

# Obedience

Obedience is an attitude of heart toward a higher authority. But since there is no Hebrew word for "obey," what was the real meaning behind what is translated as obedience. I always just assumed the actual word 'obey' was in the Hebrew Bible....it's translated in our English Bibles. The word translated obey in our Bibles is the Hebrew word "Shâma ." Just as there is no Hebrew word meaning "obey," there also is no English word for Shâma. While this Hebrew verb translates as "hear" it means much more than just hearing or listening. The King James Bible chose the verb 'to hearken' rather than hear. But now, nobody hearkens anymore so the English translators of the Bible didn't know what to do with this verb. So they translated it as 'obey'.

**Shâma** (shaw-mah') 8085 to hear, heed, listen to, obey

- a. (Qal)
  - a. to hear (perceive by ear)
  - b. to hear of or concerning
  - c. to hear (have power to hear)
  - d. to hear with attention or interest, listen to
  - e. to understand (language)
  - f. to hear (of judicial cases)
  - g. to listen, give heed
- b. to consent, agree
- c. to grant request
  - a. to listen to, yield to
  - b. to obey, be obedient
- d. (Niphal)
  - a. to be heard (of voice or sound)
  - b. to be heard of
  - c. to be regarded, be obeyed
- e. (Piel) to cause to hear, call to hear, summon

f. (Hiphil)

- a. to cause to hear, tell, proclaim, utter a sound
- b. to sound aloud (musical term)
- c. to make proclamation, summon
- d. to cause to be heard

Shâma' (Strong's #8085, x1160) is best translated by a combination of four (4) English words, "hear, heed, understand and obey". In all it occurs over one thousand (1000) times in Scripture, often in key verses and is translated variously as hear x785, hearken x196, obey x81, understand x9, obedient x8.

We find Shâma in scriptural names such as Yishmael (Strong's #3458) "Aluahym hears" (**Genesis 16:11**); Simeon (Strong's #8095) "he who hears" (**Genesis 29:33**); and Samuel (Strong's #8050) "he who hears Aluahym" (**1 Samuel 1:20**).

The first (1st) use of Shâma is in the context of hearing אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah)'s voice, and walking with אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah), unfortunately the first (1st) use is negative in that Adam only shâma's אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) after he has already shâma-d Eve, who in turn has shâma-d the serpent, as a result Adam's response is fear and flight rather than hear and delight! In **Genesis 16:2** Abraham not only listens but "obeys" Sarai's voice, he didn't just hear her, he did what he was told! However negative the consequences!

Shâma can range in meaning from merely hearing a sound, though usually the sound of a voice, through the kind of hearing that indicates assent and action such as in the hearing of Manoah's prayer (**Judges 13:9**) or the non-hearing of the prayers of sinners (**Jeremiah 11:11; Ezekiel 8:18**). Clearly, hearing means response and non-response in these cases. Micah expresses the beautiful words "My Aluahym will hear me".

The first (1st) time "Shâma" appears in Scripture is in **Genesis 3:8**. "And they heard (Shâma) the sound of אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) among the trees of the garden."

Adam and Eve had just sinned and eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This scripture shows us אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah)'s response to them in spite of their sin... in spite of them not following their hearing hearts and doing what אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) required of them. אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) came walking through His garden in the cool of the

day. The word walk is halak; it has the idea of moving or going as opposed to just sitting there. The term "cool of the day" wasn't just added as a poetic phrase, the word cool is the word Ruach which is the word for spirit.

Immediately following their disobedience they "heard (Shâma)" the Ruach (Spirit) of אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) in the Garden ready to walk with them... eager to enjoy fellowship, Ruach (Spirit) to ruach (spirit) with them. They heard His Ruach (Spirit) come into the garden desiring to be with them like always.

To hear (Shâma) is hearing with understanding, attention, and with a response. Response to what? To come to Him and walk with His Ruach (Spirit) as usual. Allowing the wind of His Ruach (Spirit) to blow over them and make things right.

Our translations then tell us that אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) said "where are you?" Actually, in the Hebrew it is a Semitic idiomatic expression meaning "he is nowhere." אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) wasn't asking a question; He wasn't asking where Adam was. He was crying out "Adam is nowhere in My heart."

This is not a picture of an angry Aluahym who is looking for Adam so that he can punish his "disobedience"... this first (1st) look at sin for us is a picture of a caring Father so sad that His son left His heart.

