

To Love Yehovah (le'ahavah Yehovah)

By

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We often hear about love in our society today. Generally, we see it in the context man and woman whether young or old. We even see some love expressed as sex. Yet is this the kind of love that the Tanakh talks about or is it closeness in relationship between two in a relationship. I am not talking about sex in this context. More specifically how are we to love Yehovah.

In the Hebrew, 'ahav is translated as love. This is reference number 157. In Hebrew, it is Aleph-Hey-Bet. You can find this verb in the New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance (NEHC) on page 25 and in the Brown-driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (BDB) on page 12.

First lets see what is love in The Tanakh by looking at traditional relationships.

Bereshit/Genesis 22:2

2 And He said, "Take your son, your favored one, Isaac, whom **you love (ahav'ta אָהַבְתָּ)**, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you."

Here we see that of a father's love for a child. This love was especially deep as this was his only child.

Bereshit/Genesis 37:3

3 Now Israel **loved (ahav אָהַב)** Joseph best of all his sons, for he was the child of his old age; and he had made him an ornamented tunic.

Here we see that Yisrael/Yaqqov loved Yosef more than all of his brothers. It wasn't that his brothers were not worthy of his loving them more there was just a closer relationship because this was the son of his most loved wife.

Shemot/Exodus 21:3-5

3 If he came single, he shall leave single; if he had a wife, his wife shall leave with him. 4 If his master gave him a wife, and she has borne him children, the wife and her children shall belong to the master, and he shall leave alone. 5 But if the slave declares, "I love (ahav'tiy אָהַבְתִּי) my master, and my wife and children: I do not wish to go free,"

Here we see that the man must he loves his master, his wife and his children to stay with his master. Whether this desire is for his master or more for not losing his wife and children.

Vayiqra/Leviticus 19:18, 34

18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against your countrymen (benei amekha בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ). Love (veahav'ta וְאַהֲבָתָּה) your fellow as yourself: I am Yehovah.

34 The stranger (ger) who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; **you shall love** (veahav'ta וְאַהֲבָתָּה) him as yourself, for you were strangers (gerim) in the land of Egypt: I am Yehovah Eloheykha.

Here we see that the way one would love one's self is how we are to love our fellow or the Ger. We see that love is not just limited to the relationship between and man and woman. Love can be for a child, for one's master, for your fellow, or for the Ger among you. Clearly love in the last two examples his a kind of love without a deep relationship but that is why we are given the example of loving one's self. Would you cause harm to yourself, would you cheat yourself, would you be unjust to yourself?

Now lets look at what love is for Yehovah. What and who does he love?

Devarim/Deuteronomy 23:6

6 But Yehovah Eloheykha refused to heed Balaam; instead, Yehovah Eloheykha turned the curse into a blessing for you, for Yehovah Eloheykha **loves you** (ahav'kha אָהַבְךָ).

Here we see that Yehovah love the children of Yisrael.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 10:12-16

12 And now, O Israel, what does Yehovah Eloheykha demand of you? Only this: to revere Yehovah Eloheykha, to walk only in His paths, **to love Him** (ule'ahovah oto וְלֵאֱהָבָה אֹתוֹ), and to serve Yehovah Eloheykha with all your heart and soul,

13 keeping Yehovah's commandments and laws, which I enjoin upon you today, for your good. 14 Mark, the heavens to their uttermost reaches belong to Yehovah Eloheykha, the earth and all that is on it! 15 Yet it was to your fathers that Yehovah was drawn **in His love for them** (le'ahovah otam לְאַהֲבָתָּה אֹתָם), so that He chose you, their lineal descendants, from among all peoples—as is now the case.

16 Cut away, therefore, the thickening about your hearts and stiffen your necks no more.

Here we see why he loved them. We also see some of the requirements for showing love to him.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 7:6-11

6 For you are a people consecrated to Yehovah Eloheykha: of all the peoples on earth Yehovah Eloheykha chose you to be His treasured people. 7 It is not because you are the most numerous of peoples that Yehovah set His heart on you and chose you—indeed, you are the smallest of peoples; 8 but it was because Yehovah favored you and kept the oath He made to your fathers that Yehhovah freed you with a mighty hand and rescued you from the house of bondage, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know, therefore, that only Yehovah Eloheykha is El, the steadfast Elohim who keeps His covenant faithfully to the thousandth generation of those **who love Him (le’ohavayv לְאוֹהֲבָיו)** and keep His commandments, 10 but who instantly requites with destruction those who reject Him—never slow with those who reject Him, but requiting them instantly. 11 Therefore, observe faithfully the Instruction—the laws and the rules—with which I charge you today.

