

Shema Yisrael

She- ma Yis- ra- el A - do - nai E - lo -
 he nu She- ma Yis - ra-
 el A - do- nai E - chad

Words trad. Jewish (Deut. 6: 4)
 Music and Dance W&A van der Zwan © 2017

Shema Yisrael *Hear, O Israel*
Adonai Elohenu *the LORD our God*
Adonai Echad *the LORD is one*

These words form the Jewish creed, often referred to as the Shema or Sh'ma. For a devout Jew, it is a *mitzvah* (religious duty) to recite the Shema twice a day. These are the first words whispered into the ears of a newborn baby and the last words one hears before journeying to the other world.

- Shema Listen.
- Yisrael The initiation name of Jacob, given to him after the nightlong fight with God. Israel means 'the one who prevails or is triumphant with God'.
- Adonai Lord, traditionally spoken when the Tetragrammaton JHWH (יהוה) is written in the text.
- Elohenu A form of Elohim, a name of the One meaning 'He is the Power (singular) over powers (plural)', or roughly, 'God of gods'.
 The form Elohenu means 'our God'.
- Echad Another name for God, meaning 'the One' (as in the Arabic wasifa Ahad), 'the First' or 'undivided Oneness'.
 The CH is pronounced as in the Scottish LOCH.



Genesis 32:28 tells us:

Then the man said, 'Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.'

Jacob calls the place where he wrestled *Peniel* (also spelled *Penuel*), the Face of God, as 'I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared' (Gen. 32:30). In

Genesis 35:10, God is the one giving Jacob the name 'Yisrael'.

Israel later became synonym for the Jews as 'the people of Israel'. In a broader and more inclusive sense, we all have our struggle with the divine, so we all are the people of Israel, the one who struggled with God (and with humans).

Hazrat Inayat Khan (IX, 221) explains Jacob's wrestling as the battle between his soul and his deluded self or ego. When his ego left him, he realized in daylight as 'God himself'.

Dance description

Define partners. Dance start with facing center in the circle.

1. Shema
2. Yisrael Ado-
3. -nai Elo-
4. -henu
5. Shema
6. Yisrael Ado-
7. -nai Echad

1. Hands behind the ears, palms facing center. This is the traditional 'listening mudra', also used in Islam.
2. Start bowing on YIS-, ending with hands on knees in bowed position. This again is a traditional movement, also used in Islam and Universal Sufism. Come up at ADO-.
3. Step in to the center (4 steps, starting with right), palms facing up in receptive way and raising as a way of connecting with the divine.
4. Step back in same rhythm, ending with hands on the heart.
5. Face partner, hands still on the heart and bow to the left as if whispering the Shema in your partner's ear.
6. Come up and take hands of partner. Make a half turn anticlockwise, starting on -EL.
7. Holding hands, facing center and take four steps to the right in the Unity of ECHAD.