

# Afterthoughts

- Yocheved Bienenfeld

## V'HAYU HAD'VARIM HA'ELEH

The first passage of the Sh'ma tells us to love HaShem in various ways: B'CHOL L'VAV'CHA UVCHOL NAFSH'CHA UVCHOL M'ODECHA - "with all your heart, your soul, your means". It then continues and instructs us to follow the dictates of the Torah, to teach them to our children, to don Tefillin and to fulfill the mitzva of Mezuzah, both of which remind us of the mitzvot of the Torah.

I had always seen this continuation of V'HAYU HAD'VARIM HA'ELEH as a list of requirements added to those at the beginning. Maybe I was wrong and it is actually telling us more. Certainly, these are requirements but, in addition, it could be a description of how we are to show V'AHAVTA - to show Gd we love Him. Beyond the opening list of B'CHOL L'VAV'CHA..., this is adding and saying: you also demonstrate your love of Gd by V'HAYU HAD'VARIM HA'ELEH - doing His mitzvot and teaching His Torah.

After all, we learn from Hoshei'a (14:3), which we read on Shabbat Shuva: K'CHU IMACHEM D'VARIM...

"take with you, words". Isn't it possible that aside from the traditional understanding that D'VARIM means "words" - that we should verbally confess our sins as part of t'shuva; isn't it possible that D'VARIM refers to V'HAYU HAD'VARIM HA'ELEH, these things - the Torah and mitzvot is what you should bring with you to show your t'shuva? The Malbim says that K'CHU IMACHEM D'VARIM refers to T'SHUVA MEI'AHAVA, repentance that reflects your love of Gd, things that will serve as a merit, which is "mitzvot and good deeds" - things that are sourced in the Torah. This, then, is indeed, something that shows V'AHAVTA EIT HASHEM - how we love HaShem.

Although Rashi (Va'etchanan 6:6) does state that V'HAYU HAD'VARIM HA'ELEH is the AHAVA, I believe there is a little difference between what he says and what I am referring to. Rashi: "And what is the love spoken of in the previous verse? V'HAYU HAD'VARIM HA'ELEH; as a result of this (the words of the Torah) being on your heart, you become aware of the Holy One, Blessed is He, and attach yourself to His ways." Rashi tells us that the way to come to love HaShem is to follow the Torah, thus getting to "know" Him and cling to Him.

What I am suggesting is rather how we can express that love. And so, even though the understanding of V'HAYU HAD'VARIM HA'ELEH in both cases is related to V'AHAVTA EIT HASHEM, their direction is different. Rashi = How to achieve that love; my suggestion = how to express that love. 🌸