

Ahavat Hashem

Introduction

What is Love?

At least twice daily, in the Shema prayer, we recite "וְאַהֲבָתָאֵת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ", commonly understood to mean "You shall love Hashem" (Devarim 6:5). What, though, does it mean to love God? Love is difficult to define, and often means different things to different people. It could refer to: romantic attachment, giving and doing for another, loyalty, or trust. The question is even more complex when speaking of Hashem. Can the term even be applied to a being that one cannot see, let alone comprehend? Is love of Hashem comparable to human love, or must it be defined in completely different terms?

Commanding an Emotion?

The verse raises a second issue as well. How can one be commanded to love? Are emotions subject to one's will? Though it is fair to expect a person to *act* in a certain way to another being, is it reasonable to demand of someone to feel a certain way?

Additional Questions

- The verses surrounding the phrase "וְאַהֲבָתָאֵת ה'" speak of the need to recognize the unity of Hashem ("אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד") and to reflect on or observe His commandments ("וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֶנְכִּי מְצֹוֶה הַיּוֹם עֲלֶיךָ"). How do these relate to the obligation of loving Hashem?
- What does it mean to love Hashem "בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדְךָ"? Is this just a metaphoric way of saying that one should love Hashem extensively, or do the terms speak more intrinsically to the nature of love?
- How do other commandments involving love of another, such as the directives to love our neighbor (Vayikra 19:18) and a foreigner (Vayikra 19:34), compare to the obligation to love God? Does "love" have a consistent meaning in each of these instances?

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Exegetical Approaches

THIS TOPIC IS STILL UNDERGOING EDITORIAL REVIEW

Overview

Commentators differ in their understanding of whether the commandment to love Hashem prescribes an emotion, thought or action. Rambam compares it to love of a spouse, where a person longs for and desires to connect with Hashem. Though one can not be expected to feel love on command, one can be commanded to look into Hashem's ways and His commandments, which will ultimately lead to the emotion. R. Chofetz b. Yatziach, in contrast, suggests that the cognitive process of getting to know Hashem is not merely a means to an end, but the act of love itself.

A third category of sources suggest that actions, rather than thoughts or emotions, are what constitute love. While Shadal focuses on the concept of loyalty and observance of Hashem's mitzvot, Mishnah Berakhot speaks of the need to actively show Hashem appreciation for all He does. Finally, Ramban defines love as the willingness to sacrifice one's self for Hashem.

Emotional Experience

Love of Hashem is a feeling, rather than a thought or action.

Longing for Hashem

Love of Hashem means a deep desire to connect with Him and be in His presence, similar to the love of a husband and wife.

SOURCES: R. Saadia Gaon, R. Bachya ibn Pekuda, Rambam, R. Bachya b. Asher, Sefer HaChinukh, Ralbag, R. Yosef Albo

How is love of Hashem attained?

- **Intellectual process** – According to most of these commentators, although love itself is an emotion, the path to love is a cognitive one. One must strive to know God by delving into His Torah and contemplating His various deeds, wonders and creation.¹ The deeper one's knowledge of Hashem, the higher a level of love one can attain.²
- **Doing Hashem's bidding** – R. Yosef Albo, in contrast, suggests that observing Hashem's commandments is the way to achieve a love of God.³ According to him, love of Hashem is the highest level one can attain, and the mitzvot are commanded primarily as a means of reaching this goal.⁴

Can an emotion be commanded? Most of these commentators maintain that although one cannot be expected to feel love on command, one can be demanded to study Hashem's ways or keep His commandments, and this leads to love.⁵ One could alternatively suggest that the verb "וְאָהַבְתָּ" is not a command at all, but a promise that once one attains a knowledge of Hashem and his oneness ("...עַמִּי"), love will inevitably follow.⁶

"בְּכַל לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכַל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכַל מְאֹדְךָ" – This position views these phrases as explanatory notes which further clarify how one should love. According to R. Yosef Albo, the terms refer to the three parts of one's being which are utilized in loving Hashem - one's mental faculties, the vital power of the soul, and the power of desire.⁷ Most of the other commentators follow Chazal,⁸ and explain that the phrases teach that one must be willing to surrender one's desires, and sacrifice one's life and money for love of Hashem.

