# "Love your fellow as yourself": universalism and particularism in Jewish exegesis of Leviticus 19:18

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## PREFACE[1]

**????? ???? ????" – ?' ????? ????, "??? ??? ???? ?????." ?? ???? ????: "?? ??? ?????? ??? – ??"**
**[2]".??? ???? ???**

> "Love your fellow (*re`akha*) as yourself (*kamokha*)."[3] Rabbi `Akiva says: "This is a great principle (*kelal*) of the Torah." Ben `Azzai says: "'This is the book of the generations of the human being (*adam*)' (Genesis 5:1) – this is a greater principle than that."

What is the basis of the disagreement between these two great rabbis in the Land of Israel in the early second century C.E. as to which verse is a "great" or "greater" principle of the Torah? The difference of opinion reflects the particularistic or nationalistic orientation of Rabbi `Akiva versus the universalistic orientation of his pupil and associate Ben `Azzai. As we shall see, the "fellow" (*re`a*) one is commanded in Leviticus 19:18 to love was (and still is, in various Jewish circles) interpreted to refer only to one's fellow Jew. Therefore, Ben `Azzai suggested that Genesis 5:1 is "a greater principle" because it applies universally to all humans created in the divine image.[4] The full passage (Genesis 5:1-2) to which Ben `Azzai refers reads:[5]

> This is the book of generations of the human being (*adam*), on the day of God's creating the human being; he made him in the image of God. He created them male and female, and blessed them, and he called their name "human being" (*adam*) on the day of their creation.[6]

In a different text, Rabbi `Akiva also appears to adopt the broader, universalistic view based on the creation of humans in the divine image:[7]

**??? ????? . . . ??? ????: ???? ??? ????? ????, ??? ???? ????? ?? ????? ???? ?????, ????? "????**
**????? ??? ?? ????" (?????? ?:?). ?????? ????? ?????? ???? ?????, ??? ???? ????? ??? ?????? .???? ?????, ????? "???? ??? ??' ??????" (????? ??:?)**

> Rabbi `Akiva . . . used to say: Beloved is the human being, who was created in the image [of God]; an even greater love was that it was made known to him that he was created in the divine image, as it says: "In the image of God he made him" (Genesis 9:6). Beloved are Israel who were called the children of the All-present;[8] an even greater love was that it was made known to them that they are called "children of the All-present," as it says: "You are children to the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 14:1).

It seems to me that we must distinguish the first from the second quote cited by Rabbi `Akiva. While in the first case he thus affirmed the universal creation of all humans in the divine image – like Ben `Azzai (although based on a different verse with the same effect) – in the second case he clearly affirmed a special, indeed unique, status to the people of Israel alone, thus presumably supporting the view that Leviticus 19:18 applies only to one's fellow Jew, in contrast with the view of Ben `Azzai. If Rabbi `Akiva did not intend to make such a distinction between Jews and humans in general, the passage makes little sense.

A third and different text, however, more or less combines both views, namely that Leviticus 19:18 is the basis for human relations (as Rabbi `Akiva maintained), but that inter-personal relations are based on, and go back to, the creation of the human being (as Ben `Azzai maintained). In *Avot De-Rabbi Natan* ("The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan") we find:[9]

**?' ????? ?? ????? ????, ???? ?? ????? ???? ??? ??: "????? ???? ????" ??? ?' ??????. ?? ??? .?????, ??? ???? ???? ?? ??? ???. ??? ??? ??? ???? ?????**

> Rabbi Shim`on ben Eli`ezer says: This was solemnly pronounced: "Love your fellow as yourself" – I have created him. If you love him, I am faithful to give you a good reward. But if not, I am the judge to punish.

The basis of the disagreement, then, lies in the referent of the term *re`a* in Leviticus 19:18. If its reference is particular, namely only to one's fellow Jews, as apparently understood by Rabbi `Akiva, then (in Ben `Azzai's view) a different source in the Torah is required as "a greater principle" to apply universally to all human beings, based on their common creation. Rabbi Shim`on ben Eli`ezer, on the other hand, while sharing Ben `Azzai's universalistic concern, understands Leviticus 19:18 in that universalistic sense based on the common creation of the human species.

The meaning of *re`a*, then, is the first of three problems in our understanding the commandment in Leviticus 19:18. The second problem relates to a fundamental question: how can love be commanded? The third problem lies in our understanding of *kamokha*, "like you," or, as it is commonly translated, "as yourself."

## WHO IS THE RE`A THAT WE ARE SUPPOSED TO LOVE?

The term ???? (*re`a*), which appears (in different forms, gender, singular and plural, and with various pronominal suffixes) some 187 times in the Hebrew Bible,[10] can have different meanings in diverse contexts, and can be translated by such English terms as fellow, friend, lover, companion, comrade, associate.

Whichever translation we adopt, the one thing is clear: *re`a* does not mean "neighbor" (as commonly translated), in the sense of the person living in an adjacent home. This is made amply clear not only linguistically and contextually, but also because in two parallel passages, different Hebrew terms are used. In Exodus 11:2 we find: "Each man shall ask of his fellow (*re`ehu*), and each woman of her fellow (*re`utah*), jewels of silver and jewels of gold," whereas previously, in Exodus 3:21-22 we find: "Each woman shall ask of her neighbor (*shekhentah*) or the one living in her house, etc."[11]

Now we come to what is perhaps the most famous – and difficult – reference to *re`a* in Leviticus 19:18: "Do not take vengeance nor bear a grudge against the children of your people (*benei `amekha*); love your fellow (*re`akha*) as yourself (*kamokha*)."

Who is this *re`a*? In his essay "The Neighbor (*Re`a*) Whom We Shall Love"[12] Ernst Simon suggested that the verse can be understood in two opposite manners, particular and universal:

> An initial possibility is that the two halves of the verse are parallel. In that case, it would follow that just as the first half is limited to *benei `amekha*, that is, to members of the Jewish people, so is the second half limited only to other Jews. Read this way, the commandment instructs us not to take vengeance or bear grudges against other Jews, and to love other Jews as we love ourselves. In interpreting such biblical verses, however, there is also a second possibility, namely that the two parts are not parallel but opposed. In that case, since the first half is explicitly restricted to Jews, the second half can be construed as having a wider, nonrestrictive referent. According to this interpretation, our neighbor is every man, and we are commanded to love all men as we love ourselves.[13]

Here are just a few examples of the diverse usages of *re`a* as cited by Ernst Simon, which for clarity are listed below in table format with brief explanations.

| **Particular: *Re`a* as one's fellow Israelite/Jew** | **Universal: *Re`a* as one's fellow human** |
|---|---|
| Exodus 2:13 – "Why do you strike your fellow (*re`akha*)?" – both contenders are Hebrews.<br><br>Deuteronomy 19:14 – "Do not move back the boundary markers of your fellow (*re`akha*) delineated by earlier generations, in your inheritance which you inherited in the land which the Lord your God gives you to possess" – relating to the permanent division of the land among the tribes of Israel. | Exodus 11:2 – "Each man shall ask of his fellow (*re`ehu*), and each woman of her fellow (*re`utah*), jewels of silver and jewels of gold" – in both cases the "fellows" are Egyptians.[14]<br><br>Jeremiah 3:1 – "You have whored with many lovers (*re`im*)" – i.e., you, Israel, followed and mixed with other idolatrous nations, violating the unique, "monogamous" relationship with God.<br><br>Job 2:11 – "The three companions (re`im) of Job heard, etc." The Talmudic rabbis discuss whether Job, from the country *`Utz*, ever actually existed, or whether the story is a parable (a position strongly affirmed by Maimonides).[15] In any event, there is no indication in the biblical text that Job or his companions were Israelites, and the problem of unmerited suffering is universal. |

These few examples – and there are many more times the term may be found – suffice to show that *re`a* can have different meanings, which must be understood contextually, and that it may refer in a particular sense only to Jews, or in a universal sense to any human. This ambiguity, in turn, leads to a tension in diverse rabbinic and philosophic interpretations of Leviticus 19:12 in Jewish literature over the centuries, as we shall now see. However, those interpretations lead to a more basic question (regardless of whether the *re`a* is a Jew or any human): how can one be commanded to love, and even more, how can one be commanded to love someone else "as yourself" (*kamokha*)?

## HOW THE VERSE WAS TRANSLATED IN ANCIENT VERSIONS

Let us first see how the verse has been translated, i.e., understood, in various ancient versions.

The "standard" Aramaic translation of the Torah, Targum Onkelos, reads:

**.??????? ?????? ????**
(Love your fellow as yourself.)[16]

Onkelos' literal translation, renders *re`akha as ?avrakh*, which also means fellow, friend, companion, and thus retains the ambiguity of the referent in the Hebrew. Similarly, the translation of *kamokha* as *kevatakh* ("like you") leaves unanswered the question of whether the commandment means we should love the other "as yourself," or means something else.

