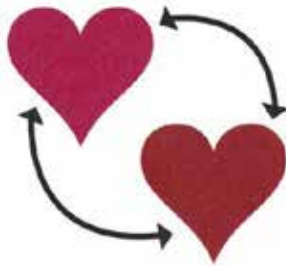


# הקשר היהודי שלך Your Jewish Connection

Brought to you by the Lifelong Learning Committee – *Written by Linda S Trapasso*

## Finding Love in the Torah

“Love is the greatest enjoyment of mankind” by P. Eliyahu ([Jewish Quotations on Love](#)). This quotation makes a lot of sense to me, as do many others found at the web site.



“Love is the most powerful human emotion. It electrifies, inspires, and exalts us. It illuminates and gives meaning to our lives.” (from Rabbi Naftali Reich in [What Is True Love?](#)). **This is likely what most of us think of when we talk of love.** But what is love? And what does the Torah say about it?

Three commandments in the Torah can help with this (from Britain’s Former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, [Love Is Not Enough](#), and Rabbi Vered L. Harris in [Justice and Mercy are Jewish Love](#)):

Love those who are like you (Leviticus 19:18)

Love those who are different from you (Leviticus 19:34)

Love the Eternal your G-d (Deuteronomy 6:5)

“We learn about love from how G-d treats us...with mercy and justice... So G-d loves us through justice and mercy. Similarly, when we act with justice and mercy, we fulfill the commandments to love our fellow, the stranger in our midst, and the Eternal One.” (Rabbi Harris).

When we love others like we love ourselves, we find virtue in them. “Judaism defines love as the emotional pleasure one experiences when he/she finds virtue in another human being and identifies the person with those virtues.” (from Rabbi David Zauderer, [I’m Lovin’ It?](#)).

It follows that the more we know about others’ virtues, the more we will love them. “The Jewish outlook...is that love is based upon the *understanding* and *appreciation* of another’s virtues. When people are truly committed to focusing on each other’s virtues, they won’t ‘fall’ out of love.” (from Rabbi Noah Weinberg and Rabbi Yaakov Salomon in [The Power of Love](#)).

LOVE WHAT MATTERS

finding. As to that, Gila Manolson states, “To the Jewish mind, it isn’t unexpected at all. What we value most in ourselves, we value most in others. G-d created us to see ourselves as good...So, too, we seek goodness in others. Nice looks, an engaging personality, intelligence, and talent (all of which count for something) may attract you, but goodness is what moves you to love.” (from [What Is Love?](#)).

According to Rabbi Dov Heller, “Intimacy is primarily about how



two people make each other feel. If you consistently make each other feel good, then you feel close to each other. If you consistently make each other feel bad, you feel

distant from each other... The Torah provides a profoundly simple formula for creating and maintaining intimacy based on the premise that emotional intimacy depends upon how well you handle negative or troubling feelings. The formula of which I speak is found in the book of Leviticus 19:16-19...Contained in these verses are fundamental psychological principles about how to stay in love for the rest of your life.” (from [7 Steps to Lasting Love](#)).

Wondering how love is working for you? Go take the quiz at [7 Steps to Lasting Love](#).

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Judith Wallerstein studied real-life successful marriages and reported that couples placed high value on the partners’ moral qualities, which was an unexpected