

The Shema Meditation

Finding peace when you have no control

Cover your eyes with your right hand and say:

Listen, Israel, the Lord is our G-d,
the Lord is One

Recite the following verse in an undertone:

Blessed be the name of the glory of His
kingdom forever and ever.

You shall love the Lord your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you today shall be upon your heart. You shall teach them thoroughly to your children, and you shall speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road, when you lie down and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for a reminder between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates.



DISCUSSION/CONTEMPLATION

Our life has been turned upside down. Most of us have never lived through such an uncertain time. Our plans have been cancelled, our routines have been upended. None of us can know for certain what the future holds. We have lost our sense of control over our own lives.

How does that make you feel? Uneasy? Scared? Angry?

What if we could feel liberated. What if losing our sense of control could actually set us free.

This is the main message of the Rosh Hashana prayers. G-d is in control. He created the universe, not we. What happens to us is not in our control. We didn't lose control over our lives, because we never had it. All we can control is our own inner response to what happens.

This is an empowering thought. Let G-d do His job of running the world. And you do your job of bringing goodness to the world around you. Everything is going to plan, and all is as it is meant to be. We are here to do our bit – making the world a better place by doing good deeds. And we are in good hands. Let go of your need to be in control of the external world, and take control of your inner world. There you will find peace.

We do this by saying the Shema, the most central prayer of Judaism. On Rosh Hashana this prayer has an even deeper impact.

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COVER YOUR EYES

There is a superficial way of looking at the world, that views things as happening by chance. Cover your eyes, to momentarily ignore the way things look on the surface. You are about to enter a deeper view of reality. Switch off the screen that is playing in front of you. Turn off the story of a life that seems random. With your eyes closed, create a blank slate on which you will draw a new picture of a different world.

Now that you are not distracted
by externalities start to

LISTEN

to the inner song of the world.
Hear the harmony that reigns in the universe.
Everything happens as it is meant to happen.
You are where you are meant to be.
All is in order.

You are not listening with your ears,
you are tuning in with your soul,
the inner part of you called...

ISRAEL.

This is your deepest core, the layer of you that is one with G-d. On this level, you have perfect faith. Your mind may have questions and doubts. Your heart may have worries and fears. But your soul is completely at peace, has total clarity, and knows with absolute conviction that...

THE LORD IS OUR G-D.

So for a few moments suspend your doubts and put aside your worries. Transcend your heart and mind and enter into the soul.



Once you have entered this soul reality, linger there for a while. Contemplate the oneness of all. Think of all that is going on in the world, and everything happening in your own life, both the good and the not so good. From the vantage point of your soul, you see the oneness in all. Whatever is happening is coming from the same one G-d. Even if things seem random and all over the place, even if contradictory forces seem to be at play, it is not really so. Everything comes from the one G-d.

THE LORD IS ONE.

Let the word...

ONE

hang in your mind for a bit longer. All is one. Feel the peace and calm in that idea. Allow the peace to spread from your soul to your mind, from your mind to your heart, from heart to your entire body. As you open your eyes, let that peace spread outside of you to the entire world.

**Blessed be the name of the glory
of His kingdom forever and ever.**