By contrast, the later Targum Yerushalmi (often mistakenly referred to as "Targum Yonatan" and in English as "Pseudo-Jonathan")[17] abandons any pretext of literal translation, and freely renders it:

**.??????? ????? ??? ?? ??? ?? ?? ????? ???**
(Love your fellow, whatever you hate for yourself do not do to him.)

In other words, to "love your fellow as yourself" means, following the words of Hillel the Elder's "golden rule:"[18]

**.??? ??? ????? ?? ?????. ?? ??? ?? ????? ???? ????? ?????? ???. ??? ????**
(Whatever is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. This is the whole Torah in its entirety, and the rest is its commentary. Go and study.)[19]

In the Septuagint, our verse is translated as:

*Kai agapeseis ton plesion sou hos sauton.* (Love your neighbor as yourself.)

The Septuagint's translation here of *re`a* as *plesion* (neighbor; someone near or close) is presumably the origin of the common rendition of the verse as loving one's "neighbor" in European languages.[20]

The Vulgate, however, renders *re`a* more closely to the Hebrew as "friend" (*amicus*):[21]

*Diliges amicum tuum sicut te ipsum.* (Love your friend as yourself.)

The Peshitta renders our verse:

**.??? ????? ??? ????** (Love your fellow as yourself.)[22]

However, we should note that in the reference to our verse in Matthew 22:39 and Mark 12:31, and also in the story of the "Good Samaritan" in Luke 10:27, in some of the versions the terminology for *re`a* differs. In these three citations of our verse in the New Testament, the Greek has *plesion* and Luther has *Nächsten*, as they do in Leviticus 19:18. However, in all three of the New Testament passages, the Vulgate has *proximum* (instead of *amicum*) and the Peshitta has **???????** (instead of **?????**), presumably reflecting the Greek *plesion* rather than the original Hebrew/Aramaic term likely used by Jesus.

Returning to our verse, the Peshitta's reading of *kamokha* as **??? ????** becomes all the more interesting in light of Moses Mendelssohn's lengthy commentary on our verse (although without any reference to the Peshitta itself), to be discussed below.

The Judeo-Arabic *Tafsir* ("commentary") of Sa`adiah Gaon (892-942 C.E.), like the Peshitta's Syriac **???**, uses *nafs* for (your)self, and renders our verse as:

**.????? ?????? ??'? ????** (Love your friend as yourself.)

Sa`adiah here translates *re`a* as *?a?ib,* a friend, companion, or comrade.[23] However, Sa`adiah's straightforward translation leaves unanswered our two questions, namely whether he understood the *re`a* as referring only to another Jew or to any person, and how one is supposed to be commanded to love one's friend as oneself.

These two questions were, however, discussed by various subsequent medieval Jewish exegetes and philosophers. We shall now review a few examples, focusing on each point of view: *re`a* as meaning only another Jew; *re`a* understood universally as any other person; and the problem of a commandment to love another *kamokha*, if that means "as yourself."

## RE`A AS MEANING ANOTHER JEW

Rashi (Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, 1040-1105), the preeminent Bible and Talmud commentator, focused primarily on the first part of our verse, explaining what is meant by avenging and maintaining a grudge. On the second part of the verse, Rashi simply refers back to Rabbi `Akiva's statement that "this is a great principle of the Torah." Rashi's grandson Rashbam (Rabbi Samuel ben Me'ir (1085-1174), however, while not mentioning explicitly the restriction of *re`a* to one's fellow Jew, adds a further moral condition:

**.????? ???? ????" – ?? ???, ?? ??? [???], ??? ?? ?? ??? ???, ?????? "???? ?' ???? ??" (???? ?:??)**"
"Love your fellow as yourself" – if he is your fellow, if he is good, but not if he is wicked, as it is written 'The fear of the Lord is to hate evil' (Proverbs 8:13)."

Neither Rashi nor Rashbam explicitly states that *re`a* refers only to one's fellow Jew. That silence, however, may simply mean that it was obvious to them. On the other hand, at least in the case of Rashbam, who knew Latin, had contact with Christians, and occasionally in his commentary refers to and rejects Christian exegesis,[24] it is conceivable that he deliberately moved from the ethnic to the ethical qualification of *re`a*.

However, when it comes to Rambam (Rabbi Moses ben Maimon; Maimonides,1138-1204), we find repeated and explicit limitation of *re`a* to one's fellow Jew. This is all the more paradoxical, given his general universalistic outlook, both in his philosophy and in his works on *halakhah* (Jewish law).[25] This explicit limitation is found in three different references to our verse.

In his Judeo-Arabic "Book of the Commandments,"[26] positive commandment 206, we see that Rambam explicitly limits the commandment to "my brother in religion" (**???'? ?? ?????**):

> The two hundred and sixth commandment is the commandment we were commanded to love each other, as we love ourselves (**??????**), and that my compassion and love for my brother in religion (**???'? ?? ?????**) be like (**??'?**) my love and compassion for myself (**?????**), for his money and for his body (**?'???**), and that whatever I wish for myself I should wish for him as himself (**???? ????? ???? ?? ??'??**), and whatever I hate for myself or for one who keeps close to me I should hate for him as himself. This is what was meant by saying, "Love your fellow as yourself."

Twice in his encyclopedic code of law, the *Mishneh Torah*,[27] Rambam similarly restricts the commandment to one's fellow Jew.

> It is a commandment for every person (*adam*) to love every other Israelite as himself

> (*ke-gufo*), as it says, “Love your fellow as yourself.” Therefore, one must praise him and take pity on his property,[28] just as one takes pity on one’s own property and desires honor for oneself.[29]

And again:

> According to their (i.e., the rabbis’) words, it is a positive commandment to visit the sick, to comfort mourners, to participate in a funeral, and to dower a bride . . . These are acts of kindness performed by a person, which have no fixed measure. Although all these commandments are of rabbinic authority, they fall under the general rule (*kelal*) of “Love your fellow as yourself.” Whatever you want others to do to you, you do for your brother in the Torah and in the commandments (*le-a?ikha ba-Torah uva-mi?vot*).[30]

Rambam’s general universalism is obvious in many contexts, most clearly in the very first chapter of his *Guide of the Perplexed*, where he identifies the biblical term *?elem*, the “image” of God in which the human being was created (Genesis 1:26-27), which does not mean physical shape (*to’ar*). Rather, Rambam insists:

> The term *image* (*?elem*), on the other hand, is applied to the natural form (*al-?urah al-?abi`iyah*), I mean to the notion in virtue of which a thing is constituted as a substance (*jauhar*) and becomes what it is. It is the true reality of the thing in so far as the latter is that particular being. In man that notion is that from which human apprehension (*al-idrak al-insani*) derives. It is on account of this intellectual apprehension that it is said of man: “In the image of God created He him.”[31]

The *Guide of the Perplexed*, written in Judeo-Arabic, then ends with a Hebrew poem:[32]

> God is very near to everyone who calls, /
> If he calls truly and has no distractions;
> He is found by every seeker who searches for Him, /
> If he marches toward Him and goes not astray.

Similarly, Rambam’s *Mishneh Torah* begins with the “Book of Knowledge” (*Sefer Ha-Mada`*) and the opening words: “The foundation of foundations and the pillar of the sciences is to know that there is a first being, who causes all existing things to exist.”  The Code then ends with a quote from Isaiah 11:9: “For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as water covers the sea.”

Previously, in his Commentary on the Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5, Rambam equated the “stamping die” (*?otam*) by which God “stamped” the human species with “the form of the human species (*?urat al-insan al-nau`iyah*), by which a human being is human, in which all humans participate.”[33] There is no distinction in these passages between Jews and non-Jews, all are humans, endowed with intellect which is their true essence and the “image” of God, defining *homo sapiens*.

In Rambam’s greatest works, the history of the human species thus begins with the creation of *homo sapiens* with reason, and culminates with universal knowledge of God.

How, then, can we explain Rambam’s departure from his characteristic universalism in his particularistic understanding of Leviticus 19:18?  One possibility, of course, is inconsistency, but

we would expect more of a thinker of Rambam's stature. A second possibility is that Rambam is less of a universalist than many would like to think, but that flies in the face of the clear universalism of his reading of the "image" of God as universal human intellectual apprehension. A third possibility is that some readers of his works differentiate between "Rambam" the rabbi and "Maimonides" the philosopher, but that leads us to conclude that he suffered from an intellectual and spiritual split personality, a conclusion I find impossible. Moreover, the universalistic second passage cited above is from his Commentary on the Mishnah, a rabbinic work.

A fourth possibility is that we always need to read Rambam/Maimonides contextually. Rambam's approach in general was to categorize concepts and explicate terms (as he did for much of Part I of the *Guide of the Perplexed*, beginning with *?elem*). Thus, for example, in his *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Repentance 3:9 he categorizes and explains different types of dissident belief, which must not be confused with each other, distinguishing from each other the categories of *min* ("sectarian"), *apiqoros* ("heretic"), *kofer ba-torah* ("denier of the Torah"), and *meshumad* (apostate). Similarly, in his Commentary on the Mishnah, Introduction to Sanhedrin, Ch. 10 (where he lists his "13 Foundations [or: Principles]" of Judaism), he carefully differentiates, and explains at length, concepts frequently conflated with each other, including *`olam ha-ba* ("the world to come"), *te?iyat ha-metim* ("resurrection of the dead"), *gan `eden* ("the Garden of Eden," i.e., paradise), and *yemot ha-mashi'a?* ("the messianic era").