Context – Most of these commentators support their understanding of the process of loving Hashem from the immediate context of the words "וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת ה'". Drawing on the Sifre Devarim, they maintain that the phrase "וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה..." comes to explain "וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת ה'", teaching *how* one should attain a love of Hashem. Love results from reflecting on the commandments.⁹

General usage of "אהב" – The affective understanding of love is supported by the many Biblical occurrences of the root in the context of interpersonal relationships and emotional attachment.¹⁰ In addition, many prophets compare the relationship between Hashem and the nation to that of a husband and wife, similarly emphasizing the emotional aspect.

Loving one's neighbor and the foreigner – Rambam, Sefer HaChinukh, and Ralbag are not consistent in understanding other love-related commandments to refer to emotions. Thus, for example, Rambam understands love of one's neighbor to be action-oriented, including speaking the other's praise and protecting his property.

Overlap with other mitzvot – This approach needs to explain how this commandment differs from the command to "know God", as most of these commentators assume that this is a large part of achieving love. It is possible that they maintain that the two are intrinsically connected and that one is only commanded so that the other can be attained.¹¹

Biblical models – R. Bachya ibn Pekuda explains that Avraham (referred to as "אֲבִי") is held up as the model of a lover of Hashem since he served Hashem with his body (through circumcision), his soul (in sacrificing Yitzchak), and his possessions.¹² Rambam, in contrast, highlights how Avraham brought others close to Hashem by teaching them about Hashem.¹³ Rambam could also have pointed to Avraham as a model of one who used his intellect to discover, and then love, Hashem.¹⁴

Philosophical underpinnings of approach – As most of these commentators are part of the rationalist, Aristotelean, school which views knowledge and the intellect as the highest of values, it not surprising that they view the path to love as a cognitive one.



Desiring to Perform the Mitzvot

Loving Hashem refers to loving His commandments and observing them joyously,¹⁵ rather than out of expectation of reward or fear of punishment.

SOURCES: Sifre Devarim,¹⁶ Bavli Nedarim, Rashi, Sefer Mitzvot Gadol, Sefer Mitzvot Katan

How is love of Hashem attained? R. Moshe of Coucy asserts that loves stems from an appreciation of all that Hashem has bestowed upon us.¹⁷ If a person thinks of all he has received when being created,¹⁸ he will then desire to "repay" Hashem.

Can an emotion be commanded? The Semag assumes that as long as a person contemplates (an action which can be commanded) all that he has received from Hashem, a person cannot help but to desire to return that good and rejoice in observing Hashem's commands.

"בְּכֹל לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכֹל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכֹל מְאֹדְךָ" – These words do not define the command, but rather clarify its parameters. Semak, following the Sifre, explains "לִבְבְּךָ" to refer to one's good and bad inclinations, while the Semag more simply explains it to refer to one's thoughts. To love Hashem, one must bend one's desires towards observance of His commandments. Moreover, one must be willing to endanger and even sacrifice one's soul (נַפְשְׁךָ), or forego one's possessions ("מְאֹדְךָ") so as to keep Hashem's laws.

Context – This position might view the two verses, "וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ" and "וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה..." as together defining the mitzvah. "These things which I command you" must be observed from a point of love.¹⁹

General usage of "אהב" – Many of the verses which speak of love of Hashem also speak of keeping His commands.²⁰

Loving one's neighbor and the foreigner – The Semag and Semak do not view these as parallel to the command to love God, but rather understand them to be action oriented and not affective.²¹

Philosophical underpinnings of approach – R. Moshe of Coucy veers away from the philosophical approach to the command, viewing the need to reflect on Hashem's goodness as more important than intellectual inquiry into the nature of Hashem.²²



Cognitive Thought

To love Hashem is to try to know Him, understand Him, and constantly think of Him.

