

TEFILLAH TIPS

TEFILLAT SHACHARIT—SHABBAT

***Please respond describing if and how these Tefillah Tips are disseminated to members.
Thank you***

SHEMA YISRAEL II

After the first *pasuk*, we recite “*Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso Leolam Vaed* - Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity. The simple understanding as to why we don’t say *Baruch Shem* out loud is because unlike the rest of the *Shema*, *Baruch Shem* is nowhere to be found in the written Torah and interrupts two Biblical sentences. It is however mentioned in the Talmud in tractate *Pesachim* 56A that our Father, Jacob said this sentence to his children before passing away (see last week’s edition). Therefore the Talmud concludes it should be said in an undertone.

The *Shema* continues with the words “*Veahavta Et Hashem Elokecha* - And you shall love the Lord your G-d”. How exactly are you to express your love unto Him? “*Bechol Levavecha, uvechol nafshecha, uvechol meodecha* - with all of your heart, your soul, and your possessions”.

The commentators ask, “How can the Torah command us to emote”?! We are commanded to don *Tefillin*, to eat kosher, and to observe the Shabbat, but to **love** G-d? Emotions are triggered and experienced but are not necessarily accessible at will. How then shall we understand - “*Veahavta Et Hashem* - You Shall love G-d”?

HaRav Baruch HaLevi Epstein zt”l (1860-1941) in his work on the *Siddur*, *The Baruch Sheamar* advances two approaches to understanding this verse.

The first approach maintains the literal translation of *Veahavta* – You shall love Him. He explains that the commandment of “*Veahavta*” must be seen in light of the previous prayer in the *Siddur* - “*Ahava Rabbah*”. The prayer “*Ahava Rabbah*” demonstrates the absolute all-encompassing love that our Creator has for us. “*Ahava Rabbah Ahavtanu* - G-d You have loved us with an abundant love”. Once we know, understand, feel and appreciate G-d’s adoration and love for us, it is only natural for us to experience love for Him in return. Of course we cannot be commanded to conjure an emotion at will, but we can be commanded to focus on G-d’s benevolent ways that will trigger in us a deep love for Him in return.

The second approach is based on a passage in the Talmud tractate *Yoma* 86A which interprets *Veahavta Et...* to mean - “*G-d should become beloved through your actions*”. It is not enough to simply perform *Mitzvoth* - commandments. We are obliged to live and behave in a way that creates honor and dignity for Hashem in His world. The way that we talk, the way that we dress and the way we relate to our family and colleagues all reflect on our Maker- G-d. So the first verse in the paragraph implores us - *Veahavta Et Hashem*”, to love G-d by making a *Kiddush Hashem* – living a noble and ambassadorial life that celebrates the royalty, magnificence and universality of G-d and Torah. In our world where the name Jew and the name of the Jewish State - Israel are not always appreciated and revered by the nations of the world (to put it mildly), fulfilling this *Mitzvah* properly is essential in strengthening and maintaining the just and eternal nation we represent.

Take Home Tip – Remember that *Hashem* loves us more than words can say, and that we can express our love to Him by demonstrating honesty, morality and goodness throughout the day.

Shabbat Shalom.

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