

## A Liturgical Tidbit

The *Shema* and *V'ahavta* – Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (plus a piece of tradition!)

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד:  
בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם  
וָעֵד.  
וְאֶהְבֶּתְךָ אֵת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ, בְּכָל  
לְבָבְךָ, וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ, וּבְכָל מְאֹדְךָ.  
וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה,  
אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם, עַל לְבָבְךָ:  
וּשְׁנַנְתָּם לְבִנְיָהּ, וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָּם  
בְּשַׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ,  
וּבְלִכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ,  
וּבְקוּמְךָ. וְקִשַּׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל  
יָדְךָ, וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ,  
וְכִתַּבְתָּם עַל מְזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

*Sh'ma Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad.*

(in a near whisper say...) *Baruch shem k'vod malchuto, l'olam va-ed.*

*V'ahavta, et Adonai eh-lo-heh-cha, b'chol l'vav'cha, oo'v'chol naf'sh'cha, oo'v'chol m'oh-deh-cha.*

*V'ha-yoo ha-d'var-reem ha-ay-leh, ah-share ah-no-chee, m'tzav-cha ha-yom, ahl l'va-vecha.*

*V'she-nan-tam l'va-neh-cha, v'dee-bar-ta bahm, b'sheev-t'cha b'vay-teh-cha, oo-v'lech-t'cha va-deh-rech, oov'shohch-b'cha oo-v'koo-meh-cha.*

*Oo-k'shar-tam l'oat ahl ya-deh-cha, v'ha-yoo l'toe-ta-fote bain ay-neh-cha.*

*Oo-k'tav-tam ahl m'zoo'zote bay-teh-cha oo-vee-sh'ah-reh-cha.*

**Why do we recite the 2<sup>nd</sup> line of the “Shema” in an undertone (whispered)?**  
(*Baruch, shem k’vod, maluchto, l’olam va’ed*)

**TRADITION!**

With tradition, there are always explanations. However, where we find one Jew, we typically find at least two opinions! Here are some traditional thoughts on the reason we whisper this line:

1. When Jacob was about to pass away, he called all of his children and he said, “*Maybe, when I pass on from this world, you will bow down to another god.*” They responded, “*Hear O Israel, the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is one.*” And Jacob responded quietly, “*Blessed be the name of the glory of His kingdom forever and ever.*”

The Sages taught: Should we say these words in our prayers because Jacob said them? Yes. But, on the other hand, Moses did not transmit them to us, for they are not found in the Torah. Therefore, let us say them softly (Pesachim 56a).

2. When Moses went to heaven to receive the Torah from G-d, he heard the angels praising G-d, “*Blessed be the name of the glory of His kingdom forever and ever.*” After Moses heard this, he brought it to the Jews below. And why is it not said out loud?

Rabbi Assi says, “*It is as if someone took jewelry from the king’s palace and gave it to his wife, and told her, ‘Do not wear this out in public, only in the home’ (so the king’s people should never come to see it and take it back.). We mortals are not fit to be blessing G-d, since outwardly we are not adequately connected to G-dliness and spirituality. For angels, who are constantly spiritual and connected to G-dliness, it is appropriate to bless G-d. That is why Moses told us to say this line bashfully, quietly, to ourselves.*”