SOURCES: R. Chefetz b. Yatzliach

How is love of Hashem attained? This position views the process of getting to know Hashem not as a means to an end, but as an act of love itself. The process might include delving into Hashem's deeds, studying the wonders of creation, learning the Torah, and in general, constantly thinking about Hashem in all aspects of one's life.

Can an emotion be commanded? Since love is an intellectual process rather than an emotion, it can be demanded of a person.

"בְּכֹל לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכֹל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכֹל מְאֹדְךָ" – This approach might read these terms, like R. Yosef Albo above, as referring to one's powers of cognition, vitality, and desires, all of which join in the quest to know Hashem.

Context – According to this position, the command of "וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ" is defined by the following phrase of "וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה...". Love means "putting these things... on your heart".

General usage of "אהב" – Though no verses explicitly define love as an act of cognition, there are several verses which link love of Hashem and "clinging to Him",²³ which might be understood as constantly thinking of Hashem.

Loving one's neighbor and the foreigner – It is possible to explain these mitzvot, too, as a requirement to try and understand the other. This would work especially well with the law regarding a foreigner who might be easily misunderstood.

Overlap with other mitzvot – This understanding of love is almost identical to the command of "ידיעת ה'", which R. Chefetz enumerates separately, making it difficult to understand the need for both. Theoretically, one could suggest that there is only one commandment, which is derived from "וְאָהַבְתָּ".

Biblical models – This position might view Avraham as the paradigmatic "אוהב ה'" as he was the first to discover and spread the knowledge of Hashem in the world.²⁴

Philosophical underpinnings of approach – This position values intellect over emotion, considering knowledge of Hashem the highest of values.



Demonstrative Actions

Actions, rather than thoughts or emotions, lie at the heart of love.

Observing Mitzvot

To love Hashem is a metaphorical way of saying to be loyal to God and observe His Torah.

SOURCES: Shadal

Can an emotion be commanded? Shadal says explicitly that love itself cannot be commanded. This, in part, is what motivates him to suggest that "וְאָהַבְתָּ" does not refer to emotion. Instead, the obligation relates to obedience and is, thus, action based.²⁵

"בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדְךָ" – These terms refer to one's inner will, vitality, and possessions, all of which should be used to serve Hashem.

Context – Shadal might suggest that the phrases "וְאָהַבְתָּ" and "וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה..." are essentially identical, with one defining the other. Love is equivalent to observing Hashem's commands.

General usage of "אהב"

- **Supporting verses** – Shadal's understanding might be supported by the many verses which link love of Hashem and observance.²⁶ There are also many examples where the word "אוהב" connotes a loyal follower or supporter, rather than a "lover".²⁷
- **Difficult verses** – This definition is harder to sustain in the many occurrences of the word which describe human relationships and strongly suggest an emotional component,²⁸ and one would need to argue that there are multiple meanings of the word love in Tanakh.

Ancient Near Eastern parallels – Several modern scholars²⁹ attempt to explain the directive to love God as being analogous to the "love" expressed in several ancient Near Eastern vassal treaties. These use the term to refer to a political loyalty and obedience, a "covenantal" rather than "emotional" love, much like Shadal's definition.³⁰

Loving one's neighbor and the foreigner – Shadal is consistent in similarly asserting that the commands to love one's neighbor and a foreigner are general commandments which mandate certain behaviors rather than emotions. He also explains fear of God as action based.³¹

Overlap with other mitzvot – This proposed definition of love of Hashem would seem to be equivalent to the many verses which speak of "following in Hashem's ways",³² making one wonder what is the need for both. One might simply suggest that the two are in fact synonymous formulations.³³

Philosophical underpinnings of approach – Shadal reacts very strongly against the approach of the "philosophers" which leaves love of God to the realm of the intellect, and elevates cognitive attachment over practical actions. He claims that this is antithetical to the purpose of Torah which aims to guide man to justice and righteousness.³⁴ The mitzvot were not given to aid man in his quest to understand God, but to teach him what is good and right. In fact, if the Torah speaks of the oneness of God or the wonders of creation it does so only because these will help man act correctly, not because the belief or knowledge is an end in itself.³⁵



Sacrificing for Hashem

Love of Hashem is the willingness to sacrifice one's self for Him.