Again, Here is the reason why he loves the Children of Yisrael. It was their fathers Avraham, Yitzaq, and Yaqgov/Yisrael who were the ones Yehovah made the oath with. He made promises to them and loved the children for that reason.

Malakhi/Malachi 1:2-3

**I have shown you love (ahav’tiy et’khem אֶהְבֵּיתִי אֶתְכֶם)**, said Yehovah. But you ask, “How have **You shown us love (ahav’tanu אֶהְבֵּיתֵנוּ)?**” After all—declares Yehovah—Esau is Jacob’s brother; yet I have accepted Jacob 3 and have rejected Esau. I have made his hills a desolation, his territory a home for beasts of the desert.

Here he states in the prophets he loves Yaqgov (his descendants). Even showing that he rejected Esau (Edom) over Yaqgov.

Hoshea/Hosea 14:5-8

5 I will heal their affliction, Generously will I take **them** back in **love (ohavem אוֹהֲבִים)**; For My anger has turned away from them. 6 I will be to Israel like dew; He shall blossom like the lily, He shall strike root like a Lebanon tree. 7 His boughs shall spread out far, His beauty shall be like the olive tree’s, His fragrance like that of Lebanon. 8 They who sit in his shade shall be revived: They shall bring to life new grain, They shall blossom like the vine; His scent shall be like the wine of Lebanon.

Here we see that Yehovah will take back Yisrael (Northern Kingdom) in love. He put him away for the transgressions of the Idols yet in the future he will take him back in love.

What does He love?

Yeshiyahu/Isaiah 61:8

8 For I Yehovah **love (ohev אהב)** justice, I hate robbery with a burnt offering. I will pay them their wages faithfully, And make a covenant with them for all time.

Here we see that he loves Justice. That is one of his desires for us to do.

Mishlei/Proverbs 8:17

17 **Those who love me I love (ani ohavai ehav אני אהבי אהב)**, And those who seek me will find me.

Here it is restated the love Yehovah has is for those who love him. This is what he spoke to Moshe and later repeated by Moshe.

Tefillim/Psalms 11:7

7 For Yehovah is righteous; He **loves (ahev אהב)** righteous deeds; the upright shall behold His face.

Here He is said to love righteousness because he is righteous.

How do we show love to him?

Devarim/Deuteronomy 6:5

5 You shall love Yehovah Eloheykha with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

וְאַהַבְתָּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשֶׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ

The Hebrew here is “ve’ahav’ta et Yehovah Eloheykha bakal levavkha ubakal naf’ shekha ubakal me’odekha” We have a statement of devotion. One in which we are to love Yehovah with everything in our being.

Shemot/Exodus 20:6

6 but showing kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and keep My commandments.

וְעֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד לְאַלְפִים לְאַהֲבָיו וּלְשֹׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתַי<sup>6</sup>

The Hebrew here is “ve’osheh chesed le’alafim le’ohavai uleshom’rey mitz’votai” Which tells us he is merciful to those who keep His Commandments. They show him love in keeping the mitzvot (plural mitzvah) he gave us in his Torah. This is repeated in Devarim/Deuteronomy 5:10.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 7:9

9 Know, therefore, that only Yehovah Eloheykha is Elohim, the steadfast haEl who keeps His covenant faithfully [and Mercy] to the thousandth generation of those who **love Him (le’ohavayv לְאַהֲבָיו)** and keep His commandments,

Here we again see he is faithful in keeping his covenant. Those who show their love to Him by keeping His mitzvot.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 10:12-13

12 And now, O Israel, what does Yehovah Eloheykha demand of you? Only this: to revere Yehovah Eloheykha, to walk only in His paths, **to love Him (ule’ahovah oto וְלֵאֱהָבָה אֹתוֹ)**, and to serve Yehovah Eloheykha with all your heart and soul,

13 keeping Yehovah’s commandments and laws, which I enjoin (command) upon you today, for your good.

What does he ask of us? That we fear him to walk in his ways, to love him and and serve him. How do we walk in his ways? **We keep his mitzvot and chuqqotayv just as was taught to the children by Moshe. These commandments and practices that were taught were commands. It again speaking of all our heart and soul, which is the level of devotion, we must have.**

Devarim/Deuteronomy 11:1,13-15, 18-26

11:1 **Love, therefore, Yehovah Eloheykha (veahav’ta et Yehovah Eloheykha וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ)**, and always keep His charge, His laws, His rules, and His commandments.

