> Since the poor person clearly does not continue eating until the end of the first watch, this <i>baraita</i> certainly contradicts our mishna. With regard to <b>the first clause</b> of the <i>baraita</i>,</p>	<p>אמר מר משעה שהכהנים נכנסין לאכול בתרומתן.</p> <p><b>ורמינהו:</b> מאימתי קורין את שמע בערבין — משהעני נכנס לאכול פתו במלח, עד שעה שעומד ליפטר מתוך סעודתו.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Rashi:</p> <p>משהעני – שאין לו נר להדליק בסעודתו:</p> <p>On account of his poverty, he cannot afford artificial light ; therefore he takes his evening meal while there is yet sufficient light.</p> </div> <p>סיפא, ודאי פליגא אמתניתין. רישא, מי לימא פליגי אמתניתין ?</p>
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however, which establishes the beginning of the time for the recitation of the evening *Shema*, shall we say that it disagrees with our mishna?

**Resolution:** The Gemara immediately rejects this idea: **No**, the time when **the poor person** eats and the time when **the priest** is purified and permitted to partake of his *teruma* are **one** and the same **time**.

**Contradiction Beraita 2:** The Gemara raises a contradiction from the *Tosefta*: **From when does one begin to recite *Shema* in the evening? From the time when people enter to eat their bread on Shabbat eve.** This is the statement of Rabbi Meir.

As they do in our mishna, **the Rabbis say: From the time when the priests are eligible to partake of their *teruma*, a sign for which is the emergence of the stars. And although there is no explicit proof** that the emergence of the stars is when one may begin to recite the evening *Shema*, **there is an allusion** in the book of Nehemiah to the fact that the emergence of the stars is generally considered the beginning of the night. As it is stated with regard to the building of the walls of Jerusalem: **“And we perform the work, and half of them grasp their spears from dawn until the emergence of the stars”** ([Nehemiah 4:15](#)). And it says: **“That in the night they may be a guard to us, and may labor in the day”** ([Nehemiah 4:16](#)). From here we ascertain that the day ends with the emergence of the stars....

לא, עני וכהן חד שיעורא הוא .

**ורמינהו:** מאימתי מתחילין לקרות קריאת שמע בערבית — משעה שבגני אדם נכנסין לאכול פתן בערבי שבתות, דברי רבי מאיר.

ונחכמים אומרים: משעה שהפנהגים ופאין לאכול בתרומתן. סימן לדבר: צאת הכוכבים. ואף על פי שאין ראיה לדבר, זכר לדבר, שנאמר: "ואנחנו עושים במלאכה וסצגם מתזיקים ברמחים מעלות השחר עד צאת הכוכבים", ואומר: "והיו לנו הלילה משמר והיום מלאכה"

....In analyzing the three opinions regarding the beginning of the period for the recitation of the evening *Shema*, the Gemara begins with the supposition: **It might enter your mind** to say that the time when the **poor person** typically eats his meal and the time when ordinary **people** eat their Shabbat evening meal **are one** and the same **time**, since in both cases those eating would seek to begin their meals as early as possible, as, for

קא סלקא דעתך דעני ובגני אדם חד שיעורא הוא.

different reasons, they are unable to kindle additional lights to illuminate their meal.

**Summation of question:** And, **if you say** that the time of **the poor person's** meal **and** the time when **the priest** is purified and permitted to partake of his *teruma* **are one** and the same **time**, then the opinion of **the Rabbis** is identical to that of **Rabbi Meir**. (Look at your chart – what do Rabbi Meir and the Sages disagree about and what have we now concluded is identical time which leads us to say that Rabbi Meir and the Sages would theoretically been in agreement but they can't be! So what is their disagreement? )

**Rather**, what we said previously must be rejected, and instead **learn from this** that there is **a separate time** for the **poor person** and **a separate time** for the **priest**.

However, this conclusion is based on the assumption that the time of the poor person and the time of people are the same.

**Answer:** That too can be rejected with the assertion that, **no**, the time of the **poor person and the priest are one** and the same **time**, and the time of **the poor person and people are not the same**. Accordingly, the opinion expressed by the *tanna* in our *baraita* is identical to that of the other *tanna'im*, and only Rabbi Meir disagrees with them.

ואי אמרת עני וכהן חד שעורא הוא, תכמים היינו רבי מאיר ?

אלא, שמע מינה עני שעורא לחוד וכהן שעורא לחוד. לא, עני וכהן חד שעורא הוא, ועני וכהן אדם לאו חד שעורא הוא .