SOURCES: Ramban

Can an emotion be commanded? Hashem is not commanding an emotion but an act of self sacrifice.

"בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדְךָ" – These words define the command, explaining what it means to love Hashem – to be willing to give all (life and soul) for Him.³⁶

Context – According to Ramban, the command of "וְאָהַבְתָּ" is integrally related to the previous verse which declares the unity of Hashem – "שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד". He maintains that loving Hashem is basically the antithesis of idolatry. One must love Hashem to the exclusion of others, and if the case arises, be willing to give one's life rather than worship other gods.³⁷ Thus, Moshe first speaks of Hashem's oneness and then of the command to love Him alone.

General usage of "אהב" – In other verses as well, there is a connection between love of Hashem and the prohibition of idolatry.³⁸ In addition, many verses³⁹ stress that one must love with all one's heart and soul, perhaps alluding to the requirement of self sacrifice. Ramban's definition might be applied to verses which speak of human love relations as well, as these might also connote a willingness to sacrifice for the other, and in a spousal relationship, a love which is exclusive.

Loving one's neighbor and the foreigner – Ramban does not mention the need for self sacrifice in his explanation of other commandments involving love of fellow humans, and in fact points out that love of one's own life must come before that of the other.⁴⁰

Overlap with other mitzvot – Ramban distinguishes this command from the obligation of martyrdom (קידוש השם) by asserting that each applies to a different set of circumstances. The obligation to give one's life rather than publicly transgress commandments in a time of persecution is learned from "וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל", while the obligation, even in private, to martyr one's self rather than violate the three cardinal

prohibitions of idolatry, illicit relations, or murder, is learned from "וְאֶהְיֶה". For elaboration, see Sanctifying Hashem's Name.

Biblical models – Avraham is the chosen paradigm because he opted to be thrown into a furnace and die rather than worship idolatry.⁴¹



Displaying Gratitude

Love of Hashem is a recognition of and active show of appreciation for all that He has given us.

SOURCES: Mishna Berakhot

Can an emotion be commanded? This position understands love to be an expression of gratitude, an act of which all are capable regardless of inner feelings.

"בְּכֹל לְבַבְךָ וּבְכֹל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכֹל מְאֹדְךָ" – The Mishna understands the phrase "וּבְכֹל מְאֹדְךָ" to define the term love, equating it with thanking Hashem for everything He gives (whether good or bad).⁴² It is not clear how the Mishna would understand the other terms. It might suggest that they teach how one must express thanks: from the heart and soul.⁴³

Context – The theme of appreciation runs throughout this section of Devarim. The passage immediately after the "Shema" speaks of all the good the nation would encounter upon their arrival in Israel and warns the people not to forget Hashem but to recognize that all stems from Him.⁴⁴

General usage of "אהב" – There are no verses which explicitly link love and saying thanks.⁴⁵

Loving one's neighbor and the foreigner – Theoretically one could say that these commandments, too, relate to expressing gratitude to the other.

¹ R. Saadia Gaon is the most general in his formulation, speaking simply of the need to attain knowledge of the existence and oneness of Hashem before loving Him. R. Bachya b. Asher and Sefer HaChinukh emphasize inquiry into Hashem's Torah/mitzvot and do not mention thinking about the wonders of creation while the others mention all aspects. R. Bachya ibn Pekuda adds other prerequisites as well such as recognizing how much one owes Hashem for both all the good He has granted and all the bad he has forgiven.

² This position argues that, without knowledge, there is nothing to love, for how can one love something which one does not know?

³ See HaKetav VeHaKabbalah similarly who stresses that intellectual inquiry alone will never accomplish the goal.

⁴ He also asserts, though, that the process is circular and that one who loves Hashem will express this through serving Hashem and doing his mitzvot.

