

וְאָהַבְתָּ V'ahavta

V'ahavta is a part of the Sh'ma and its blessings and always comes immediately after the Sh'ma towards the beginning of a service.

V'ahavta means and you shall love. There are other important words in this prayer too. In the second line we see the words Lvav'cha which means your heart (lev means heart), nafsh'cha which means your soul (nefesh means soul). We also see the word mezuzot which means more than one mezuzah (a small box containing the words of the Sh'ma and V'ahavta).

V'ahavta commands us to teach our children that one way of showing our love for God is by respecting and following God's commandments. It even gives us ways to remember to do this with symbols, like putting up a mezuzah on the doorposts of our house, and wrapping ourselves with Tefillin (black boxes that contain the words of the Sh'ma and V'ahavta).

וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ,
בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ, וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ, וּבְכָל מְאֹדְךָ.
וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה,
אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם, עַל לְבָבְךָ.
וּשְׁנַנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ, וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָם, בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ,
וּבְלִכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ, וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ, וּבְקוּמְךָ.
וּקְנַשְׁתָּם לְאוֹת עַל יָדְךָ, וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ.
וְכַתַּבְתָּם עַל מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ.

And you should love God with your whole heart, with every breath, with all you have. Take these words that I command you now to heart. Teach them intently to your children. Speak them when you sit inside your house or walk upon the road, when you lie down and when you rise. And bind them as a sign upon your hand, and keep them visible before your eyes. Inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.