1. Deuteronomy: A Vassal’s Covenantal Love for Their Lord

a. Deuteronomy 6

Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.

You shall love/ve’ahavta the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. Take to heart these instructions with which I charge you this day. 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. Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead; inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

b. 1 Kings 8:23

O Lord God of Israel, in the heavens above and on the earth below there is no god like You, who keeps Your gracious covenant/ha’berit v’ha’hesed with Your servants when they walk before You with all their heart/b’khol libam.

c. 1 Kings 5

Now King Hiram of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, when he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father; for Hiram had always been a friend to David. Solomon sent word to Hiram, saying, “You know that my father David could not build a house for the name of the Lord his God because of the warfare with which his enemies surrounded him, until the Lord put them under the soles of his feet. But now the Lord my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor misfortune. So I intend to build a house for the name of the Lord my God...When Hiram heard the words of Solomon, he rejoiced greatly, and said, “Blessed be the Lord today, who has given to David a wise son to be over this great people...So Hiram supplied Solomon’s every need for timber of cedar and cypress. Solomon in turn gave Hiram twenty thousand cors of wheat as food for his household, and twenty cors of fine oil. Solomon gave this to Hiram year by year... There was peace/friendship/shalom between Hiram and Solomon; and the two of them made a treaty/berit.
### d. Jon Levenson, *The Love of God* pg. 9

In a related text, we find an oath that Assurbanipal, facing a revolt by his own brother, imposes on his vassals and government officials: “the king of Assyria, our lord,” they are to swear, “we will love.” Here, too, as in the case of the Canaanite king six centuries earlier, the failure to love the suzerain means the disintegration of the alliance. The covenant requires love, and the suzerainty covenant requires exclusive love. In a covenant text from the 14th century BCE, a Hittite emperor puts it forthrightly to his vassal: “Do not turn your eyes to anyone else! Your fathers presented tribute to Egypt; you [shall not do that].”

### e. 1 Samuel 20:12-16

Jonathan said to David, “By the Lord, the God of Israel! When I have sounded out my father, about this time tomorrow, or on the third day, if he is well disposed toward David, shall I not then send and disclose it to you? But if my father intends to do you harm, the Lord do so to Jonathan, and more also, if I do not disclose it to you, and send you away, so that you may go in safety. May the Lord be with you, as he has been with my father. If I am still alive, show me the faithful love of the Lord/hesed Adonai; but if I die, never cut off your faithful love from my house, even if the Lord were to cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.” Thus Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the Lord seek out the enemies of David.” Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him; for he loved him as he loved his own life.

### f. Deuteronomy 7:6-11

For you are a people consecrated to the Lord your God: of all peoples on earth the Lord God chose you to be his treasured people.

It is not because you are the most numerous of peoples that the Lord set His heart on you/hashak and chose you—indeed, you are the smallest of peoples; but it was because the Lord loved/me’ahat Adonai you and kept the oath He made to your fathers that the Lord freed you with a mighty hand and rescued you from the house of bondage, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know, therefore, that only the Lord your God is God, the steadfast God who keeps his covenant faithfully/ha’berit v’ha’hesed to the thousandth generation of those who love Him/l’ohavav and keeps His commandments, but those who instantly requites with destruction those who reject Him—never slow with those who reject Him, but requiting them instantly. Therefore, observe faithfully the Instruction—the laws and the rules—with which I charge you today.
The Holy One Blessed be He said to Israel, “I love you/hoshkeni. For even at the time that I bestow upon you greatness, you make yourselves small before me.

“I bestowed greatness upon Abraham and he said before me, ‘I am but dust and ashes’ (Gen. 28:27). [I bestowed greatness upon] Moses and Aaron and they said, ‘What are we? Your murmurings are not against us but against the Lord’ (Exod. 16:8). [I bestowed greatness upon] David and he said, ‘But I am a worm, and no man’ (Ps. 22:6).

“But the idolaters are not [humble] like this. I bestowed greatness upon Nimrod and he said, ‘Come let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves...’ (Gen. 11:4). [I bestowed greatness upon] Pharaoh and he said, ‘Who is the Lord?’ (Exod. 5:2). [I bestowed greatness upon] Sennacherib and he said, ‘Who among all the gods of the countries have delivered their countries out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?’ (II Kings 18:35). [I bestowed greatness upon] Nebuchadnezzar and he said, ‘I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High’ (Isa. 14:14). [I bestowed greatness upon] Hiram king of Tyre and he said, ‘I am a god, I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas’ (Ezek. 28:2).”
2. Maimonides: A Philosopher’s Love for an Abstract Deity

Mishne Torah, Laws of the Foundations of Torah, 2:1-2

It is commanded to love and fear this glorious and awesome God, it is stated: "And you shall love God, your Lord" (Deut. 6:4) and it is stated: "Fear God, your Lord." (Deut. 6:13

What is the path [to attain] love and fear of Him? When a person contemplates His wondrous and great deeds and creations and appreciates His infinite wisdom that surpasses all comparison, he will immediately love, praise, and glorify [Him], yearning with tremendous desire to know [God’s] great name, as David stated: "My soul thirsts for the Lord, for the living God" (Psalms 42:3).

When he [continues] to reflect on these same matters, he will immediately recoil in awe and fear, appreciating how he is a tiny, lowly, and dark creature, standing with his flimsy, limited, wisdom before He who is of perfect knowledge, as David stated: "When I see Your heavens, the work of Your fingers... [I wonder] what is man that You should recall Him" (Psalms 8:4-5).