⁵ R. Yosef Albo understands Devarim 10:12-13 to be saying exactly this. According to him the verses have a misplaced modifier and should read, "מִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ שֶׁאֵל מְעַמְךָ [לא] לִירְאָה אֶת ה' ... וְלִאֱהָבָה אֹתוֹ... [כי אם] לְשֹׁמֵר אֶת", "מִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ שֶׁאֵל מְעַמְךָ [לא] לִירְאָה אֶת ה' ... וְלִאֱהָבָה אֹתוֹ... [כי אם] לְשֹׁמֵר אֶת". Moshe is encouraging the nation by telling them that Hashem does not expect them to love (or fear) Him but rather that they observe His commands which will, in turn, inevitably lead to these emotions.

⁶ In R. Saadia's HaNivchar BaEmunot UvaDeiot he alludes to such a cause and effect ("כאשר יגיע האדם אל"), and in his liturgical poem on the Decalogue, he does not include loving Hashem as a commandment. On the other hand, he does count it as a commandment in his Sefer HaMitzvot, and in his Azharot to the Decalogue he writes, "מפני האדון ירא ואהבתו". Cf. a parallel exegetical dispute regarding the process of repentance in Devarim 4:30 and 30:1-10.

⁷ He suggests that each of these matches one of the three motivating factors that lead people to love - the good (discerned by the mind), the useful (detected by the vital power) and the pleasurable (recognized by the power of desire).

⁸ They differ in the details and exact definitions of each term, with Ralbag following Chazal most closely in understanding "לב" as desire/inclination, "נפש" as soul/life and "מאד" as money. R. Bachya b. Asher flips Ralbag's definitions of "לב" and "נפש" and Rambam prefers the second explanation brought in the Mishna Berakhot to explain "מאד", that one must love Hashem even if he causes suffering. R. Bachya ibn Pekuda suggests that the terms refer to different levels that people can reach in their love. Some are willing only to give of their money, others to harm their physical bodies, while others are even willing to sacrifice their souls.

⁹ R. Yosef Albo understands the phrase differently, but he, too, could have suggested similarly – love comes only after "these things which I command you" are observed. See HaKetav VeHaKabbalah who understands the juxtaposition of the verses in this manner.

¹⁰ See, for instance, Bereshit 22:2, 25:28, 29:20 and 37:3, which describe Avraham's love of Yitzchak, Yitzchak and Rivka's love of their children, and Yaakov's feelings for both Rachel and Yosef.

¹¹ See also Sanctifying Hashem's Name for a discussion of how Rambam's position on the obligation of martyrdom is consistent with his understanding of Ahavat Hashem.

¹² This is less explicit in the Biblical text.

¹³ This is based on the second opinion in the Sifre Devarim which understands the phrase "הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ" to refer to conversion.

¹⁴ See the Rambam's description of Avraham's path to monotheism in Hilkhos Avodah Zarah 1:3.

¹⁵ In other words, love of Hashem is the desire to adhere to His wishes, and is what accompanies the action. This is distinct from the position below that love is the active observance itself.

¹⁶ See also the Yereim who quotes this Sifre in explaining the command.

¹⁷ As opposed to the above position, the Semag advocates not philosophical inquiry into Hashem, but personal reflection. Cf. the position below which equates love and expressing gratitude.

¹⁸ The Semag enumerates all the various parts of the body from eyes to kidneys to legs, and the gifts granted by each.

¹⁹ To some extent, this position reads the verses opposite to the above approach. While those commentators maintain that the clause "וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה..." defined how "וְאָהַבְתָּ" was to be achieved, this position asserts that "וְאָהַבְתָּ" defines how "הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה" are to be observed.

²⁰ See, for instance, Devarim 7:9, 10:12-13, 11:1 and 30:11-20.

²¹ In his explanation of the command of "וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כְּמוֹךָ", for example, the Semak includes making peace between fellow men, respecting the other and judging favorably.

²² See Y. Galinsky's article, "ולוהיות לפניך עבד נאמן כל הימים": פרק בהגותו הדתית של בעל התוספות רבי משה מקוצי", Daat 42 (5759): 13-31, regarding how the Semag veers from Rambam's definitions of numerous mitzvot, and for his general aversion to Aristotelian influence.