Keeping in mind, then, this general approach in which terms and concepts must be clearly understood and differentiated, Rambam's interpretation of Leviticus 19:18 may simply mean that he understood – like many before and after him – the term *re`a* in our verse contextually as referring only to another Jew, just as the first part of the verse immediately before our phrase refers explicitly to *benei `amekha* ("the children of your people"), and the previous verses also refer explicitly to *`amekha* ("your people") and to *a?ikha* ("your brother"). In other words, Rambam may simply, in his typical manner, be attempting to be terminologically and conceptually precise: as he read it contextually (and not unreasonably) the term *re`a* in this specific verse refers to one's fellow Jew. That limitation, however, does not undermine Rambam's general universalistic outlook, and the fact that this verse refers to another Jew does not mean that there are not grounds elsewhere for a broader ethic.[34]

## RE`A AS MEANING ANOTHER HUMAN BEING

A generation before Rambam, Abraham ibn Ezra (1085-1158), a widely-read grammarian, philosopher and exegete,[35] first examined a syntactical aspect of our verse, and then interpreted its reference. The point in question is the Torah's use of the indirect object (the prepositional letter "**?**") before **??** instead of the direct object particle **??**. This is an important point to which later commentators returned. However, according to Ibn Ezra, the prepositional letter "**?**" can also indicate a direct object, as in 2 Samuel 3:30 ("Yoav and Avishai his brother killed Avner – **?????**"). Nevertheless, Ibn Ezra – and the later commentators and philosophers who followed his analysis – then reads **????** as an indirect object:

> In my opinion, it means that he should love for his fellow (**?????**) the same good as for himself (**?????**). And the meaning of "I am the Lord" is that I am one God who created you.

Ibn Ezra's connecting the commandment to love the other because all humans are equally created by God follows – as it would later for Rambam – from the notion that it is reason that is the essential common denominator of *homo sapiens* going back to the very creation of the human species. In his Introduction to the Torah, Ibn Ezra wrote:[36]

> For reason (*de`ah*) has been implanted in the [human] heart by divine wisdom . . . The angel [intermediating] between the human being and his God is his intellect (*sekhel*).

By basing the commandment on the creation of the human species by "one God," and by reading the verse as commanding love "for his fellow" – rather than as a direct object – Ibn Ezra set the stage for subsequent expansion of the discussion of both problems raised above: who is the **??** we are commanded to love, and how can one be commanded to love someone else "as yourself?"

## HOW CAN ONE BE COMMANDED TO LOVE SOMEONE "AS YOURSELF"?

Ramban (Rabbi Moses ben Na?man;  Na?manides, 1194-1270), whose commentaries on the Torah frequently cite Ibn Ezra, follows him in understanding the preposition "**?**" of **????** as meaning an indirect object, but significantly expands the notion to mean an avoidance of jealousy, because loving someone else literally "as yourself" (as a direct object) is impossible.  His commentary thus provides a direct link between that of Abraham ibn Ezra and Moses Mendelssohn.

> The meaning of "Love your fellow as yourself" is an exaggeration, for the human heart (*lev ha-adam*) is not capable of accepting that a person should love his fellow (*?aver*) as he loves himself (*ke-ahavato et nafsho*). Moreover, Rabbi `Akiva already came and taught that "Your life takes precedence over the life of your fellow" (*?ayekha qodemin le-?ayei ?averkha*).[37] Rather, the commandment of the Torah (means) that he should love one's fellow in every matter, just as one loves everything good for oneself.  This is possible, since [the Torah] did not say "Love *et re`akha* [i.e., the direct object] your fellow as yourself," but rather compared them with the word *le-re`akha* [i.e., the indirect object, meaning "for your fellow"], just as it says of the *ger* (resident alien; proselyte),[38] "Love [for] him [*lo*, i.e. indirect object] (Leviticus 19:34), which means to equate in his mind the love of both of them. For sometimes a person loves his fellow in certain matters, such as benefiting him in wealth but not in wisdom and so forth. And, if he loves him completely, he will want his beloved fellow to attain wealth, property, honor, knowledge, and wisdom, but not that he will become his equal. Rather, he will always wish in his heart to be greater than [his fellow] in everything good. Therefore, Scripture commands that this jealousy not be in his heart, but that he should love an abundance of good for his fellow, just as he does for himself (*le-nafsho*), without placing limits on that love. That is why it says of Jonathan [in his love for David], "for he loved him as his love for himself (*ki ahavat nafsho ahevo*; 1 Samuel 20:17), because he had eliminated from his heart the attribute of jealousy.[39]

Ramban's commentary does not deal explicitly with our first problem, namely the identity of the *re`a*, although the challenge of eliminating jealousy "in the human heart" is certainly not limited to one group. However, our second problem, how can one be commanded to love another "as oneself," is resolved by Ramban's careful analysis of the language of our passage.

Just as Ramban thus expanded Ibn Ezra's analysis, Moses Mendelssohn, in turn, expanded Ramban's analysis (which he cites), and combined discussion of both our problems: the identity of the *re`a* and the meaning of *kamokha*, usually – but according to Mendelssohn incorrectly – understood as meaning "as yourself."

## MOSES MENDELSSOHN ON OUR VERSE

Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), in addition to his various general and Jewish philosophical works, published a German translation of the Torah (and also of the Psalms), and an important

commentary (*Bi'ur*) on the Torah, titled *Netivot Ha-Shalom* ("The Paths of Peace").[40] However, before discussing his commentary on Leviticus 19:18, we need to note a terminological peculiarity. As we shall see, the commentary renders our verse (in German in Hebrew letters) as: "Liebe deinen nächsten der dir gleich ist" – making the important point that *kamokha* means "who is like you" – whereas in the Pentateuch translation itself (also in Hebrew letters) on the same page Mendelssohn rendered the verse more conventionally: "Liebe deinen nächsten so wie du dich selbst liebst." This translation is reminiscent of Luther's well-known rendition: "Du sollst deinem Nächsten lieben wie dich selbst."

The difference cannot, in my view, be attributed to the fact that the Leviticus commentary (or at least its draft) was penned by Mendelssohn's associate Naphtali Herz Wessely under Mendelssohn's supervision, because if Mendelssohn had disagreed with the interpretation and translation incorporated in the *Bi'ur*, he would have added a parenthetical comment, and there are no such parenthetical comments in the lengthy passage of the *Bi'ur* on Leviticus 19:18. The only possible explanation I can give for the discrepancy is that the translation itself was an attempt to present a proper German rendition of the *peshat* (the surface meaning of the text), whereas in the commentary the different translation is introduced by the phrase ?**???? ????? ?????** - "in another language (i.e., German) it must be interpreted."[41] In other words, in the first case we have a straightforward translation, and in the second case we have an acknowledged case of interpretation.

The lengthy *Bi'ur* on our passage, in a sense, summarizes and combines all the pieces we have seen before in diverse sources: how can a person be commanded to love another "as yourself"; Rashbam's restriction of the reference only to someone who is good is unacceptable because the commandment refers to all Jews, but even that is then extended to all humans who were created equal in the image of God; equating the love of (or: for) one's fellow with Hillel's rule; a syntactical analysis of the term *kamokha* ("like you") in contrast with *ke-nafshekha* ("as yourself"); and how the Masoretic notes support understanding *kamokha* not as meaning "as yourself" but as meaning "he is like you." In that light, Mendelssohn concludes that Ramban's describing the commandment as "an exaggeration" is no longer necessary. Mendelssohn's *Bi'ur*, then, gives us a complete presentation of how to understand Leviticus 19:18, in contrast with earlier partial understandings of various aspects of the passage. What follows is my translation of the pertinent points in the *Bi'ur* on Leviticus 19:18:

> If the intention is according to the opinion of the commentators of the Bible that he should love every person (*kol adam*) as he loves himself (*et `a?mo*), it would be extraordinary for [God] to command us something which is impossible for anyone. A person cannot love someone else, let alone someone foreign (*nokhri*) to him, as he loves himself. Moreover, one cannot command love or hate, over which a person has no control . . . Furthermore, if that were the case, he would need to mourn over everyone else's trouble as his own trouble, and then his life would be no life, for there is no hour in which he would not see or hear of the trouble of another Jew. Similarly, in that case he would need to benefit someone else in whatever he benefits himself. This makes no sense. I have seen that Ramban said that "the meaning of 'Love your fellow as yourself' is an exaggeration, for the human heart (*lev ha-adam*) is not capable of accepting that a person should love his fellow (*?aver*) as he loves himself (*ke-ahavato et nafsho*). Moreover, Rabbi `Akiva already came and taught that "Your life takes precedence over the life of your fellow (*?ayekha qodemin le-?ayei ?averkha*)" . . . Rashbam said "'Love your fellow as yourself' – if he is your fellow, if he is good, but not if he is wicked" . . . This interpretation is not to be accepted, because the commandment refers to all Israel. I say that the word *kamokha* ("like you") in Hebrew does not mean this. Rather *kamokha* means "who resembles you" (*ha-domeh lekha*), as in "because you resemble Pharaoh" (*ki kamokha ke-Pharaoh*; Genesis 44:18), in your rank (*ma`alatekha*) you resemble Pharaoh's rank, "there is no one understanding and wise like you" (Genesis 41:39), equal to you and resembling you.

