

Transition

from *Pesukei DeZimra* to *Shema*

Source Sheet by Sarah Lipman

Rav S.R. Hirsch, Horeb, par. 628:

The day begins — Creation awakes, another span is given to life, being newly created for the millionth time. You also are awakened and given back anew to life... What is it, this newly awakened world around you and in you? ... Who is it that appears to your inner self in all this awakening? It is God, Who is revealed to you by the history of your ancestors, Who in every age and generation is the all mighty, the all-sustaining, judging and guiding providence.

...What should *you* be in this newly awakened world? What should you be in this choir of servants? You also should be a servant. you also should dedicate all your powers unitedly to His service. As His creating word calls forth the sun, and summons the light of the world, so has God's love appointed Israel as the bearer of the light of spirit and life, and as the bearer of the Torah.

O, that you would be mindful of such a high task! O that you would allow heart and spirit to be infused by the spirit of the Torah and allow your life, in word and deed, to be but a copy of the contents of the Torah! You would thus surrender yourself to God in love just as He summons you in love. Then will your physical life also endure; that is, as long as it remains the bearer of such light (*Ahava*). Do you wish for a pledge of such a task, for a pledge of such a destiny? Then listen to it in the words in which God Himself has declared it unto you (*Shema, VeHaya Im Shamo*). See it also in that God appears to you as the Creator of your national existence. *Pesukei DeZimrah* thus form an introduction to *Krias Shema*, in which the view of God in world and history is made into a bridge between Israel and duty.

...When the [contemplation of God in world and history via] words of *Pesukei DeZimrah* have been uttered and felt, you ... pass on to the *Birchos Krias Shema*. You have thus enlightened your inner self...