²³ See Devarim 11:22, 30:20 and Yehoshua 22:5

²⁴ Throughout his life, too, he continued to try and understand Hashem, not hesitating to question when he was troubled by Hashem's ways.

²⁵ Shadal views this as an all inclusive obligation which encompasses all of Hashem's mitzvot.

²⁶ See Shemot 20:5, Devarim 7:9, 10:12-13, 11:1 and 13,19:9,30:11-20, and Yehoshua 22:5

²⁷ See, for instance, Shemuel II 19:7, Melakhim I 5:15, Yirmeyahu 20:4 and 22:20.

²⁸ See a few of many examples in the note above.

²⁹ See W.L. Moran, "The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," CBQ 25 (1963): 77-87, M. Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School (Oxford, 1972):81-84. See also: M. Weinfeld, "The Loyalty Oath in the Ancient Near East," UF 8 (1976): 379-414, and S. Ackerman, "The Personal is Political: Covenantal and Affectionate Love ('āhēb, 'ahābā) in the Hebrew Bible," VT 52 (2002): 437-58.

³⁰ See above notes for other examples in Tanakh where the root "אהב" is used in this fashion.

³¹ See his commentary to Devarim 6:24: "יראת ה' איננה בלבד היראה שבלב, אך כל העבודות והמעשים הטובים מפניו". "יראת ה' נקראים כן".

³² See, for example, Devarim 10:12, 11:22 and 28:9.

³³ As each phrase alone appears multiple times the repetition itself is not troubling, but one might still question the need for the distinct terminology. Shadal asserts that the anthropomorphic phrases used to describe Hashem's relationship to man include love and hate, and as such, the Torah needed to similarly use such terms, even if inapplicable in their literal sense, to describe man's relationship back to God. Thus, one might conclude that though language of "וְהִלַּכְתָּ בְּדַרְכָּיו" is more clear, a formulation involving the root "אהב" was nonetheless necessary as well.

³⁴ According to Shadal, there is a fundamental divide between the aims of philosophy and Torah, and as such one should not be used to explain the other. Doing so can only distort both: המתפלספים שהכניסו דעות חכמי יון בתורת ישראל, ושינו מראיהם של עניני התורה להסכימם עם דברי הפילוסופים, והואיל ולא היה זה אפשרי, עשו מהתורה והפילוסופיה ונשארו קרחים מכאן ומכאן.

³⁵ Shadal's fierce opposition towards using Greek philosophy to understand Torah and mitzvot is a theme that runs throughout his commentary. See, for example, his opening comments to Sefer Bereshit. To learn more, see About Shadal.

³⁶ This is how Ramban explains the verse in his comments on Shemot 20. In his comments on Devarim, he adds that "בְּכָל מְאֹדָךְ" means "מאד מאד," that one must love Hashem extensively. There he explains the other terms according to the Sifre.

³⁷ Ramban, thus, limits the scope of the command.

³⁸ See, for example, Shemot 20:5, 11:13-17, Devarim 13:4 and Devarim 30:16-17

³⁹ See Devarim 10:12-13, 11:13, 13:4,30:16-17 and Yehoshua 22:5.

⁴⁰ The difference is not surprising since Ramban links love of Hashem to the prohibition of idolatry which is irrelevant to human relations. To be more consistent, though, he still might have suggested that love of another requires some level of sacrifice.

⁴¹ See R. Meir in the Sifre Devarim who presents Yitzchak as a model of one who was willing to give his soul to Hashem. Ramban probably does not mention him since nowhere is Yitzchak called an "אוהב" and because Yitzchak's act was not connected to martyrdom in the face of idolatry.

⁴² See R. Akiva in Sifre Devarim. This explanation is based on a word play: "בכל מדה ומדה שהוא מודד לך הוי'": "מודה לו במאד מאד".

⁴³ If so, the verse is asserting that thanks must be sincere which would mean that the obligation includes an emotional aspect as well.

⁴⁴ See also Devarim Chapters 8 and 10.

⁴⁵ This approach might nonetheless suggest that in general the root refers not just to the affective aspect of love, but also to an appreciation of the other. In many verses, though, it would be hard to limit the definition of love to this.