Similarly, “who is like you among the gods, Lord?” (Exodus 15:11), and so on. So here, the meaning of “Love your fellow,” is because he is like you, equal to you, and resembling you, since he was also created in the image of God, and he is a human being (*adam*) like you. This includes all human beings (*benei adam*) because all of them were created in the image [of God].That is why Rabbi `Akiva said of this, “It is a great principle of the Torah.” Rabbi `Akiva himself repeated this principle when he taught, “The human being is beloved (*?aviv*) because he was created in the [divine] image” (Mishnah Avot 3:18). Moreover, even if he were now to do something evil, he is created resembling God (*bi-demut Elohim*) in having control and choice (*memshalah u-ve?irah*), and is able to choose the good. That is why Ben `Azzai said, “‘This is the book of the generations of the human being (*adam*)’ (Genesis 5:1) – this is a greater principle than that,” because this Biblical verse says, “He made him resembling God (*bi-demut Elohim*).” Ben `Azzai repeated this principle when he taught, “Do not despise any person” (Mishnah Avot 4:3). . . . In another language (i.e., German) [our verse] must be interpreted as “Liebe deinen nächsten der dir gleich ist” (“Love your fellow who is like you”). Therefore Scripture said it vaguely (*setam*) without apportioning this love. And so Hillel the Elder came and interpreted it: “Whatever is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow” (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 51a), because in any event you should not do to him whatever would cause you sorrow if done to you. This is clearly true: that it is forbidden for us to cause any other person sorrow, or to despise him, whether he is righteous or wicked, except in a trial [in a court of justice], or by chastisements of love to return him to the good . . . If *kamokha* meant that you should love him as yourself (*ke-`a?mekha*), besides [the fact] that we would not then need Hillel’s interpretation, in his words [Hillel] would have reduced and diminished the intention of the phrase. However, the normal Hebrew expression for loving someone else as one loves oneself would be **????? ?????** (*ohavo ke-nafsho*), as in the case of the love of David and Jonathan, where it says “Jonathan loved him as himself (*va-ye’ehavenu Yehonatan ke-nafsho*; 1 Samuel 18:1),” and “for he loved him as his love for himself (*ki ahavat nafsho ahevo*” 1 Samuel 20:17). So if this is what our verse were referring to, it should have said **????? ???? ?????** (*ve-ahavta le-re`akha ke-nafshekha*; “Love your fellow as yourself”). How extraordinary was the love of David and Jonathan . . . if every Jew would be required to love another as himself (*ke-nafsho*). However, the main point (*`iqqar*) is as we have said, that “Love your fellow because he is like you” was said vaguely [without apportioning the love] and was transmitted to the Sages, the masters of the tradition (*qabbalah*). Moreover, the author of the [Masoretic] notes (*te`amim*) placed [the disjunctive note] *tipe?a* under the word *le-re`akha* (your fellow). Had he placed a conjunctive note joining [the words] *le-re`akha kamokha* (“your fellow like you”) it would mean your fellow who is like you in justice and wisdom and so forth. Therefore, he joined [with conjunctive notes the words] *ve-ahavta le-re`akha* (“love your fellow”), that he should love all of them, but separated the word *kamokha* (like you) [by the disjunctive note under the world *le-re`akha*], so that henceforth the meaning is that he is a human being like you (*she-hu adam kamokha*)[42] . . . And so the expression is completely clear, and we no longer have need for Ramban’s saying that it is an exaggeration, because it is as bright as the sun. Look at all the places where [the verb to] love is followed by the word **??** [indicating a direct object], such as “Love the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 6:5), “He also loved Rachel” (Genesis 29:30, etc. This is a proof of our interpretation, because **??** [designating the direct object] . . . refers to the thing itself, indicating a special quality (*segulah meyu?edet*) in the one who is loved, on account of which one loves him more than anyone else. However, that is not the love mentioned here [in our verse]. Rather it is for the sake of a universal matter (*`inyan kolel*) that they are all humans like him, created in the [divine] image. Therefore, here and in the verse “Love him, he is like you” (Leviticus 19:34) it doesn’t say [the direct object particle] **??** but has [the indirect preposition letter] “**?**”, referring to something outside him. This is Hebrew usage everywhere.

Mendelssohn's *Bi'ur* was subject to criticism in traditionalist circles opposing the Haskalah (Jewish Englightenment) and modernization, and has more or less been boycotted down to our day in such circles, in part because of the assimilation and baptism of several of his children (after his death!).[43] Nevertheless, the *Bi'ur* is thoroughly traditional in outlook,[44] and Mendelssohn's detailed interpretation of Leviticus 19:18 not only summarized much of the traditional rabbinic and medieval exegesis, but set the stage for how the commandment to "love your fellow" came to be understood by some late nineteenth century and twentieth-century Jewish philosophers, whether or not they acknowledged the debt.

On a different note, Mendelssohn had clearly insisted that the civil rights and European citizenship the Jews sought in the Emancipation could not be obtained at the price of giving up their traditional way of life and loyalty to the divinely revealed Torah, unlike the Reformers who followed him in the next generation or two. As we shall see in the next section, Leviticus 19:18 was cited as part of that Reform platform. Mendelssohn, however, reaffirmed his commitment both to the Torah and to religious pluralism:

> I cannot see how those who were born into the household of Jacob can in good conscience exempt themselves from the observance of the law . . . And you, my brothers, who are followers of the teachings of Jesus, how can you blame us for doing what the founder of your religion himself has done and sanctioned by his authority? Can you seriously believe that you cannot reciprocate our love as citizens and associate yourselves with us for civic purposes as long as we are outwardly distinguished from you by our ceremonial law (*Ceremonialgesetz*), do not eat with you, or do not marry you? As far as we can see, the founder of your religion himself would not have done these things or have permitted us to do them either . . . If we can be united with you as citizens only on the condition that we deviate from the law which we still consider binding, then we sincerely regret the necessity of declaring that we shall renounce our claims to civil [equality and] union with you . . . Brothers, if you care for true godliness, let us not pretend that conformity exists where diversity is obviously the plan and goal of Providence.[45]

## ISAAC MARKUS JOST

In sharp contrast with Mendelssohn, however, the Reformers who came after him were prepared to "reform" Jewish identity and practice in the interest of encouraging the social, civic, and cultural, as well as legal integration of the Jews into European society.[46] One of those Reformers in the generation after Mendelssohn was the historian Isaac Markus Jost (1793-1860), who proposed a new and positive relationship between Jews and Gentiles in which negative statements and attitudes towards non-Jews in the Talmud would be revised or abrogated. In that context, he cited Leviticus 19:18 in a Hebrew essay published in 1841, in which he advocated eliminating particularistic rabbinic readings of what he believed to be the Torah's universalism in our verse:

> We are all of one mind and one voice, we have one justice and one law. The essence of our Torah and our moral teaching is this*: Love your neighbor as yourself*, complete love, with no differentiation between Jews and everyone else. The love of our *neighbor* leads us and guides us in all our actions. We hereby unanimously nullify any words uttered at any time which may have left the impression that we have contravened the Torah precept pertaining to love of one's neighbor. This is overall love of humanity. It is unconditional . . . Any slight hint that our Torah makes a distinction between Jews and non-Jews is null and void. We have no part in it, now or ever.[47]

Jost's radical manifesto was criticized by (Orthodox) Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer (1795-1874), who

was one of the earliest precursors of what came to be known as "religious Zionism."[48] In his apologetic response to Jost he argued that Talmudic law does not, in fact, differentiate and discriminate between Jew and non-Jew. Negative statements in the Talmud are misunderstood by critics like Jost; these passages do not refer to non-Jews per se, but only to idolators (including Jewish idolators!):[49]

> Heaven forbid, to make a distinction between Israel and the other nations regarding law and justice. Therefore I have come to clarify that they [the critics of the Talmud] have not fully understood the words of the Sages, for it is obvious that they made no distinction whatsoever between Jews and non-Jews.[50]

## HERMANN COHEN

According to Hermann Cohen (1842-1918), the logical correlation of God and a person (*Korrelation von Gott und Mensch*) has a fundamental ethical precondition or component, which in turn is essentially related to the commandment to love one's fellow. That commandment is only possible because the creation of the human being "means the creation of his reason."

Like Abraham ibn Ezra and Rambam, for Cohen the essence of the human being, which is called the "image of God," is reason. In his *Die Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums* (*The Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism*), Chapter 5, "The Creation of Man in Reason" ("Die Schöpfung des Menschen in der Vernunft") Cohen explicitly treated the biblical creation of the human species in "image of God" in terms of the creation of the human being endowed with reason. For Cohen, this is understood as the logical correlation of God and the human species, and subsequently the basis for the love of the other because "he is like you."

> Thus the question of creation, in the case of man, now concerns knowledge (*Erkenntnis*). And with regard to knowledge the question concerns the relation (*Verhältnis*) of man to God . . . Our philosophical language calls it correlation (*Korrelation*), which is the term for all concepts of reciprocal relation. God's being is the foundation for the being of creation, or rather for the existence of creation. But in the case of man's existence, creation does not suffice . . . In the case of man, God's being must be the presupposition knowledge. And knowledge is concerned not only with the knowledge of nature, but is also concerned with "the knowledge of good and evil." The essence of man (*das Wesen des Menschen*) is dependent on the knowledge of morality. Reason (*Vernunft*) is not only theoretical, but also practical, ethical. The creation of man must mean the creation of his reason (*Die Schöpfung des Menschen muß die Schöpfung seiner Vernunft bedeuten*).[51]

Subsequently, in Chapter 8 "The Discovery of Man as Fellowman (*Die Entdeckung des Menschen als des Mitmenschen*)," Cohen discussed the ethical challenge of transforming the *Nebenmensch* (the "next person" – think of the stranger standing next to you in a crowded bus or metro) into the *Mitmensch* (the "person with" you).

