

FOUNDATIONS



Foundations for a Thoughtful Judaism Practice

SOURCES



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CLASS 2 CONNECTING WITH GOD

Source 1

Deuteronomy (Devarim) 6:4-9

- ד שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד.
- 4 Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.
- ה וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדֶךָ.
- 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
- ו וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם עַל לִבְבְּךָ.
- 6 Take to heart these instructions with which I charge you this day.
- ז וְשִׁנַּנְתֶּם לְבַנְיֵיךָ וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתּוֹךָ בְּדַרְוֹךָ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ.
- 7 Impress them upon your children. Recite them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up.
- ח וְקִשְׂרַתֶּם לָאוֹת עַל יָדְךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ.
- 8 Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead;
- ט וְכַתַּבְתֶּם עַל מְזוֹזֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ. {ס}
- 9 inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Source 2

Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Tefillin, Mezuzah, and the Torah
Scroll 6:13

חַיֵּב אָדָם לְהִזְהָר בְּמִזוּזָה מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהִיא חֹבֶת הַכֹּל תָּמִיד. וְכֵן זְמַן שֶׁיִּכְנָס וַיֵּצֵא יִפְגַּע בִּיחֻד הַשֵּׁם שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וַיִּזְכֹּר אֶהְבָּתוֹ וַיַּעֲזֹר מִשְׁנֹתוֹ וּשְׁגִיּוֹתָיו בְּהַבְּלֵי הַזְּמַן. וַיִּדַּע שֶׁאֵין דָּבָר הַעוֹמֵד לְעוֹלָם וְלְעוֹלָמֵי עוֹלָמִים אֲלָא יְדִיעַת צוּר הָעוֹלָם. וּמִיָּד הוּא חוֹזֵר לְדַעְתּוֹ



וְהוֹלֵךְ בְּדַרְכֵי מִישְׁרִים. אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים הָרְאִישׁוֹנִים כָּל מִי שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ תְּפִלִּין בְּרִאשׁוֹ וּבְזֵרוֹעוֹ וְצִיצִית
בְּבִגְדוֹ וּמְזוּזָה בְּפֶתְחוֹ מְחֻזָּק הוּא שְׁלֹא יִחַטָּא שְׁהָרִי יֵשׁ לוֹ מְזִכְרֵי רַבִּים וְהֵן הֵם הַמְּלַאֲכִים
שֶׁמְצִילִין אוֹתוֹ מִלְּחַטָּא שְׁנֵאמַר (תהילים לד ח) "חָנָה מְלֵאָף ה' סָבִיב לִירְאָיו וַיַּחֲלִצֵם".

A person must be careful regarding mezuzah because it is an obligation upon everyone always. And every time a person enters or leaves a room, they will confront God's Name and remember their love and be roused from their slumber and their errors in spending time vainly. And the person will know that there is nothing that is eternal other than knowledge of the Rock of the world (= God). And immediately (upon seeing the mezuzah), a person will return to their right mind and walk the path of the righteous. The early scholars said: Any who has tefillin on their head and arm, tzitzit (fringes) on their clothes, and a mezuzah in their doorway will surely not sin, for that person will have many reminders, and they are the angels which save a person from sin, as is said: "The angel of God rests around those who fear God and will gird them" (PSALMS 34:8).

Source 3



Summary: Bible Scholars Debate the Meaning of Love

Bible scholars debate the meaning of *ahavah* (love) as used to refer to the relationship between God and the Jewish People in the Bible. William Moran regards *ahavah* as referring to loyalty and obedience, pointing to the many places in the Bible in which loyalty and obedience are implied, as well as to the language of ancient Near Eastern treaties. Those treaties often used the same terminology to refer to the kind of obedience that binds two nations to one another in mutual commitments. Jacqueline Lapsley, on the other hand, regards *ahavah* as referring to emotional attachment, noting the significance of emotional attachment in creating true relationship. Rather than seeing emotions as separate from the logic of creating one's ethical life, she understands emotions as important for organizing the actions and ethics of one's life. In this case, those emotions of love and relationship with God will shape how one behaves and organizes their life. She points to verses in which love leads to action.



Supplementary Sources



William L. Moran, "The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy"

Love in Deuteronomy is a love that can be commanded. It is also a love intimately related to fear and reverence. Above all, it is a love which must be expressed in loyalty, in service, and in unqualified obedience to the demands of the Law. For to love God is, in answer to a unique claim (6,4), to be loyal to him (11,1.22; 30, 20), to walk in his ways (10,12; 11,22; 19,9; 30,16), to keep his commandments (10,12; 11,1.22; 19,9), to do them (11,22; 19,9), to heed them or his voice (11,13; 30,16), to serve him (10,12 ; 11,1.13). It is, in brief, a love defined by and pledged in the covenant — a covenantal love... When we come to the Amarna period...“love” unquestionably belongs to the terminology of international relations...love also binds sovereign and vassal. The Pharaoh is expected to love his vassal...The vassal must love the Pharaoh...To love the Pharaoh is to serve him and to remain faithful to the status of vassal...Finally, subjects must love their king...A vassal must still love his sovereign.



Jacqueline E. Lapsley, "Feeling Our Way: Love for God in Deuteronomy"

Actions devoid of feelings of love, even those that fulfill the commandments, are morally suspect. The biblical clue for this appears in God's relationship with Israel. God's love for Israel is not expressed solely in action but in the divine emotional response to Israel. Somehow, God's love for Israel is born out of a feeling, and that feeling has moral weight and relates in a significant way to the actions God takes on Israel's behalf (Deut 7:8). Recent work in the area of virtue ethics and narrative ethics lends support to the significance of emotions in the moral life, as do arguments being made in the field of neurobiology. Arguments on this topic appear to be divided into two broad streams: one holding that emotions are of ethical value but are not an integral part of cognition per se (e.g., Michael Stocker), the other that emotions are crucial for ethics because they are an integral part of cognition (e.g., Martha Nussbaum from a philosophical perspective, or Antonio Damasio from a neurobiological perspective). According to this second line of thinking, "appropriate" — that is, "right" — emotional responses are, in fact, necessary for right moral thinking. It is the implications of this second line of thinking for understanding love in Deuteronomy that I want to mention briefly here. From their respective disciplines, Nussbaum and Damasio argue that emotions provide human beings "with a sense of how the world relates to [their] own set[s] of goals and projects. Without that sense, decision making and action are derailed." ...



Emotions are necessary in the moral life, according to Nussbaum, because they constitute judgments of value; they are “value-laden ways of understanding the world.” This appraisal of the role of emotions is significant for how love is understood in Deuteronomy. If it can be shown that love for God in Deuteronomy is not limited to obedience or to an emotionless version of loyalty but, in fact, has emotion as a constitutive element, then it follows from the research of Damasio and Nussbaum that the emotionally loving response to the deity is not an irrelevant footnote to obedience to the law, but is fundamental to a proper relationship with God.