INTRODUCTION TO THE RECITATION OF THE SH'MA.
The call to worship marks the formal beginning of the Sha'harit (morning) service. Sha'harit always includes two central moments: the Recitation of the Sh'ma, and the Amidah (the silent prayer). Brakhot surrounding the Sh'ma serve to interpret the themes of its biblical verses. Preceding the Sh'ma, in which we declare that God is one, are two brakhot. The first affirms that God is the creator of all, further remarking on the wonder of creation and the morning light. The first paragraph of the Sh'ma speaks of the love for God, and so the second brakhah acknowledges the inverse: God's love of the people Israel as manifest in the gifts of the teachings of Torah. A single brakhah follows the morning recitation of the Sh'ma; it speaks of redemption, reflecting the theme of the exodus from Egypt, which is introduced in the third paragraph of the Sh'ma.

ALMIGHTY. A meditation for Bar'khu written by Yehudah Halevi (Spain, d. 1141).

BAR'KHU: THE CALL TO WORSHIP TOGETHER. The leader calls the congregation together as a minyan; the congregation, by responding, acknowledges its being assembled for prayer.

TO WHOM ALL PRAISE IS DIRECTED. The Talmud of the Land of Israel explains the word ha-m'vorakh to mean “whom all of us praise” (Berakhot 73).