

## **The Talmidim and the Shama (pronounced sha - ma')**

*Talmidim* (plural; singular *talmid*), "disciples." The English word "disciple" fails to convey the richness of the relationship between a rabbi and his *talmidim* in the first century A.D. Teachers, both itinerant like Yeshua (Jesus) and the settled ones, attracted followers who wholeheartedly gave themselves over to their teachers (though not in a mindless way, as happens today in some cults). The essence of the **relationship was one of trust in every area of living**, and its goal was to make the *talmid* like his rabbi in knowledge, wisdom and ethical behavior.

**To be "discipled" then in the manner that most imitates the method used by Yeshua involved the following characteristics:**

- 1. You must be willing to submit to a rabbi** (ours is Yeshua - the one rabbi who received His *authority* from God Himself.

(a Torah rabbi had memorized [hidden in his heart] the first five books of our Bible - these men were a dime a dozen in Jesus' day. They could teach nothing new. The rabbis with "authority" had memorized the whole *Tanakh* [Old Testament]. There may have been as few as 15 of these master teachers throughout Jewish history. These men had the authority to teach a new "yoke" [interpretation of the text]. They taught using Rabbinic dialogue whereby a talmid would ask a question; the rabbi would respond with a question; the talmidim would discuss among themselves and respond with another question with the correct answer imbedded in the question. This dialogue could continue for hours. The rabbis used this technique plus pithy sayings and parables to *speak to the heart* of the talmidim. They believed that "if the heart is moved, the mind will follow, but if the mind is moved the heart may never follow."

- 2. You must be part of a small community of like-minded *talmidim*.**

- 3. You must be willing to become a "disciple maker."**

- 4. You must be 100 % committed to know and obey *the text* (the Bible).**

\*When the talmidim gathered to explore the text (which was typically read to them while they stood in respect of God's law), they would begin by repeating the following passage from Deuteronomy called the Shama. They considered this ritual recommitment to God the act of "being born again."

Deut 6:4-5 Hebrew

4 Sh<sup>a</sup>ma` Yisraa'eel Yahweh 'Eloheynu Yahweh 'echaad  
5 W<sup>a</sup>'aahabtaa 'eet Yahweh 'Eloheykaa b<sup>a</sup>kaal- l<sup>a</sup>baabkaa uwbkaal- napsh<sup>a</sup>kaa uwbkaal- m<sup>a</sup>'odekaa

Deut 6:4-5 NIV

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.