Oftentimes we falsely assume that having ears equates to listening. But most often times it does not mean that someone is hearing you and understanding you. So, what does אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) require from us? He's looking for Shâma levot....for hearing hearts. A hearing heart is a heart that is intent on... or committed to... doing whatever אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) commands... whatever He asks from us. And most importantly a hearing heart is rooted in love (Ahabah) (**Deuteronomy 11:1; John 14:15; 1 John 5:3**).

At the tower of Babel (**Genesis 11:7**) the lip or languages of mankind were confused and henceforward men could no longer "hear" one another. Clearly, they could hear noise and strange accents, even foreign words, but they meant nothing to them, so the word implies "understanding" in this key situation.

Shâma is used in the sense of discernment in **Genesis 41:15** when Yoseph is described as one able to shâma a dream for Pharaoh. A chapter later (**Genesis 42:23**) Yoseph uses a language interpreter to speak to his brothers while they do not realize he can actually "understand" them all along.

Probably the most famous use of shâma is in **Deuteronomy 6:4**, "Hear, O Yisrael: **יהוה** (Yahuah) our Aluahym, **יהוה** (Yahuah) is echad (one)". The opening words of the Hebrew Shâma (Shema) or creed.

After the dispersion of Babel **יהוה** (Yahuah) calls and reforms a people for himself who will "hear and obey (do)". At Sinai he gives them the book of the covenant through Moshah (Moses), to which the people respond "we will do and obey" (**Exodus 24:7**). Interestingly enough "doing" precedes "obeying" and the latter is the word shâma again, literally then "we will do and hear". Today let's have hearing hearts that do, let's respond to Him, walk with His Ruach (Spirit), committed to doing whatever He asks. Today let's be hearers and doers.

**יהוה** (Yahuah) promises to set Yisrael "high above all the nations of the earth" if they will "really hear and do (obey)" (**Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 28:1**), a phrase made up from a double use of shâma.

In the Greek Tanakh (Old Testament) Septuagint shâma is often translated, "to hearken", this in turn is used in the Brit Hadashah (New Testament) with the sense of "to obey".

The Brit Hadashah (New Testament)'s description of Amunah (faith) (**Romans 10:17**) as necessary for salvation and in order to please **יהוה** (Yahuah) (**Hebrews 11:6**) Amunah (faith) is said to come by hearing/shâma'-ing, i.e., by hearing, heeding, understanding and obeying. In the Gospels, too, hearing, understanding and obeying (doing), are linked **Matthew 7:24**, the house upon the rock; **Luke 8:21** and **11:28**, **וַיְהִי** (Yahusha)'s family are hearers and doers of the word. To hear is not enough, you must understand and act upon it, to these more shall be given **Mark 4:24**.

"Ears to hear" (**Matthew 11:5; 13:9,43; Mark 4:9,23; 7:16; Luke 8:8; 14:35**; in **Revelation 2-3** to each of the 7 churches; **(13:9)** is an Hebraism (**Deuteronomy 29:4; Ezekiel 12:2**) meaning "he who has understanding and a desire to obey (do)". Many times **וַיְהִי** (Yahusha) introduced his parables with "hear this parable...", i.e., understand it.

**John 14:15** "If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

**Acts 5:29** But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey **יהוה** (Yahuah) rather than men.

**1 Peter 1:14** As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,

**1 John 5:3** For this is the love (Ahabah) of אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah), that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

**Isaiah 1:19** If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;

**Psalms 119:30** I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I set your rules before me.

**Exodus 23:22** "But if you carefully obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.

**Luke 6:46** "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?"

**2 Kings 18:6** For he held fast to אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah). He did not depart from following him, but kept the commandments that אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) commanded Moshah (Moses).

**John 14:31** But I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.

**1 John 3:24** Whoever keeps his commandments abides in Aluahym, and Aluahym in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Ruach (Spirit) whom he has given us.

**John 8:51** Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

**Psalms 119:60** I hasten and do not delay to keep your commandments.

**Jeremiah 7:23** But this command I gave them: 'Obey my voice, and I will be your Aluahym, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.'

**Luke 11:28** But he said, Baruch (Blessed) rather are those who hear the word of אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) and keep it (Do it)!"

