

TEFILLAH TIPS

TEFILLAT SHACHARIT—SHABBAT

Veshamru Bnei Yisrael Et Hashabbat

The concluding verse in *Yismach Moshe* states: *Ushnei Luchot Avanim... Vechatuv Bahem Shemirat Shabbat – Vecheyn Katuv Bitoratecha* – Moshe descended from the mountain and brought forth the Stone Tablets with the **Guarding of Shabbat** carved into them; as it states in scripture Exodus 31:16 *Veshamru Bnei Yisrael Et HaShabbat Laasot Et Hashabbat Ledorotom Brit Olam...* The People of Israel shall guard the Shabbat and keep *Shabbat* for all generations.. it is an eternal sign between Israel and ME, since for six days G-d constructed the world and on the seventh He rested.

Veshamru is one of the most well known passages in the *Torah*. It is recited Friday nights before the *Shabbat Amidah* and it is also the opening passage of the *Kiddush* we recite *Shabbat* morning after services and before the meal. Over the centuries, beautiful *nigguim* / melodies have been composed to express the grandeur of these verses (for your listening pleasure click on the following) - <http://youtu.be/11BeUK3Vojo>

Careful observation of this *Tefillah* enables us to ask some compelling questions.

1. At Mt. Sinai, we are taught in the Talmud that G-d stated both **Zachor** – Remember the *Shabbat* as well as **Shamor** – Guard the *Shabbat*. Why does our prayer only state **Shamor** – *Veshamru Bnei Yisrael....?*
2. The prayer invokes the awe inspiring transmission of the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai, but quotes from a completely different passage in the *Torah* 31:16 from *Ki Tisa* – Why?

The *Anaf Yosef* states that since the first set of Tablets said **Zachor** and were broken, and the second set of Tablets that remained forever whole had the phrase **Shamor** et *Yom HaShabbat*. It is therefore appropriate that the *Tefillah* we recite today reflects the unbroken version - *Veshamru Bnei Yisrael Et Hashabbat*.

The *Iyun Tefillah* explains that the reason for including *Shamor* is because the *Torah* stresses *Shamor* with much greater frequency than *Zachor*. *Shamor* – Guard the *Shabbat* – commands us to maintain and protect the sanctity of *Shabbat* by abstaining from prohibited labors. On the other hand, *Zachor*-Remember, teaches us the positive *Mitzvoth* on *Shabbat*; like *Kiddush* and eating three meals. We see that *Shamor* is emphasized by being written seven times while *zachor* is only mentioned once.

The *Iyun Tefillah* also reasons that the *Mitzvah* of *Shabbat* is quoted from Exodus 31 and not from the Ten Commandments so that one could not claim that the Ten Commandments have more significance than the other 603. Additionally, while the Ten Commandments' mention of *Shabbat* is presented in a universal fashion, Exodus 31:16 emphasizes the seamlessly close relationship between G-d and the Jewish people – *Veshamru et Bnei Yisrael Et Hashabbat* – The nation of Israel **alone** is commanded to observe the *Shabbat*.

Take Home Tip: *Shabbat* is our weekly reminder of the eternal relationship we share with our Creator. *Oht Hi* – it is an **eternal sign**. It's our task to read the sign each week and celebrate the gift of *Shabbat*.

Shabbat Shalom
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