

אֱהָבָה רַבָּה and שְׁמַע

Root – ב-ה-ר

Meaning – choose

Words in the prayer with the same root הַבוֹחֵר

The last line of the אֱהָבָה רַבָּה is immediately before one recites the שְׁמַע.

The congregation says the prayer all together out loud and then immediately recites the שְׁמַע.

When you recite the שְׁמַע it is traditional to cover one's eyes so that we may fully focus on this prayer. The first line is said out loud with a full voice, while the second line is said quietly or silently.

The אֱהָבָה רַבָּה speaks of God's great love for us and lets us know that at some point in the future we will be gathered together from the four corners of the Earth. It reminds us that God chose the Jewish people from all the people of the Earth.

The שְׁמַע is probably the most well-known sentence in Jewish life as well as the most important. It is a phrase that Jews around the world say every day. It speaks of God being our God and that that God is the only God. It emphasizes the oneness of God. It is considered the watchword of our faith. Traditionally, Jews say the שְׁמַע (if they can) at the moment of our last few moments of life.

Vocabulary and Translation

In Love – בְּאַהֲבָה

Hear! – שְׁמַע

One – אֶחָד

Honor, Glory – כְּבוֹד

Past Roots

כ – ר – ב - Blessed

Praised be you Adonai, who chooses your people Israel in love.

Hear, o Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is one.

Blessed be the Name of his kingdom for ever and ever