**Psalms 119:44** I will keep your Torah (law) continually, forever and ever,

**James 1:22-25** But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect Torah (law), the Torah (law) of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be Baruch (Blessed) in his doing.

**Psalms 112:1** Hallu (Praise) אַחַד (Yahuah) ! Baruch (Blessed) is the man who fears אַחַד (Yahuah), who greatly delights in his commandments!

**Hebrews 5:9** And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

**John 14:23** אַחַד (Yahusha) answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

**2 Chronicles 31:21** And every work that he undertook in the service of the house of אַחַד (Yahuah) and in accordance with the Torah (law) and the commandments, seeking his Aluahym, he did with all his heart, and prospered.

**Psalms 143:10** Teach me to do your will, for you are my Aluahym! Let your good Ruach (Spirit) lead me on level ground!

**John 15:14** You are my friends if you do what I command you.

**John 14:21** Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

**Philippians 2:8** And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a stake.

**Psalms 119:59** When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimonies;

**Exodus 19:5** Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;

**John 15:10** If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

**Romans 5:19** For as by the one (1) man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one (1) man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

**Deuteronomy 4:39-40** Know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that אַחַד (Yahuah) is Aluahym in Shamyim (Heavens) above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. Therefore you shall keep his statutes and his commandments, which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land that the אַחַד (Yahuah) your Aluahym

is giving you for all time.”

**Deuteronomy 6:18** And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of אַיָּהוָה (Yahuah), that it may go well with you, and that you may go in and take possession of the good land that אַיָּהוָה (Yahuah) swore to give to your fathers

**Romans 6:16** Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one (1) whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?

**Joshua 22:5** Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the Torah (law) that Moshah (Moses) the servant of אַיָּהוָה (Yahuah) commanded you, to love אַיָּהוָה (Yahuah) your Aluahym, and to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments and to cling to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

**Hebrews 13:17** Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

**1 John 3:22** And whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

**1 Samuel 15:22** And Samuel said, “Has אַיָּהוָה (Yahuah) as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of אַיָּהוָה (Yahuah)? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.

**Matthew 6:24** “No one can serve two (2) masters, for either he will hate the one (1) and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one (1) and despise the other. You cannot serve אַיָּהוָה (Yahuah) and money.

**Luke 6:46-48** “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.

**Matthew 7:21** “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of Shamyim (Heavens), but the one (1) who does the will of my Father who is in Shamyim (Heavens).

**2 Corinthians 10:5** We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the

knowledge of אַחַדְיָהוּ (Yahuah), and take every thought captive to obey Mashiach (Messiah),

**James 2:17** So also Amunah (faith) by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

**Psalms 99:7** In the pillar of the cloud he spoke to them; they kept his testimonies and the statute that he gave them.

**Ecclesiastes 12:13** The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear אַחַדְיָהוּ (Yahuah) and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

**Proverbs 10:8** The wise of heart will receive commandments, but a babbling fool will come to ruin.

**Psalms 119:100-102** I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts. I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word. I do not turn aside from your rules, for you have taught me.

**Romans 1:5** Through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of Amunah (faith) for the sake of his name among all the nations,

**Leviticus 26:3-13** "If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. Your threshing shall last to the time of the grape harvest, and the grape harvest shall last to the time for sowing. And you shall eat your bread to the full and dwell in your land securely. I will give Shalum (peace) in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid. And I will remove harmful beasts from the land, and the sword shall not go through your land. You shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. ...

**Matthew 9:9** As אַחַדְיָהוּ (Yahusha) passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.

**Proverbs 19:16** Whoever keeps the commandment keeps his life; he who despises his ways will die.

**Psalms 119:112** I incline my heart to perform your statutes forever, to the end.

**Psalms 111:10** The fear of אַחַדְיָהוּ (Yahuah) is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!

**Ephesians 6:1-3** Children, obey your parents in **אֱלֹהִים** (Yahuah), for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first (1st) commandment with a promise), "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."

**Acts 2:38** And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of **וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ** (Yahusha) HaMashiach for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Ruach HaKodesh.

**James 2:24** You see that a person is justified by works and not by Amunah (faith) alone.

**2 John 1:6** And this is love (Ahabah), that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it.

**James 2:26** For as the body apart from the ruach (spirit) is dead, so also Amunah (faith) apart from works (doing) is dead.