Here is his telling them to keep all that we has commanded them to keep: **“Our Charge/Watch (mish’maretu), and his statues (chuqqotayv) and His judgements (mish’patayv) and his commandments (mitzvotayv) all the days (kal hayamim).”** This means to show love to Yehovah we must embrace all he teaches us in the Torah.

Not just one day, or two days or even a week but all the days from here on until the end of time.

**13** If, then, **you obey (tish'me'u "you listen")** the commandments (mitzvotay my commandments) that I enjoin (metzaveh in commanding) upon you this day, loving (le'ahavah to love לְאַהֲבָה) Yehovah Eloheykha and serving Him with all your heart and soul, **14** I will grant the rain for your land in season, the early rain and the late. You shall gather in your new grain and wine and oil—**15** I will also provide grass in the fields for your cattle—and thus you shall eat your fill.

Here we see that we are to listen to what he commands us. Every seven years they were to come to the Feast of Sukkot and here the Torah read to them there. So listen was the only way they would have learned about it since writing was not in the means of many Yisraelim. The one commanding here was Moshe as he was taught and told to command the children of Yisrael. Here we see some of the benefits of loving him.

**18** Therefore impress (place) these My words upon your very heart: bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead, **19** and teach them to your children—reciting them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up; **20** and inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates—**21** to the end that you and your children may endure, in the land that Yehovah swore to your fathers to assign to them, as long as there is a heaven over the earth.

**22** If, then, **you faithfully keep (tish'merun) all this Instruction (kal hamitzvah) that I command (metzaveh) you, loving (le'ahavah לְאַהֲבָה) Yehovah Eloheykha, walking in all His ways, and holding fast to Him,** **23** Yehovah will dislodge before you all these nations: you will dispossess nations greater and more numerous than you. **24** Every spot on which your foot treads shall be yours; your territory shall extend from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River—the Euphrates—to the Western Sea. **25** No man shall stand up to you: Yehovah Eloheykha will put the dread and the fear of you over the whole land in which you set foot, as He promised you. **26** See, this day I set before you blessing and curse: **27** **blessing, if you obey (tish'me'u you listen) the commandments (mitzvot) of Yehovah Eloheykha that I enjoin (metzaveh) upon you this day;** **28** **and curse, if you do not obey (tish'me'u you listen) the commandments (mitzvot) of Yehovah Eloheykha, but turn away from the path (haderekh) that I enjoin (metzaveh) upon you this day and follow other gods, whom you have not experienced.**

Here we see that when we love Yehovah and keep his way (derekh) we are blessed and we show love to him. When we turn from this path or way we are no longer following what he desire of us to do. Therefore, we don't show love to Him.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 19:9 (8-10)

8 And when Yehovah Eloheykha enlarges your territory, as He swore to your fathers, and gives you all the land that He promised to give your fathers—9 if you faithfully observe all **this Instruction (hamitzvah)** that I **enjoin (metzav'kha) upon you** this day, **to love (le'ahavah לְאַהֲבָה)** Yehovah Eloheykha and **to walk (to go lalekhet) in His ways (bid'rakhayv) at all times (kal yamim)**—then you shall add three more towns to those three. 10 Thus blood of the innocent will not be shed, bringing bloodguilt upon you in the land that Yehovah Eloheykha is allotting to you.

If our fathers had followed/to go to his ways then Yehovah would have expand their territory they would be able to build three more cities of refuge. The pattern he is we are to listen, go after his ways (do what he told us), which expresses we are concerned for those ways and thus we are showing him we love Him.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 30:1-10

30:1 When all these things befall you—the blessing and the curse that I have set before you—and you take them to heart amidst the various nations to which Yehovah Eloheykha has banished you, 2 and you return to Yehovah Eloheykha, and you and your children heed (listen) His command (baqulu his voice) with all your heart and soul, just as I enjoin (metzav'kha) upon you this day, 3 then Yehovah Eloheykha will restore your fortunes and take you back in love. He will bring you together again from all the peoples where Yehovah Eloheykha has scattered you. 4 Even if your outcasts are at the ends of the world, from there Yehovah Eloheykha will gather you, from there He will fetch you. 5 And Yehovah Eloheykha will bring you to the land that your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will make you more prosperous and more numerous than your fathers. 6 Then Yehovah Eloheykha will **open (mal circumcise)** up your heart and the hearts of your offspring **(לְאַהֲבָה)** Yehovah Eloheykha with all your heart and soul, in order that you may live. 7 Yehovah Eloheykha will inflict all those curses upon the enemies and foes who persecuted you. 8 You, however, will again **heed (listen) Yehovah and obey (asit do) all His commandments (baqul His Voice) that I enjoin (metzav'kha commanding you) upon you** this day. 9 And Yehovah Eloheykha will grant you abounding prosperity in all your undertakings, in the issue of your womb, the offspring of your cattle, and the produce of your soil. For Yehovah will again delight in your well-being, as He did in that of your fathers, 10 since you will be heeding Yehovah Eloheykha and keeping His commandments and laws that are recorded in this book of the Teaching—once you return to Yehovah Eloheykha with all your heart and soul.

