

sun...praised be thy name for ever, O our King; Creator of ministering spirits...

(O give thanks) to him that maketh great lights... Blessed art thou, O Lord, Creator of the luminaries.

With abounding love hast thou loved us, O Lord our God... be gracious unto us and teach us ... Enlighten our eyes in thy Law...Thou hast chosen us from all peoples and tongues, and hast brought us near unto thy great name for ever in faithfulness, that we might in love give thanks unto thee and proclaim thy unity...

(at evening) Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who at thy word bringest on the evening twilight...Thou createst day and night: thou rollest away the light from before the darkness, and the darkness from before the light...the Lord of hosts is thy name... Blessed art thou, O Lord, who bringest on the evening twilight.

With everlasting love thou hast loved the house of Israel, thy people; a Law and commandments, statutes and judgements hast thou taught us. Therefore, O Lord our God, when we lie down and when we rise up we will meditate on thy statutes... mayest thou never take away thy love from us...

Then comes the reading of the SHEMA, *Deut 6:4-9*, together with *Chapter 11: 13-21* and *Numbers 15:37-41*.

Afterwards there are prayers affirming the truth and constancy of the Lord, Redeemer of his people, followed in the evening by an act of confidence in God's protection, and belief in the sure presence already of his kingdom.



'That they all may be one'

Holy Cross Series U69

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MEDITATING ON THE UNITY

THE ONLY AND EXALTED GOD

“ I AM THE LORD AND THERE IS NO OTHER, BESIDES ME THERE IS NO GOD”.

So we read in the *Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Chapter 45:5*.

This is the supreme revelation granted to the Jews, marking them out as the chosen people of God for all time, as witnesses in the world to the transcendent holiness of the ONE and only LORD.

The treasure is guarded well, enshrined at the heart of their prayer, on their doorposts and always before their eyes. From thence it radiates out to transfigure every aspect of life. In obedience to the injunction of the Lord then, the SHEMA (Hear O Israel the Lord our God is one, *Deuteronomy 6:4-9*) is recited daily especially at Morning and Evening Service. We can find the sacred words in context, set out in both Hebrew and English, in the Authorised Daily Prayer Book of Judaism, and used consistently still in the Synagogue and at home by the pious Jew.

The practice goes back at least to Temple times, and indeed some parts of the prayers now found in the Prayer Book, surrounding the SHEMA, are known to originate from then. The preceding two are in praise of God the Creator of light and of everything that is, and lead on to acclaim him as the giver of spiritual light to his people through the revelation of the Law:

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who formest light and createst darkness, who makest peace and createst all things –

(at morning) Who in mercy givest light to the earth and to them that dwell thereon, and in thy goodness renewest the creation every day continually... The blessed God great in knowledge, prepared and formed the rays of the