



## DIVREI MENACHEM

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### Is The “Second” Like the “First”?

In this week’s Parsha, we come across “the second paragraph of the Shema.” In many ways, the text of this “second” paragraph mimics the first, urging us, perhaps, to question the repetition of the commands to teach the children and put on Tefillin.

What is the fundamental difference between the two paragraphs? Our rabbis teach that the *first* paragraph of the Shema, preceded by the affirmation of Hashem’s essential oneness or unity, is mainly about belief in Hashem, *Emunah*.

Thus, the Tefillin encompasses the brain and heart, urging us to know and feel God’s Presence. The Mezuzah confronts us when we move from our transcendent comfort zone into the real world.

Moreover, you are to love Hashem with all your faculties, with your heart, your soul, and your *might*, where “might” means material possessions. Notably, however, the opening line of the *second paragraph* omits this element –

*“If you surely hearken to my commandments that I command you today, to love Hashem, your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul...”*

What happened to “with all your might”? For the Baal HaTanya, the answer lies in the question. For the above acclamation goes

beyond love, *per se*: You must love, and you must *serve* Hashem!

Says the Baal HaTanya, you cannot, *de facto*, force someone to love. However, you can teach someone how to *express* love. As a husband runs to please his wife and dedicate his worldly possessions to her, so should you serve Hashem. Your dedication and observance of Mitzvot are proof of the faith you expressed in God in the first paragraph – and proof of your love.

Indeed, the second paragraph is primarily about observance, a test of our love and obedience. And by giving of ourselves in the service of Hashem, we benefit from His beneficence; He repays in kind. The rains will come on time, and our sustenance will be assured.

Indeed, it should be of no surprise that although we can send rovers to explore the planets, we never figured out how to make rains come at the appropriate times for successful harvests.

Ultimately, it behooves each of us first to exert our personal belief in Hashem and, then, to learn, teach, and practice the Mitzvot so that, in the collective merit, our days will be lengthened in the Land that Hashem swore to our forefathers. ■

Shabbat Shalom! Menachem Persoff



Mazal Tov to  
Rachel & Shmuel Stewart  
and family on the birth of a grandson

