

# Va-Etchanan 8/13/22

Source Sheet by Dina Becker

## Deuteronomy 6:4-5

(4) Hear, O Israel! ה' is our God, ה' alone.  
 (5) You shall love your God ה' with (ב') all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

## Devarim Rabbah 2:37

"And you shall love the Eternal your G-d with all your heart and all your soul". What is "with all your heart and all your soul"? With every single soul-breath that was created in you. Rabbi Meir said "on every breath that a person takes, they are required to praise their Creator. From where do we learn this? From Ps 150:6 "Let all that breathes (or every breath) praise the Eternal." ... The rabbis said, come and see the Holy Blessed One fills the world and the soul-breath fills the body. The Holy Blessed One sustains the world and the soul-breath sustains the body. The Holy Blessed One is unique in the world and the soul-breath is unique in the body. The Holy Blessed One doesn't sleep and the soul-breath doesn't sleep. The Holy Blessed One is pure in the world and the soul-breath is pure in the body. The Holy Blessed One sees and is not seen and the soul-breath sees and is not seen. The soul-breath that sees and is not seen should come and praise the Holy Blessed One who sees and is not seen.

## דברים ו'ד'-ה'

(ד) שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד: (ה)  
 וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ  
 וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ:

## דברים רבה ב'ל"ז

(לז) וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ  
 וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ (דברים ו, ה), מֵהוּ בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ  
 וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ, בְּכָל נֶפֶשׁ וְנֶפֶשׁ שֶׁבָרָא בְּךָ.  
 אָמַר רַבִּי מְאִיר עַל כָּל גְּשִׁימָה וְנִשְׁימָה  
 שֶׁאֵדָם מַעֲלָה חַיִּב לְקַלֵּס אֶת יוֹצְרוֹ, מִנִּין,  
 שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (תהלים קנ, ו): כָּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תִּהְיֶה לְ  
 יְהוָה.... רַבֵּן אֲמַרִי בּוֹא וּרְאֵה הַקְּדוֹשׁ  
 בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְמַלֵּא אֶת עוֹלָמוֹ וְהַנְּפֶשׁ הַזֹּה  
 מְמַלְאָה אֶת הַגּוּף, הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא  
 סוֹבֵל אֶת עוֹלָמוֹ וְהַנְּפֶשׁ הַזֹּה סוֹבֵלֶת אֶת  
 הַגּוּף, הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יְחִיד בְּעוֹלָמוֹ  
 וְהַנְּפֶשׁ יְחִידָה בַּגּוּף, הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא  
 אֵין לְפָנָיו שְׁנָה וְהַנְּפֶשׁ אֵינָה יִשְׁנָה,  
 הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא טְהוֹר בְּעוֹלָמוֹ וְהַנְּפֶשׁ  
 הַזֹּה טְהוֹרָה בַּגּוּף, הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא  
 רוֹאֶה וְאֵינוֹ נִרְאֶה וְהַנְּפֶשׁ הַזֹּה רוֹאֶה  
 וְאֵינָה נִרְאִית, תְּבֵא הַנְּפֶשׁ שֶׁהִיא רוֹאֶה  
 וְאֵינָה נִרְאִית וְתַקְלֵס לְהַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא  
 שֶׁהוּא רוֹאֶה וְאֵינוֹ נִרְאֶה.

**Sefat Emet, Deuteronomy, Vaetchanan**1871: *Translation by Art Green*

"You shall love the Eternal your G-d" (Deut. 6:5). The Midrash quotes, "Whom do I have in heaven; I desire none alongside you in earth (Ps. 73:25). This means one should want nothing but G-d.

"With all your soul"--"with every single soul-breath that G-d has created in you." And the meaning of *be-khol levaevekha* is not "with all your heart," as most people interpret it. But rather, we need to become aware that each feeling we have is only the life-force that comes from G-d. "A person does not bang his finger below unless it is decreed from above"; we are but "the axe in the woodchopper's hand."

This is the meaning of "the Eternal is one." It goes beyond the fact that there is just one G-d, there is the Eternal and *nothing* else. Every thing that exists is only the Eternal's blessed life, but it is hidden. The same is true of the Eternal's blessed will. Therefore, the love of G-d has to be in every feeling a person has. This is "all your heart."

**From Art Green:** *Here we have the mystical claim of Hasidism in its most undiluted form. Since nothing but G-d is real, we should both seek and find nothing but G-d in all our lives. Every feeling and emotion, every want and desire, come from nowhere other than the being and will of G-d. To worship G-d with "all your heart" requires recognizing this truth and living in response to it.*

*How would we begin to make this teaching real in our religious and emotional lives? It would require two steps: a great opening and a great directing. The first step is one of radical self-acceptance and inclusion. "I will stop fighting off my thoughts, stop picking and choosing among my desires. All of them, even those I like least, have their root in G-d, for there is no other root." The second step is that of directing and uplifting each of these thoughts and desires. Try addressing each of your desires in this way: "The game is up, O desire. You can't fool me any more. I know that you too come from G-d, even if in fallen form. Now I will take you back to your root, using the energy you arouse in me to give to G-d in yet a more whole way."*

*This teaching does not answer for us the critical question of which desires or emotions we may act upon, celebrating G-d's presence in the fulfillment of desire, and which we must hold*

**שפת אמת, דברים, ואתחנן**  
 תרל"א: במדרש ואהבת את ה' כו' מי  
 לי בשמים ועמך לא חפצתי כו'. פי' שלא  
 להיות נמצא שום רצון אחר רק להש"י.  
 נפשך בכל נפש ונפש שברא בך כו'. ופי'  
 בכל לבבך אינו כמו עם כל לבבך כמו  
 שמפרשין העולם. רק ממש בכל הרגשה  
 שבאדם ידע שהוא רק חיותו מהש"י  
 שאין אדם נוקף אצבעו כו'. והוא כגרזן  
 ביד החוצב. וזה ה' אחד פי' לבד שהוא  
 אלקי אחד. רק שהוא אחד אין עוד שכל  
 דבר הוה הוא חיותו ית' ממש רק  
 שנסתר וכן רצונו ית' א"כ צריך להיות  
 נמצא אהבתו ית' בכל הרגש שבאדם  
 וזה בכל לבבך כנ"ל:

*back, worshipping G-d with transformed desire alone. The spiritual life requires a proper balancing between these two; it is the critical role of halakha--whether the old or a new form--to offer us guidance as to where those lines are drawn.*

by Rabbi Rachel Barenblat, the Velveteen Rabbi

## SHVITI

שׁוֹיִתִּי יי לְנִגְדֵי תָמִיד / I keep God before me always. -- Psalm 16:8

Always before me:  
in the checkout line  
at the pharmacy  
where I'm reading mail  
on my phone, in the pixels  
of my computer screen

in the locked ward  
where I never know  
who will want  
to talk about God  
and who will shuffle past  
without meeting my eyes

in the stranger  
whose barbed words  
leave me sick and sad  
and in the tallit  
I wrap around my shoulders  
to hold me together

in my toddler's cries  
at four in the morning  
in the painful conversation  
I don't want to begin  
in every ache  
help me to find You

