

אַהֲבַת עוֹלָם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל

עֲמַד אֲהַבְתָּ

תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת, חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים

אוֹתָנוּ לְמַדָּתָּ

עַל כֵּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ,

בְּשִׁכְבֵּנוּ וּבְקוּמָנוּ

נְשִׁיחַ בְּחֻקֶּיךָ

וְנִשְׁמַח בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ

לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

כִּי הֵם חַיֵּינוּ

וְאַרְץ יְמֵינוּ,

וּבָהֶם נִהְיָה יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה,

וְאַהֲבַתְךָ אֵל תִּסִּיר מִמֶּנּוּ לְעוֹלָמִים. ◀

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אוֹהֵב עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

TORAH AND GOD'S LOVE.

The second verse of the Sh'ma, which we are about to recite, speaks of our love of God: "You shall love Adonai your God. . . ." The ancient rabbis chose to precede that statement with a *b'rakhah* that emphasizes God's love for us. The rabbis understood love as the essential quality of the divine-human relationship, and they understood love to be primarily defined by behavior. God's love is expressed in giving the Torah, instruction on how to live; our love is expressed in the performance of mitzvot, our behavior in the world. In this way, the human and the Divine are bound together.

AS WE LIE DOWN AND AS

WE RISE UP, WE SHALL SPEAK OF YOUR LAWS

בְּשִׁכְבֵּנוּ וּבְקוּמָנוּ נְשִׁיחַ בְּחֻקֶּיךָ. This phrase anticipates the instruction in the Sh'ma to "speak of [these words] . . . when you lie down and when you rise up." This prayer expands the biblical command and speaks of the need to integrate Torah into our lives throughout the day.

FOR THEY ARE OUR LIFE כִּי הֵם חַיֵּינוּ. By living a life in accord with divine teaching (Torah), we elevate our days from mere existence to a life filled with meaning.