> Thus man arises as plurality, which in itself forms the unity of a group. At the same time, man as such, as one member of this group, also poses in himself the problem of unity. Thus a concept arises that grasps man, not yet indeed as an individual with the full weight of the concept, but as a unit in a series: one man next to other men, just *the next man* (*Nebenmensch*). And this experience – for this conception of the next man is taken from experience – poses for ethics and also for religion, in accordance with the latter's share in reason, the problem of the *fellowman* (*Mitmensch*) . . . For the correlation of God and man (*Korrelation von Gott und Mensch*) cannot be actualized if the correlation of man

> and man is not first included.[52]

The problem, then, is that without this transformation of the *Nebenmensch* into the *Mitmensch*, "the 'next man' (*Nebenmensch*) becomes unavoidably the 'opposing man' (*Gegenmensch*)."[53]

In the same chapter, Cohen connects this challenge to the commandment in Leviticus 19:18 to love one's fellow (*re`a*): "Finally, out of these basic determinations of the law the general commandment of the love of the stranger becomes intelligible,"[54] because "the so-called love for the neighbor (*die sogenannte Nächstenliebe*)" is elucidated (*erläutert*) some verses later (v. 33-34) by the commandment to love the stranger as oneself (*du sollst ihn lieben, er ist wie du*), according to the English translation of Simon Kaplan.

However, Kaplan's English translation of this passage "as oneself" does not accurately represent Cohen's careful German rendition of Leviticus 19:18, where, as we have repeatedly discussed, the key word is to love one's fellow (and also later the *ger*, the "stranger," i.e., the alien resident or proselyte) *kamokha*. In this passage in *The Religion of Reason* Cohen precisely translates *kamokha* (literally: "like you") as *er ist wie du* – "he is like you."[55]

Perhaps Cohen, in light of many Jewish interpretations of Leviticus 19:18 as referring only to the *re`a* as a fellow-Jew, felt the need to emphasize its universal application by insisting that the love for the *re`a* was "elucidated" a few verses later by the similar phrasing of the love for the *ger*, whom you should love because "you were *gerim* ("aliens") in Egypt" (Leviticus 19:33), for "you have known the soul (*nefesh*) of the *ger* because you were *gerim* in the Land of Egypt" (Exodus 23:9).

Cohen had already made the point that the love of one's fellow is because "he is like you" ("*er ist wie Du*") – namely "*kamokha*" – in his earlier (1908), essay "Charakteristik der Ethik Maimunis" ("The Character of Maimonides' Ethical Theory") later included in his *Jüdische Schrift*en ("Jewish Writings"):[56]

> It is an intriguing [Aristotelian] illusion that the solitary thinker in his state of eudaemony, is most likely to attain full selfhood. We [Jews] know, however, that the isolated self exclusively engaged in thinking cannot be an ethical self (*nicht das ethische Selbst sein kann*). For this self, there exists no I with a Thou (*Für dieses gibt es kein Ich ohne Du*). *Re`a* means "the other" (*Re`a heißt der andere*), the one who is like you (*er ist wie Du*). He is the Thou of the I (*er ist das Du zum Ich*).

Cohen's point that Leviticus 19:18 means to love one's fellow (*re`a*) because "*er ist wie du* – he is like you" (and not to love the other "as yourself"), created in the divine image, endowed with reason, clearly seems to reflect Moses Mendelssohn's analysis in the *Bi'ur* on Leviticus 19:18, based on linguistic, syntactical, and philosophical considerations. Although he does not mention Mendelssohn in either work, Cohen must have been exposed to the *Bi'ur*, including while he was a student at the Jewish Theological Seminary ("Jüdisch-Theologisches Seminar") in Breslau.[57]

## FRANZ ROSENZWEIG

Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929) devoted two sections (#199-200) of his *Star of Redemption (Stern der Erlösung)* – begun as a series of postcards sent home while he served as a German army anti-aircraft gunner in the Balkans in 1918 – to the "Love of Neighbor" (*"Liebe zum Nächsten"*) and to "Commandment and Freedom" (*"Gebot und Freiheit"*). These passages deal with our second problem – how can love be commanded. A later passage, "The Neighbor and the Self," deals with our first problem – who is the *re`a* and what is meant by *kamokha*?

Like Ramban, Rosenzweig begins by questioning how love can be commanded, although his conclusion differs sharply. For Rosenzweig, while it is generally true in a sense (as Ramban pointed out) that love cannot be commanded because it originates in free volition, it can be commanded in love "by the lover himself," in this case God as lover and beloved.[58]

> Man can express himself in the act of love only after he has first become a soul awakened by God. It is only in being loved by God that the soul can make of its act of love more than a mere act, can make of it, that is, the fulfillment of a – commandment to love . . . Since love cannot be commanded except by the lover himself, therefore the love for man, in being commanded by God, is directly derived from the love for God. The love for God is to express itself in love for one's neighbor. It is for this reason that love of neighbor can and must be commanded. Love of neighbor originated in the mystery of the directed volition; it is distinguished from all ethical acts by the presupposition of being loved by God, a presupposition which becomes visible behind this origin only through the form of the commandment. Ethical laws are not content simply to be rooted in freedom – this is true of love of neighbor as well – but will recognize no presupposition at all other than freedom. That is the famous requirement of "autonomy." . . . In ethics, everything is uncertain . . . The moral law is necessarily purely formal and therefore not only ambiguous, but open to an unlimited number of interpretations. By contrast, the commandment to love one's neighbor is clear and unambiguous in content. This love originates in the directed freedom of the character, and this commandment needs a presupposition beyond freedom. *Fac quod jubes et jube quod vis*[59] means that God's "ordaining what he will" must . . . be preceded by God's "already having done" what he ordains. Only the soul beloved of God can receive the commandment to love its neighbor and fulfill it. Ere man can turn himself over to God's will, God must first have turned to man.

For Rosenzweig, the love of God presupposes the reciprocity of being loved by God. Therefore, only the soul beloved by God is capable of loving and of receiving the command to love the other. Like Mendelssohn, but on different grounds, Rosenzweig thus rejects the impossibility, suggested by Ramban, of love being commanded in our verse. As we have seen, for Mendelssohn, the love commanded in Leviticus 19:18 can be commanded because it is not the kind of love, followed by the particle ?? for the direct object, of a specific person with special qualities, but is a universal love for the other who is *kamokha*, like you. For Rosenzweig, the love of one's fellow can and must be commanded, because it is the expression of the love for God. Love, then, can be commanded – but only by the beloved lover, God.

In a later passage, "The Neighbor and the Self," Rosenzweig, like Mendelssohn and Cohen, also emphasizes the aspect of *kamokha* as meaning that "he is like you," which Rosenzweig (unlike Mendelssohn and those of his classical and medieval predecessors who mentioned Hillel the Elder) understands as transcending the "lower negative limit" (of the Golden Rule) to do to others what one would have them do to oneself, albeit phrased negatively (by Hillel the Elder):[60]

> Man's act of love is, after all, only apparently an act. He is not told by God to do unto his neighbor as he would be dealt with himself. This is the practical form of the commandment to love one's neighbor, for use as a rule of conduct. Actually it merely designates the lower negative limit; it forbids the transgression of the limit in conduct. For this reason even its external form is better phrased in the negative. Rather, man is to love his neighbor like himself. Like himself. Your neighbor is "like thee."

In conclusion, a terminological note. In the *Star of Redemption* Rosenzweig translated *re`a* as "Nächsten" (neighbor, the "next" or "nearest") as did Luther and as did Mendelssohn both in his Pentateuch translation and in the *Bi'ur*. However, the Buber-Rosenzweig Bible translation has a

different term, *Genossen*:[61] “Halte lieb deinen Genossen, dir gleich. ICH bins.”[62] Note that *re`a* here is rendered more closely to the Hebrew by a term meaning as “comrade” or “companion,” and *kamokha* here is simply rendered more literally as “dir gleich” (“like you”), like the Hebrew without a verb, rather than Mendelssohn’s more complete but freer “der dir gleich ist” (“who is like you”).

