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## Parshah

### What does it really mean to love G-d with all your might **ואהבת את ה' אלקיך... ובכל מאדך**?

In this week's Parsha we have the first paragraph of the Shema and in it we have the famous commandment, "And you shall love your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might".

The Baal Haturim writes that if you rearrange the letters of the word **ואהבת** (and you shall love) you can spell out the word **האבות** – the fathers. He explains that when the verse tells us, "And you shall love Hashem with all your heart, this is referring to the first of the patriarchs, Avrohom, for he was the one to find Hashem in his heart. The words to love Hashem with all your soul is a reference to Yitzchok who gave his soul to the Almighty at the Akaidoh (the binding of Isaac). Finally to love Hashem with all your might, **מאדך**, is referring to Yaakov who declared to Hashem that whatever physically would be given to him in this world, he would tithe it for Hashem. Hence it is through the forefathers that there are three aspects to loving G-d.

The Gemorah in Brochos gives us two explanations to loving G-d with all your **מאדך** – your might. The first one, as described above pertaining to Yaakov, is that a person can demonstrate his love for Hashem through the material objects that he acquires, by dedicating part of them to the Master of the world. The second explanation the Gemorah teaches is that with whatever measure (middoh) He (G-d) metes out to you, then you are to thank Him.

The Divrai Yosher asks, who revealed this aspect of love for Hashem that whatever comes the way of a person whether good or bad he should thank G-d?

It appears that it is Dovid Hamelech (King David) who showed constantly that whatever situation arose in his life he would always give thanks to Hashem. And so we find in the tractate of Brochas that a person is required to accept everything with simcha (joy). Dovid says in Tehillim (Psalms), "Of loving kindness and justice I will sing to you Hashem" – meaning if there is kindness I will sing or even

if there will be exacting justice I will also sing to G-d.

Rabbi Akiva commented that a person should accustom himself to say whatever the Merciful One does, it is always for the good. In other words whatever happens to a person he should always feel that G-d is making it happen for his own good and through such an attitude he will be able to joyfully show gratitude to Hashem.

There is a famous story told about Rabbi Akiva that when he was once seeking hospitality in a particular town he found that no one could help him. With his lantern, rooster and donkey in hand he had to find refuge in the forest. During the night a wind blew and extinguished his lantern, a cat came and ate his rooster, followed by a lion that ate his donkey. On each of these unfortunate occurrences Rabbi Akiva declared, "Everything that the Merciful One does is for the good". In the morning Rabbi Akiva found out that a marauding army had come and plundered the town during the night, taking many captives on its departure. Rabbi Akiva realised that he could have been captured if he had spent the night in the town. Rashi comments that if his candle would have remained alight the army would have seen him and if the donkey would have brayed or the rooster would have called out, the army would have heard and taken him. Everything that had happened that night to Rabbi Akiva had turned out in the end for the good.

The Rabbainu Yonah writes that one should bless even the bad things that come the way of a person with simcha and accept the instruction of G-d with a pleasant countenance. He should consider that everything that has happened for what seemingly looks bad as an atonement for his iniquities. Indeed the Yalkut Shimonee explains the verse in Sefer Mishlai (The Book of Proverbs), "joy for the righteous person is doing justice" – the *simcha* for the righteous human-being is when G-d is doing

justice to him for he is then wiping the slate clean of his transgressions.

This matter is particularly pertinent to Dovid Hamelech for whatever happened to him even if it appeared really negative, Dovid somehow saw the good in it and therefore gave thanks to Hashem with happiness.

Once again the Gemorah in Brochos comments on the verse, "a Mizmor (song) of David when he fled from his son Avsholom. Avsholom led an open rebellion against his father and was out to kill him and confiscate his kingdom. The Gemorah asks why is this a Mizmor (a Song) for Dovid? Surely this should be a Kinnoh (a lament)? The Gemorah explains that since Hashem had said to Dovid Hamelech, "Behold I am going to establish something bad that will emanate from within your house". Dovid was saddened and thought that maybe there was a servant or a *mamzar* that he had not shown sufficient sensitivity. However once he saw that the source to this negativity came from his own son Avsholom, he was happy, for now he realised the source to the catastrophe was literally within his household and as a consequence he composed a Mizmor (a song).

Similarly the Gemorah in Kiddushin asks on the verse, "A Mizmor to Assaff. Hashem, the nations are coming against your inheritance". Once again the Rabbis ask, surely this should be a Kinnoh to Assaff not a Mizmor? The Rabbis resolved this problem teaching us that Dovid saw prophetically into the loving kindness from above in that Hashem was going to vent his anger on sticks and stones and not on the nation of Israel. We see that Dovid Hamelech had this special strength to see the good even in the most stressful of situations. So it is no surprise that it is Dovid who demonstrates to us that you can love Hashem with all your **מאדך** – meaning in every aspect of life a person can give thanks to Hashem.

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- 2. Rashi (3:23) brings that there are ten expressions of tefilla. Why did Moshe use here the expression of techina, supplication, asking for a matnas chinom, a present as opposed to any other expression or why not ask for permission due to his own merits?