

# TEFILLAH TIPS

## TEFILLAT SHACHARIT—SHABBAT

Dear Friends,

I hope you all had a relaxing winter vacation. We are now proud to present our next set of Tefillah Tips-Shabbat Shacharit Part 2.

Daven well!!

### AHAVA RABBAH – WITH AN ABUNDANT LOVE

The second and concluding blessing before the recitation of the *Shema* is *Ahava Rabbah* which means, *With an abundant Love*. *Ahava Rabbah* expresses our recognition of the overflowing love that G-d has for His people.

There is a dispute recorded in the Talmud *Brachot* 11B regarding the appropriate wording for the opening phrase of this *Tefillah*. One opinion is *Ahava Rabbah Ahavtanu* – With an abundant love you have loved us; and the second opinion is *Ahavat Olam Beit Yisrael Amcha Ahavata* – With an eternal love You have loved Your nation. In practice we utilize both opinions – *Ahava Rabbah* in the morning at *Shacharit* and *Ahavat Olam* in the evening by *Maariv*.

The *Etz Yosef* writes in his commentary on the *siddur* that the letter *Zayin*, which is numerically 7, is conspicuously missing in both *Ahavat Olam* and *Ahava Rabbah*. The reason for this is to reference the 7 potential types of love available in a natural immediate family i.e. a father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter and spouse. The missing *Zayin* – 7 in our *Tefillot* demonstrate that the love that *Hashem* has for each and every one of us is **more powerful and beyond** even the closest family bonds in life.

Rav Noach Orlowek *shlitta* of Jerusalem often mentions in his lectures how vital it is to teach our children and remind ourselves of G-d's infinite love for all of His creations. A child that grows up feeling loved feels special. Is there any love more special than the Love of the King of all Kings?!

It is logical that before we chant the biblical commandment in the *Shema* in the morning and the evening, *Vahavata et Hashem Elokecha* – *You shall love the Lord your G-d*, we first recite with gratitude and appreciation *Ahava Rabbah/Olam* – G-d's abundant and immeasurable love for us.

The human condition and experience throughout life is enhanced and often driven by love. So too – our *Tefillah-Prayer* that we engage in day in and day out – in the morning, afternoon and night, before and after we eat and drink and even after we visit the restroom is a testament of the loving relationship between us and *Hashem* Himself.

Take Home Tip: How's your loving relationship with *Hashem*? Take a few moments every day to recognize G-d's infinite love for you and how you can strengthen your relationship with *Hashem*.

Shabbat Shalom,  
Rabbi Ephraim Epstein