## MARTIN BUBER

In his philosophy, Martin Buber (1878-1965), who completed the Bible translation he began with Rosenzweig in 1961 decades after Rosenzweig’s death,[63] reverses the direction of love. Whereas for Rosenzweig the love of another person is an outgrowth of love for God – and the commandment to love the other, as we have seen, is only possible because it comes from God the lover and beloved – for Buber it is love of the “I” (“*Ich*”) for the necessarily temporary human “Thou” (“*Du*”) that is the condition of and leads to love for “the Eternal Thou” (“*das ewige Du*”).[64]

> The extended lines of relations meet in the eternal *Thou*. Every particular *Thou* is a glimpse through to the eternal *Thou*; by means of every particular *Thou* the primary word (*das Grundwort*) addresses the eternal *Thou* . . . The inborn *Thou* is realized in each relation (*Beziehung*) and consummated in none. It is consummated only in the direct relation with the *Thou* that by its nature cannot become *It (Es)*.[65]

It seems, then, that for Buber the commandment in Leviticus 19:18 does not refer to “true love” but only to “so-called neighborly love.” True love is not and cannot be commanded; it is not a “duty.”[66]

> In all love to man – I mean, naturally, not the performance of duty that takes place in so-called neighborly love, but the earnest affirmation of the human person as such – there shines forth perfected relation.

Note that Buber uses some of the same terminology– “Ich,” “Du,” and “*die sogenannte Nächstenliebe*” (“so called neighborly love”) that Hermann Cohen had used before him, but of course with a different meaning; for Buber it refers to an existential relation rather than a logical correlation as in Cohen.

In addition, Buber’s antinomian approach stands in sharp contrast with Rosenzweig’s approach to commandments and law in general, and in particular Buber could not possibly incorporate Rosenzweig’s notion of love being commanded. Already in his 1919 essay “Cheruth” (“Freedom”),[67] Buber argued for spontaneity, and regarded legal formalism as incompatible with true “religiosity” (not “religion”!) that must be spontaneous, unconstrained, and free. Life is more divine than mere laws.[68]

> Youth is the time of total openness . . . It has not yet sworn allegiance to any one truth for whose sake it would have to close its eyes to all other perspectives, has not yet obligated itself to abide by any one norm that would silence all its other aspirations . . . Dogmas and rules are merely the result, subject to change, of the human mind’s endeavor to make comprehensive, by a symbolic order of the knowable and doable, the working of the unconditional that it experiences within itself . . . We are not concerned, then, with imposing religion upon youth . . . but with awakening youth’s own latent religion . . . We must not proclaim to youth that God can be served by only one, and by no other, act . . . We who consider life as more divine than laws and rules do not want to regulate the life of youth by laws and rules attributed to God . . . Religion is detrimental to an unfolding of the people’s

> energies on where it concentrates – as it has indeed done to an ever-increasing degree in the Diaspora – on the enlargement of the thou shalt not, on the minute differentiation between the permitted and the forbidden. When this is the case, it neglects its true task, which is and remains: man's response to the Divine, the response of the total human being . . . that is, freedom in God.[69]

For Buber, then, "Torah" properly means not a closed system of "law" (as it is often translated)[70] but as an open resource of "teaching," which he describes as "a gigantic process, still uncompleted, of spiritual creativity and creative response to the unconditional."[71] Even the Decalogue is

> not part of an impersonal codex governing an association of men. They were uttered by an *I* and addressed to a *Thou* . . . The word does not enforce its own hearing. Whoever does not wish to respond to the *Thou* addressed to him can apparently go about his business unimpeded. Though He who speaks the word has power (and the Decalogue presupposes that He had sufficient power to create the heavens and the earth), He has renounced this power of His sufficiently to let every individual actually decide for himself whether he wants to open or close his ears to the voice.[72]

To summarize, Buber differs sharply from his predecessors. While using some of the same terminology, he sets out on a new path. As we have seen, for Mendelssohn, Leviticus 19:18 does not refer to love in the regular sense (indicated by the direct object particle **??**) of a particular relationship with a special person in light of that person's unique and desirable qualities (*segulah meyu?edet*), but a higher, indeed unconditional and universal love (indicated by the indirect object prepositional letter "**?**") for all other humans. Since the other is also a human, created in the divine image, he or she is *kamokha*, "like you." For Buber, true love cannot be commanded at all, and Leviticus 19:18 only refers to the "duty" of "so-called neighborly love," not the true love of a human Thou leading to the "eternal Thou." For Cohen, who also refers in a different sense to "the so-called love for the neighbor" ("so-called" because it must be elucidated in the love for the *ger*), the correlation between God and humans (i.e., the creation of human reason) can only be actualized in terms of the inter-personal correlation, and cannot be actualized if the correlation of one person and another is not first included. That correlation is brought about by the transformation of the *Nebenmensch* into the *Mitmensch*. Buber thus shares Cohen's direction (the inter-personal correlation is the pre-condition for the correlation with God), but in Buber it is an existential relation, not a logical correlation, as it was for Cohen. Despite Buber's personal relationship with Rosenzweig, for Buber to command love (even if the command were to come from the beloved lover) is a contradiction in terms, and the direction in Rosenzweig is reversed: it is only through love of the temporary human "Du" that one can reach the love of "the eternal Thou" ("*das ewige Du*").

## EMMANUEL LEVINAS

In the preface to his *Totality and Infinity* (1961) Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) wrote of his indebtedness to Franz Rosenzweig:

> We were impressed by the opposition to the idea of totality in Franz Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption*, a work too often present in this book to be cited.[73]

We shall see below to what extent that indebtedness also applies to Levinas's understanding of Leviticus 19:18. In his *Of God Who Comes to Mind (De Dieu qui vient à l'idée)*[74] Levinas

expounds on our verse:

> En ce qui concerne le texte biblique . . .Que signifie « comme toi-même » ? Buber et Rosenzweig étaient ici très embarrassés par la traduction. Ils se sont dit « comme toi-même », cela ne signifie-t-il pas qu'on aime le plus soi-même ? Au lieu de traduire en accord avec vous, ils on traduit : « aime to prochain, il est comme toi ». Mai si on consent déjà à séparer le dernier mot du verset hébraïque « *kamokha* » du début du verset, on peut lire le tout encore autrement : « Aime ton prochain ; cette œuvre est comme toi-même » ; « aime ton prochain » ; « c'est cet amour du prochain que est toi-même ».

Although he does not mention Mendelssohn here, Levinas (so far as I know) was the only contemporary thinker to adopt the precise reading of the Masoretic notes in the *Bi'ur* (as we saw above), by which **????** *(le-re`akha*, "your fellow") was separated by the disjunctive note *tipe?a* from the next word **????** (*kamokha*, "like you"). This silent reference to the Masoretic notes, concerning which Levinas merely wrote "if one already agrees to separate the last word in the Hebrew verse, *kamokha*, from the beginning of the verse," enabled him to offer his own novel interpretation: no longer should you love your fellow because he or she, the other person, is like you (as in Buber and Rosenzweig's translation),[75] but, rather, you should love your fellow because "that deed (*œuvre*) is like yourself . . . it is this love of the fellow which is you yourself."

Similarly, in *Entre Nous: Thinking-of-the-Other* Levinas maintained that the "love of the neighbor is 'yourself.'"[76] "Like you" thus now applies, for Levinas, not to the other person, but to the very act of loving the other. For Levinas, "like you" (*kamokha*) must refer to the loving act and not the other person, because the other person is, in fact, not like you, but always remains uniquely different in his or her ethical "alterity" and "unicity." Furthermore, it is precisely that difference that is the basis and source of one's moral responsibility to the other:

> The alterity of the Other is the extreme point of "thou shalt not kill" . . . Thus an unlimited responsibility would emerge in this fear for the other person, a responsibility with which one is never done . . . even if the responsibility amounts to nothing more than responding "here I am" . . . It is a responsibility that, without doubt, keeps the secret of sociality . . . is called "love of the neighbor" – that is, the very possibility of the unicity of the unique one (beyond the particularity of the individual in a genus). It is a love without concupiscence, but as irrefragable as death.[77]

In this way, either following (without mention) Mendelssohn's reference (in the *Bi'ur*) to the technical Masoretic separation of *kamokha* from *le-re`akha*, or perhaps independently noting the same point, Levinas came to the opposite conclusion from Mendelssohn. Unlike Mendelssohn, and then Cohen, Rosenzweig, and Buber, Levinas maintains that the commandment to love one's fellow is not because "he is like you." To the contrary, it is precisely the other's ethical otherness that necessitates the command to love him or her, i.e., that commands the "I" to leave his or her totalizing tendency in favor of the other. One's fellow is not absorbable in the totality of the "I" and the uniqueness of the "I" stems from the always exterior call of the other to love him or her. Therefore, it is that loving act (and not the other!) which is *kamokha*, "like you yourself . . . which is you yourself."

Thus the other's alterity is never eliminated by that love, and, again, it is not the "other" but the loving act itself which is *kamokha*. As Lenn Goodman explains the obligation to accept the other as other in Levinas's philosophy:[78]

> Full recognition of another's subjecthood opens up to us when we see in another's

> personhood no mere echo of our own, but our counterpart, a subject whose projects are no less weighty, for their otherness, than our own.