Based on these concepts, I will explain important principles regarding the deeds of the Master of the worlds to provide a foothold for a person of understanding to [develop] love for God, as our Sages said regarding love: "In this manner, you will recognize He who spoke and [thus,] brought the world into being."

Eight Chapters 5

One should not perform any action, great or small, or other any speech unless the action or speech leads to a virtue, directly or indirectly. One should first examine and ponder every action at movement to see if it leads to this end or does not lead to it, and only then should one do it. This is the goal that God demands of us and saying: you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul (Deut. 6:5)--that is, with all the parts of your soul. You shall posit the same goal for each of them – to love your Lord God. The prophets also exhorted the people in this matter by saying: in all of your ways shall you know Him (Proverbs 3:6).

Laws of Repentance 10:2-3

One who serves [God] out of love occupies themselves in the Torah and the commandments and walks in the paths of wisdom for no ulterior motive: not because of fear that evil will occur, nor in order to acquire benefit. Rather, they do what is true because it is true, and
ultimately, good will come because of it. This is a very high level which is not merited by every wise person. It is the level of our Patriarch, Abraham, whom God described as, "beloved" for his service was only motivated by love. God commanded us [to seek] this rung [of service] as conveyed by Moses as stated: "You shall love the Lord your God..." (Deut 6:5) When one will love God in the proper manner, they will immediately perform all of the commandments motivated by love.

What is the proper [degree] of love? That a person should love God with a very great and exceeding love until their soul is bound up in the love of God. Thus, they will always be obsessed with this love as if they are lovesick, and his mind is completely distracted by his love for a certain woman. He is preoccupied with it continuously, when he sits down, when he gets up, when he eats and drinks. With an even greater [love], the love for God should be [implanted] in the hearts of those who love Him and are obsessed with Him at all times as we are commanded: "Love the Lord...with all your heart and with all soul."

It is a well-known and clear matter that the love of God will not become attached within a person’s heart until he becomes obsessed with it at all times as is fitting, leaving all things in the world except for this. This was implied by the command: "Love the Lord, your God with all your heart and all your soul.

One can only love God [as an outgrowth] of the knowledge with which they know Him. The nature of one's love depends on the nature of one’s knowledge! A small [amount of knowledge arouses] a lesser love. A greater amount of knowledge arouses a greater love. Therefore, it is necessary for a person to seclude themselves in order to understand and conceive wisdom and concepts which make their creator known to them according to the potential which one possesses to understand and comprehend as we explained in Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah.
3. Yehuda Amichai: A Modern Jewish Poet’s Pained Love for a Father In Heaven

**God’s hand is in the world**

God’s hand is in the world
Like my mother’s hand in the entrails of the slaughtered fowl
On the Sabbath eve.
What does God see through the window
While his hand is in the world?
What does my mother see?

**And this is His praise**

God lies on his back under the universe
Always fixing, something always goes wrong.
I wanted to see him whole but I see
Only the soles of his shoes, and I weep
And this is his praise

**Revelation**

Today God revealed himself to me
so:
Someone put his hand over my eyes
from behind:
Guess who it is!

**Benjamin of Tudela**

Far from here, on another continent in time,
The dead rabbis of my childhood are clearly seen,
Holding gravestones
High above their heads.
Their soul is bound
In my life’s knot.
My God, my God
Why have you not forsaken me?
### A Second Meeting with my Father

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- Again I met my father in the Café Atarah
- This time he was already dead. Outside, the evening
- Mixed forgetting and memory, as my mother
- Mixed cold with hot in the bathtub
- My father hadn’t changed but the Café Atarah
- Had been renovated. I said: Happy are those
- Who have a bakery next door to a coffee house,
- You can shout inside: “Another cake, more
- Sweetness, let’s have more!”
- Happy is he whose dead father is next door to him
- And he can call him always.
- Oh, the eternal scream of children
- “I want, I want!”
- Until it turns into the scream of the wounded.
- O my father, chariot of my life, I want
- To go with you, take me a little way,
- Set me down next to my house
- And then continue on your way alone.
- We left. And a man remained in the corner,
- One hand amputated.
- (At the last meeting he had two hands.)
- And he drank coffee and put down the cup,
- And ate cake and put down the fork,
- And leafed through a magazine and put it down,
- And laid his hand on the magazine.
- He laid it down and rested.
4. Leonard Cohen: A Jewish Musician’s Secret Love for Her

I think of you all the time
But I can’t speak about you any more
I must love you secretly
I must come to you when I am alone
As I am now
And even now I must be careful
I want all the women
You created in your image
That is why I lower my eyes
When I pass them in the street
You can hear my prayer
The one I have no words for
The name that I cannot utter
I’m twisted with love
I’m burning with boredom
I hate my disguise
The mask of longing
But what can I do
Without my disguise
I wouldn’t be created
My Redeemer is a woman
Her picture is lost
We surrendered it
A hundred years ago
“Give us the Lady,” they said.
“It is too dangerous now
“to have her likeness on a wall.”
So I gave her away
And the language with her
The happy language
She invented for her name
And anyone who wants
To talk about her
Has to become like me
Humiliated and silent
Twisted with love
A specialist in boredom
And other childish matters