

TEFILLAH TIPS

Ahavat Olam

The second blessing before reciting Shema in the evening is “*Ahavat olam beit Yisrael- With an eternal love You have loved the House of Israel.*”

There is perhaps no warmer and secure feeling in the world then feeling loved. A child or a spouse that knows that his/her parents love them feels secure. A spouse that knows that his /her significant other loves and adores them feels strengthened. Even a student in school is fortified by the love and care of a rebbe /teacher. We, the Jewish nation, should feel infused and inspired as well as fortified, strengthened and secure by the eternal love G-d manifests unto us. It is THIS love that has preserved us through the millennia despite the thousands of external and internal threats that have risen up against us.

How does G-d express this eternal love unto us?

Torah umitzvoth chukim umishpatim ohtanu leemadita – through His having shared and taught us the elixir of life and afterlife the Torah including all of the Mitzvoth. THIS IS THE GIFT OF THE AGES; THIS IS WHAT STRENGTHENS US AND PROTECTS US.

Therefore we exclaim – *Ki heym chayeinu veohrech yameynu uvahem nehgeh yomam alaylah –* They are our life and the length of our days; and we will reflect upon them every day and night.

* Rav Chaim Twersky once explained the verse above by comparing a Jew and Torah to a dialysis patient. Dialysis patients take their dialysis quite seriously. They generally do not miss appointments; and they wait on line patiently for their turn. Why? Because they **know** that dialysis is their **lifeline**; without it they cease to exist. So too, without G-d’s love and the Torah, we the Jewish people would cease to exist.

Therefore, we implore Hashem to never remove his eternal love / Torah from us – “*Veahavatecha al tasir mimehnu olamim.*”

“Baruch Atoh Hashem ohaiv amoh Yisrael – Blessed are You G-d who LOVES His nation Israel.”

After reciting *Maariv Aravim* and reflecting on G-d’s having created the beautiful and complex world we live in, and saying *Ahavat Olam* and acknowledging the Eternal love G-d expresses unto us with His Torah, we are now ready to recite the SHEMA YISRAEL.

Take Home Tip: We all know from history as well as from daily life that there are both pleasant and challenging times in life. When we recite *Ahavat Olam* we remember that our Father in Heaven loves and cares for us divinely – more powerfully than anyone else ever could. This should give us the strength and solace to engage and deal with the vicissitudes of life.

Shabbat Shalom,

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