Another point where Levinas differs from his predecessors, in this case Buber: For Buber (as we have seen), it is in the encounter with the transient human Du that one can come to the "eternal Thou" (*das ewige Du*). According to Levinas, however, while one is responding to the face of the other person he or she always remains other, and as Ephraim Meir explains, also "God remains *Illeity" (illéité)*.[79]

> For Buber, the contact with the you leads to contact with the eternal Thou. For Levinas, *Illeity* is approachable in the infinity of the demand of the other person.[80]

For Levinas, in short, "God . . . is never 'present' [as in Buber], but [always] remains '*Illeity*,' the Removed One, who is approachable in ethical acts."[91]

The otherness of the other could, in each of us, lead to fear of the other, even to the extreme point of wanting to kill him or her because (as we shall see below) "the appeal of the [other's] face – or its heteronomy – wounds a person's self-importance and the firmness of his or her position in being."[82] That is why the love must be commanded, contra Ramban and certainly contra Buber. Here Levinas clearly follows Rosenzweig, of whose influence (as we saw), Levinas had said it was "too often present . . . to be cited." A clear example of this in Levinas, as in Rosenzweig, is the need for the specific and unambiguous commandment to love the other, and only love can command love. We saw above that Rosenzweig had criticized the Kantian exclusive focus on autonomy:

> That is the famous requirement of "autonomy." . . . In ethics, everything is uncertain . . . The moral law is necessarily purely formal and therefore not only ambiguous, but open to an unlimited number of interpretations. By contrast, the commandment to love one's neighbor is clear and unambiguous in content."[83]

Levinas shared Rosenzweig's critique of ethics as formal, uncertain, vague, and lacking unambiguous specificity. In her study *What Ought I To Do? Morality in Kant and Levinas*, Catherine Chalier explained that

> the appeal of the face [of the other] – or its heteronomy – wounds a person's self-importance and the firmness of his or her position in being. That is why, according to Levinas, "the specificity of the prescriptive statements is not and cannot be ensured sufficiently by the Kantian procedure" . . . There is no privileged heteronomy for Kant, since any heteronomy, including that of God, or, quite simply, the heteronomy of any content of ethics, destroys the principle on which it rests because it exerts authority over it. By contrast, Levinas argues for a heteronomy of weakness. And, contrary to Kantian moral law, the law that emanates from that heteronomy is not expressed in a purely formal manner. It demands a precise behavior, whose sense lies in the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13) or "Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18) . . . The commandment of love . . . has no pertinence unless it comes from love itself . . . It is precisely in responding to that solicitation that a person becomes the unique or the elect. From that perspective, the "self" of the biblical commandment is not a premise but a result: that love is "thyself." The moral subject, in its unique and irreplaceable aspect, does not preexist that love but is the result of it . . . Contrary to what Kant believes, Levinas writes, "love can be commanded, and it is even the very essence of love to command reciprocity. Only love can command love."[84]

This love commanded by love can and should, in turn, lead to holiness. Again in Catherine Chalier's words:[85]

> Levinas links goodness and love to a reflection on holiness . . . The human – as an *advent* – rather than as an *idea* – gradually makes its way into being when the transcendence of the sensible fact of the particular neighbor . . . inspires non-erotic love in the subject, that is, responsibility toward the other. That love can lead to sacrifice, to an anxiety about the death of the other more prevalent than anxiety about one's own death. That is holiness.

It seems to me that Levinas, following (or like) Mendelssohn's *Bi'ur*, thus resolves all three of the problems with Leviticus 19:18 mentioned at the beginning of this essay: (1) who is the *re`a* ("fellow") we are commanded to love; (2) how can love be commanded? (3) how are we to understand *kamokha* ("like you")? Levinas's reference (like Mendelssohn) to the disjunctive Masoretic note separating the words *le-re`akha* ("for your fellow") and *kamokha* ("like you") resolves the first and third problems, because the *re`a* clearly (in their understanding) is any and every other human being, and *kamokha* means that the very act of loving one's fellow is "like you yourself . . . which is you yourself."

We then come to the second problem: how can love be commanded, even if "only love can command love?" Here, again, we must return to the *Bi'ur*. Mendelssohn – and so far as I am aware, only Mendelssohn – had explained in the passage cited above that the love commanded in our verse is not love in the regular sense of an emotional and unique attachment to a particular person indicating

> a special quality (*segulah meyu?edet*) in the one who is loved, on account of which one loves him more than anyone else. However, that is not the love mentioned here [in our verse]. Rather it is for the sake of a universal matter (*`inyan kolel*) that they are all humans like him, created in the [divine] image. Therefore, here and in the verse "Love him, he is like you" (Leviticus 19:34) it doesn't say [the direct object particle] **??** but has [the indirect preposition letter] "**?**", referring to something outside him. This is Hebrew usage everywhere.

Since this love does not refer to an emotion (which would also have been a problem for Mendelssohn, as it was for Ramban), it can be commanded. Levinas reiterates what is already clearly present, at least implicitly, in Mendelssohn: the love commanded in Leviticus 19:18 is not an emotion relating to a special particular individual, but refers to one's universal ethical responsibility to one's fellow human being and his or her life. That common responsibility, despite humans' inevitable alterity, is what makes a person who he or she is: it is the loving act of ethical responsibility which is *kamokha*, "like you yourself . . . which is you yourself."

## CONCLUSION

In a sense, we have come full circle in our understanding of how Leviticus 19:18 has been understood by some (far from all) Jewish thinkers and exegetes over the ages. For many – notably Rambam – the commandment is understood as referring to *re`a* in the particularistic sense of a fellow Jew, whereas for many others – certainly for Mendelssohn and his contemporary followers – it is understood as referring in a universalistic sense of *re`a* as one's fellow human being. However, as we have seen, Ramban questioned the verse: how can love be commanded? Ramban took advantage of the verse referring to *re`a* with the prepositional letter "**?**" indicating an

indirect object, namely love *for* another (rather than the particle **??** indicating a direct object, namely love *of* the other) to suggest that the love in question is the removal of any element of envy in our relationship with our fellow humans. For Mendelssohn, citing, but moving beyond Ramban, the love in question is not love in the regular sense *of* a specific person in light of that person's special and unique quality, but universal love *for* the other person because "he [or she] is *kamokha*, like you," created in the divine image, an understanding followed and shared by Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, and Martin Buber. For Cohen, borrowing (without mentioning) Mendelssohn's interpretation of *kamokha*, the commandment to love the *re`a* and its sequence (to love the *ger*) makes "intelligible" the general logical correlation of God and the human being brought about by transforming the *Nebenmensch* into the *Mitmensch*. For Rosenzweig, love can be commanded, but only in love by the beloved lover, which is why love of God precedes love of the *re`a*; moreover, the commandment gives specific form to a general ethical principle. Buber reverses the direction: it is only through our love of the transient human *Du* that we can come to love *das ewige Du*. However, the true *Ich und Du* relationship cannot, by definition, be commanded (that would be a contradiction in terms). Rather, Leviticus 19:18 commands only "so-called neighborly love," which is far from the ultimate *Ich und Du* relationship.

In contrast with all the other moderns we have dealt with, Levinas reverses the logic of the commandment. He agrees with Rosenzweig that the commandment gives specific form to – and removes the ambiguity of – general and formal ethical principles, but for Levinas *kamokha* does not mean that the "other" is like you (as in Mendelssohn, Cohen, Rosenzweig, and Buber). The "other" always remains other in his or her alterity and unicity. The word *kamokha*, (which Levinas observes, as Mendelssohn had two centuries earlier) is separated by a disjunctive Masoretic note from the word *re`akha*, therefore does not and cannot apply to "your fellow," because the other is not, and never can be, "like you." He or she is always different from you. Accordingly, the term *kamokha* applies not to another person, but only to that loving act (and not to the other!), and it is that act which is *kamokha*, "like you yourself . . . which is you yourself."

In light of this insight, we can now come to the paradoxical conclusion that one must, indeed, love the other, not in the sense of emotional love of a particular individual, but in the sense of one's universal ethical responsibility for the other. However, that ethical responsibility does not derive from the other being like you, for what all humans have in common is that they are unique and different from each other. On the other hand, this radical and new insight – that what we have in common with each other is our differences – is not so radical and not so new.

The Mishnah records the following:[86]

**?????? ?????? ?? ????? ???? ???: ???? ???? ??? ?????? ????? ???, ????? ????? ?? ???. ???? ???? ??????**
**.????? ???? ??? ??? ?? ??? ?????? ?? ??? ??????, ???? ??? ??? ???? ??????**

> To proclaim the greatness of the Holy One, Blessed be He, for a person stamps many coins in one stamping-die, all of which are the same as the others. But the King of Kings of Kings, the Holy One blessed be He, stamped every person in the stamping-die of the first human, and yet none of them resembles any other one.

Rambam, in his Judeo-Arabic *Commentary on the Mishnah*, observes:

> "The stamping-die of the first human" – this is the form of the human species, by which a human being is human, in which all humans participate. Although all of them receive the same form, their individuals differ in many accidental (qualities), as we observe.[87]

For Levinas, however, humans are all the same in that they differ not merely accidentally (as in Rambam), but much more importantly ethically in terms of one's responsibility for the other, regardless of the other always remaining precisely that, "the other." Keep in mind that the commandment to love the other is given in the singular imperative – each of us is commanded to be responsible for "your fellow." That responsibility, despite the other's inevitable alterity, is what makes each of us who we are.