Here Moshe is talking of a time when they will be scattered to the farthest parts of the earth. Yet he will bring us back, and the land when we return to him with all our hearts and soul, and listen to his commandments (mitzvot) and all he has commanded for us. We again show our love to him.

In Devarim/Deuteronomy 29:8 says it in about the covenant, which also understand, is the entire thing he commanded us through Moshe.

8 Therefore observe faithfully all the terms of this covenant, which you may succeed in all that you undertake.

Here it says: And listen to the word of the covenant this, and do them that you may prosper in all that you do. It is important that we listen to his words and do what he says.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 13:1-5

13:1 Be careful to **observe (listen tish'meru)** only that which I enjoin (**metzaveh commanding you**) upon you: neither add to it nor take away from it.

2 If there appears among you a prophet or a dream-diviner and he gives you a sign or a portent, 3 saying, "Let us follow and worship another god"—whom you have not experienced—even if the sign or portent that he named to you comes true, 4 do not heed (listen) the words of that prophet or that dream-diviner. For Yehovah Eloheykha is testing you to see whether you really love (ohavim אֲהַבִּים) Yehovah Eloheykha with all your heart and soul. 5 Follow none but Yehovah Eloheykha, and **revere (fear)** none but Him; **observe (tish'motu) His commandments (mitzotay) alone, and heed (tish'ma'u) only His orders (baqolo)**; worship none but Him, and hold fast to Him.

Here again we are to Listen and Do. He will test us to see if we really love him and are keeping his commandment. We are to be on our guard for this.

Yeshiyahu/Isaiah 56:6

6 As for **the foreigners (beney nekkhar)**  
Who **attach (hanil'vim the joiners)** themselves to Yehovah,  
**To minister (lesharoto to serve)** to Him,  
**And to love (ule'ahavah וְלֵאֲהַבָה) the name of Yehovah,**  
**To be (lih'yot to become)** His servants—  
All who keep the sabbath and do not **profane it (mechal'lu to make common),**  
And who hold fast to My covenant

Here we see that the sons of the foreigner who come to embrace and join to his people the covenant and the shabbat. The shabbat which is the sign of the people of Yisrael and the covenant which they are bound to keep. They too are becoming His servants. His people. They are joiners which means they join or convert.

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 8:16-17

16 These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to one another, render true and perfect justice in your gates. 17 And do not contrive evil against one another, and do not love perjury, because all those are things that I hate—declares Yehovah.

We are to speak **truth (emet)** to **our Neighbor (re'ehu)** and **judgement (mish'pat)** peace judge in your gates. We are to judge rightly and truthfully and without bias. These are favorable to Yehovah and we show him love through this too.

We don't show him love when we do harm to our neighbor, we should not do a false oath. He does not love these things. So who is your neighbor, can it be more than our Yisraelim bothers.

Shemot/Exodus 11:2

**11:1** And Yehovah said to Moses, "I will bring but one more plague upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt; after that he shall let you go from here; indeed, when he lets you go, he will drive you out of here one and all. **2** Tell the people to borrow, each man from **his neighbor (re'ehu)** and each woman from hers, objects of silver and gold."

In Egypt, The neighbor of the Yisraelim was the Egyptians. Which shows us that Neighbor can also be a gentile living among us too. So when we read about our neighbor we need to keep this in mind.

So what Commandments of the Torah we are to keep?

Bamidbar/Numbers 15:22-23

**22** If you unwittingly fail to observe any one of **the commandments (hamitzvot)** that Yehovah has **declared (diber spoken)** to Moses **23** —anything that Yehovah **has enjoined (tzivah commanded)** upon you through Moses—from the day that Yehovah **gave the commandment (tzivah commanded)** and on through the ages:

Here we are told that a commandment was whatever was declared to Moshe. It was in effect from the day it was declared for all generations. So it also shows us that commands given by Yehovah were not all given at once but given over time and took effect upon their giving.

If we truly love Yehovah we will do as he commanded directly and through his servants the prophets (nevi'im). Moshe is among those who commanded us to follow Yehovah's mitzvot. Therefore, if someone says they love him it is not just emotion we must feel but also action we must do. For emotion without the act of keeping his commandment does not show love just as the inverse with keeping the commandments without devotion to him is empty observance.