**James 1:22** But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

**John 13:17** If you know these things, Baruch (Blessed) are you if you do them.

**Hebrews 5:8** Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.

**Proverbs 16:7** When a man's ways please **אֱלֹהִים** (Yahuah), he makes even his enemies to be at shalum (peace) with him.

**John 5:30** "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

**Colossians 3:20** Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases **אֱלֹהִים** (Yahuah).

**John 3:16-17** "For **אֱלֹהִים** (Yahuah) so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For **אֱלֹהִים** (Yahuah) did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

**Joshua 22:2** And said to them, "You have kept all that Moshah (Moses) the servant of **אֱלֹהִים** (Yahuah) commanded you and have obeyed my voice in all that I have commanded you.

**2 John 1:6-9** And this is Ahabah (love), that we walk according to his commandments;

this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it. For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of **OWYAZL** (Yahusha) HaMashiach in the flesh. Such a one (1) is the deceiver and the anti-Mashiach. Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Mashiach (Messiah), does not have **AYAZL** (Yahuah). Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

**Philippians 2:12** Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,

**Ephesians 2:10** For we are his workmanship, created in **OWYAZL** (Yahusha) HaMashiach for good works, which **AYAZL** (Yahuah) prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

**Romans 6:17** But thanks be to **AYAZL** (Yahuah), that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,

**Acts 5:32** And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Ruach HaKodesh, whom **AYAZL** (Yahuah) has given to those who obey him."

**Matthew 19:17** And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one (1) who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments."

**Psalms 119:2** Baruch (Blessed) are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart,

**Galatians 6:2** Bear one (1) another's burdens, and so fulfill the Torah (law) of Mashiach.

**Romans 8:28** And we know that for those who love **AYAZL** (Yahuah) all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

**Luke 12:38** If he comes in the second (2nd) watch, or in the third (3rd), and finds them awake, Baruch (Blessed) are those servants!

**Deuteronomy 11:26-28** "See, I am setting before you today a Barachah (Blessing) and a curse: the Barachah (Blessing), if you obey the commandments of **AYAZL** (Yahuah) your Aluahym, which I command you today, and the curse, if you do not obey the

commandments of אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) your Aluahym, but turn aside from the way that I am commanding you today, to go after other Aluahym (gods) that you have not known.

**1 John 2:17** And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) abides forever.

**Psalms 103:18** To those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.

**Luke 8:15** As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.

**John 8:31-32** So אֱלֹהִים (Yahusha) said to the Hebrews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

**Ezra 7:10** For Ezra had set his heart to study the Torah (Law) of אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah), and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Yisrael.

**Luke 1:6** And they were both righteous before אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah), walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah).

**Matthew 25:20-23** And he who had received the five (5) talents came forward, bringing five (5) talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five (5) talents; here I have made five (5) talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' And he also who had the two (2) talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two (2) talents; here I have made two (2) talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

**Psalms 103:20** Barach (Bless) אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah), O you his Malakym (Angels), you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word!

**Genesis 49:10** The scepter shall not depart from אֱלֹהִים (Yahudah/Judah), nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

**Psalms 119:129** Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them.

**Joshua 5:6** For the people of Yisrael walked forty (40) years in the wilderness, until all the nation, the men of war who came out of Mitsryim (Egypt), perished, because they did not obey the voice of אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah); אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) swore to them that he would not let them see the land that אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) had sworn to their fathers to give to us, a land flowing with milk and honey.

**Psalms 119:168** I keep your precepts and testimonies, for all my ways are before you.

**John 14:6** אֲנִי הַיְהוָה (Yahusha) said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

**Proverbs 6:20** My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching.

**Romans 7:12** So the Torah (law) is Kadosh (Holy), and the commandment is Kadosh (holy) and Righteous and Good.

**Isaiah 48:18-19** Oh that you had paid attention to my commandments! Then your shalum (peace) would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea; your offspring would have been like the sand, and your descendants like its grains; their name would never be cut off or destroyed from before me."

**Acts 24:16** So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) and man.

**Deuteronomy 28:1-68** "And if you faithfully obey the voice of אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) your Aluahym, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) your Aluahym will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these Barachah (blessing)s shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) your Aluahym. Baruch (Blessed) shall you be in the city, and Baruch (blessed) shall you be in the field. Baruch (Blessed) shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. Baruch (Blessed) shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. ... Shâma (Hear and Do/Obey)!