**10 Fun Facts about *Shema and V’Ohavta***

1. When we say Shema we are fulfilling the mitzvah of *Kabbolas Ohl Malchus Shamayim*, which literally means “accepting upon ourselves the yoke of Heaven.” When we accept Hashem into our life by choice, not because “we are forced to”, we unlock a new level of *Hashgacha Pratis,* Divine Providence.
2. ***Shema Yisroel-*** *“*Hearing” implies a greater level of accepting and internalize something that we can’t necessarily see. When we say “Yisroel” we are acknowledging that we are all one and need each other to really reveal *Malchus Shamayim* in the world.
3. ***Hashem Elokeinu-***The Shem Ha’Etzem (Y.H,V,H) is in direct contrast to the name Elokim. The name Elokim represents Hashem concealed in the laws and systems of nature. It has the same numerical value as the word *HaTeva* which means the natural order of things. The Shem Ha’Etzem represents Hashem’s personal relationship with us. Therefore, we are saying that even though sometime Hashem hides behind the mask of *Elokeinu*, we still realize that *Hashem Echad*.
4. ***Hashem Echad-***This means that there is *only* Hashem, and everything that we experience is just another revelation of Hashem, no matter how hidden. This is the bridge to the next line about loving Hashem. *Echad* is the same numerical value as *Ahava*, love.
5. ***Boruch Shem-*** This is not actually part of the Parshah. It is an insertion asking for Hashem’s “name” meaning revelation to flow into the world. It was said by Yaakov Avinu, it was the response of the Jewish people on Yom Kippur after hearing the Kohen Gadol say Hashem’s name, and it is the way angels praise Hashem.
6. ***V’Ohavta Es Hashem-***This line is the Torah source for the Mitzvah of *Ahavas Hashem,* loving Hashem. How can the Torah command us to have certain emotions, let alone for an Infinite Being? The rest of the paragraph is meant answer this question. By “placing these words on your heart”, which means to learn and perform Mitzvot in a passionate way, one will come to experience the transcendent. Furthermore the Rambam says that when we look at the beauty of Creation, we will come to have feelings for Hashem.
7. ***B’Chal Levovcha***- This line corresponds to Avraham who embodies the trait of Zerizut. In order for *any* love to be complete you need to ask yourself: Is your love awake and vibrant or are you just paying lip service to that love? Do you use your talents and creativity to enhance that love? Are you in tune with how to truly love the other person?
8. ***B’Chal Nefshecha*-** This line corresponds to Yitzchak who was ready to be sacrificed. Here you must ask yourself:Do you put your lover before yourself or is it you first? Do you sacrifice? Would you die for this love? If yes, do you live like you would die?
9. ***B’Chal Meodecha*-** This line corresponds to Yaakov who went through many challenges in his life. Here you must ask yourself. Do you love only when things are good or even when things are bad? Do you use your love to power through the difficult times?
10. The rest of the paragraph expounds on how a person can come to love Hashem, by making Hashem a central part of one’s life. One expression of this is speaking about Hashem and ideas relating to Hashem and Torah. Tefilin and Mezuzah are examples of different things you can do to surround yourself with reminders about Hashem. There are other ways to do this as well.

**Rashi’s commentary of V’Ohavta (Devarim 6:5)**

**ואהבת את ה' אלהיך** – עשה דבריו מאהבה, אינו דומה העושה מיראה לעושה מאהבה, העושה אצל רבו מיראה כשהוא מטריח עליו מניחו והולך.

**בכל לבבך** – בשני יצרך.

**ובכל נפשך** – אפילו נוטל את נפשך.

**ובכל מאדך** – ובכל ממונך, יש לך אדם שממונו חביב עליו מגופו, לכך נאמר בכל מאדך.

דבר אחר: בכל מאדך – בכל מדה ומדה שהוא מודד לך, בין במידת הטוב, בין במידת הפורענות, וכן דוד הוא אומר כוס ישועות אשא וגו' (תהלים קט"ז:י"ג), צרה ויגון אמצא וגו' (תהלים קט"ז:ג').