This insight, that we are all alike in our ethical responsibility despite all of us being different from each other – in other words that what we have in common as human beings is our diverse and unique individuality – can in turn become the ground for recognizing that we need pluralism in our relations with each other – but pluralism is a topic dealt with elsewhere.[88]

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[1] My thanks to Professors Catherine Chalier and Ephraim Meir for their helpful comments and references. Wherever possible contextually or stylistically, I attempt to use gender-neutral terminology. However, the Hebrew does not always permit this (since Hebrew lacks a neuter form), and when quoting sources in English or other European languages, I do not presume to have the right to "correct" the terminology of another age and culture.
[2] Jerusalem Talmud, Nedarim ch. 9, halakhah 4, and *Sifra* (ed. Venice, 1545), Parashat Kedoshim 4:12 (column 178) on Leviticus 19:18. A somewhat different version is found in Midrash Genesis Rabbah, Parashah 24:7 on Genesis 5:1. Rabbi `Akiva supported the Bar Kokhba revolt against the Romans in the time of Hadrian, 132-135 C.E. and suffered a martyr's death. Ben `Azzai was a pupil and associate of Rabbi `Akiva.
[3] I translate the verse here in this way, reflecting the common reading of *kamokha* as "as yourself," although later we will need to translate it quite differently.
[4] For a classic study of the theme of the divine image, see Alexander Altmann, "*Home Imago Dei* in Jewish and Christian Theology," in *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (July, 1968), pp. 235-259. "Since God is (in Neoplatonism) the ultimate Ground from which Intellect emanates, and since he is (in Aristotelianism) the supreme Intellect, the essence of man, namely his intellect, has been stated by Scripture to be in the image of God and in his likeness. This is how Maimonides explains the biblical phrase, and this interpretation became commonplace in Jewish philosophy and exegesis" (p. 254).
[5] Unless otherwise indicated, translations are mine.
[6] Note that in this verse the term/name *adam* is applied to both the male and the female together. Cf. Genesis 1:27 and the shift from "him" to "them": "God created the human being (*adam*) in his image, he created him in the image of God, he created them male and female." This, as is well known, is in sharp contrast with the second chapter of Genesis, in which the man (*adam*) is alone until the woman is created out of his side.
[7] Mishnah Avot 3:18 (in other texts 3:14, 3:17). Menachem Kellner, We Are Not Alone: A Maimonidean Theology of the Other (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2021), p. 96, note 3 cites this text in the context of various Orthodox rabbinic universalistic interpretations of Leviticus 19:18. Chapter 5 "Aher – Then, Now and in the Future: Othering the Other in Judaism" is devoted to how non-Jews were and are viewed in Jewish sources.
[8] "Maqom" – literally, "Place." Cf. Midrash Genesis Rabba 68:9 (on Genesis 28:11 – ????? ????? Jacob "reached a place"): ???? ?? ????? ??? ?? ???"? ??????? ???? ???? ???? ????? ?? ???? ???? ????? ?????
"Why is God's name called maqom? Because he is the place of the world, but his world is not his place."
[9] Avot De-Rabbi Natan, chapter 16, end. Cf. The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan, translated by Judah Goldin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), pp. 86-87.
[10] The Hebrew *New Concordance of the Bible*, by Avraham Even-Shoshan (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1980), vol. 3, pp. 2013-2015, lists 187 verses under this heading.
[11] In Exodus 12:35-36, the text specifies taking valuables from "Egypt" (or: "the Egyptians").
[12]In Marvin Fox (ed.), M*odern Jewish Ethics: Theory and Practice* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1975), pp. 29-56.
[13]Ernst Simon, *ibid*, pp. 29-30.
[14] As mentioned, in a parallel passage in Exodus 3:22, the woman will ask of her neighbor (*shekhentah*).
[15] Cf. the discussion in Babylonian Talmud Bava Batra 15ab, and Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:22-23. In the Introduction to the *Guide of the Perplexed*, Maimonides instructs the reader that the purpose of the book is to explain (1) difficult equivocal, metaphorical, and amphibolous terms in Scripture, and (2) Scriptural parables. The first step in understanding the meaning of a parable is to understand that it is, in fact, a parable. See my "The Book of Job as a Biblical Guide of the Perplexed," in my *Jewish Philosophy: Foundations and Extensions* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2008), Volume Two, pp. 97-110.
[16] This is how Onkelos is translated into English by Israel Drazin and Stanley Wagner in *Onkelos on the Torah: Understanding the Biblical Text*, Vol. 3 – Leviticus (Jerusalem: Gefen, 2008), p. 151, although in Drazin's earlier *Targum Onkelos to Leviticus* (Hoboken: Ktav, 1993), p. 174) the translation reads "Love your neighbor as yourself."
[17] Although called "Yerushalmi" (Jerusalem), this Targum was actually produced in the Galilee. Based on internal evidence, e.g., Genesis 21:21, where the names of the two wives of Ishmael (regarded as the ancestor of the Arabs) are rendered alternately as ???? or ????? (after Mu?ammad's wife Ayesha or Khadijah) and ????? (his daughter Fatima), it cannot be earlier than the 7th century C.E.
[18] Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 31a. In Hebrew and Aramaic, the term *?aver* means friend, companion, comrade.
[19] For a study of this passage, including Mordecai Kaplan's suggestion that we understand "standing on one foot (Hebrew: *regel*)" as "one rule" (Latin: *regula*), i.e., as a bilingual pun, see my "Hillel's Rule" in *Jewish Philosophy: Foundations and Extensions*, Vol. One, pp. 191-202.
[20] We will refer below, in the discussion of Mendelssohn, to Luther's translation: "Du sollst deinem Nächsten lieben wie dich selbst."
[21] "Amicus" is also closer to the Hebrew and Aramaic *?aver* in the Targumim, Hillel's maxim, and the Peshitta.
[22] In Hebrew and Aramaic *nefesh*, and in Arabic *nafs*, in such a context similarly mean the self, not "soul." The Judeo-Arabic *Tafsir* ("commentary") of Sa`adiah Gaon also employs *nafs* in this way. On the Hebrew and Arabic terms used for the Delphic Maxim "Know yourself," see the discussion in my *Torah and Sophia: The Life and Thought of Shem Tov ibn Falaquera* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1988), pp. 189-194, and Alexander Altmann, "The Delphic Maxim in Medieval Islam and Judaism," in his *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism* (Ithica; Cornel University Press, 1969), pp. 1-40.
[23] This Arabic term – in the form *?a?abi* – is also used for the original companions of Mu?ammad.
[24] For example, in Genesis 49:10 Rashbam insists that "Shilo" is the name of a city and cannot be read as *shali'a?* (messenger) "according to the Christians." In Exodus 20:13 on "do not murder," Rashbam differentiates deliberate murder (*re?a?*) from involuntary killing (*harigah* or *mitah*): "This is a response to the heretics (*minim*) who acknowledged it to me, despite (what is) in their books . . . in Latin for 'do not murder,' where they were not precise." Rashbam is referring here to the Vulgate: "Non occidens."
[25] Menachem Kellner has written extensively on Rambam's principled universalism, in opposition to any kind of "essentialist" Jewish identity, including in *We Are Not Alone: A Maimonidean Theology of the Other* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2021); *Gam Hem Keruyim Adam: Ha-Nokhri Be-Einei ha-Rambam* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2016; Hebrew); *Maimonides' Confrontation with Mysticism* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2006).
[26] My translation is based on the Arabic and Hebrew edition of Yosef Kafi?, *Sefer Ha-Mi?vot* (Jerusalem: Mosad Ha-Rav Kook, 1971), p. 163. An English

translation, *The Commandments* by Charles Chavel (London: Soncino Press, 1967) was based on the Hebrew translation of the book.
[27] For an exhaustive study of this work, cf. Isadore Twersky, *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides* (Mishneh Torah) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).
[28] Literally: money.
[29] *Mishneh Torah*, Book of Knowledge, Laws of Moral Dispositions and Ethical Conduct 6:3.
[30] *Mishneh Torah*, Book of Judges, Laws of Mourning 14:1.
[31] *Guide of the Perplexed* 1:1, English translation by Shlomo Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 22.
[32] *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:54. English translation by Shlomo Pines, p. 638.
[33] See below more on this concept and the passage in the Mishnah.
[34] Menachem Kellner, in his *We Are Not Alone: A Maimonidean Theology of the Other* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2021), cites as an example of Rambam's general universalism "his famous halakhic responsum to Ovadiah the proselyte . . . In Maimonidean eyes, they [i.e., proselytes] are the best of Jews, since their Judaism is the result of conviction and choice, and not simply birth" (p. 95). Then, after discussing interpretations of Leviticus 19:18 (p. 96 and note 43), Kellner writes: "Presenting these two terms (i.e., *re`a* and *ger*), reflects what I admit to be a prejudice of mine: that the Jewish tradition, from the Bible onward, is fundamentally universalist, became ever more particularist as Jewish history became ever more difficult. Over the generations, it became more and more difficult to see the non-Jew as a fellow creature made equally in the image of God. Thus, we find a kind of ethnic particularism developing and growing especially from the Middle Ages onward" (p. 97). It seems to me, however, that the trend in many circles (especially Orthodox) away from the universalistic "prejudice" (which I personally share) cannot, in all honesty simply be blamed on historical circumstances, in other words, on non-Jewish behavior towards Jews. If it is true that the biblical message is essentially universalistic, and that many (quite possibly most) rabbis – especially, but not only among *?aredi* ("sectarian Orthodox" or "ultra-Orthodox") circles – today share an increasingly extremist and particularistic approach, the question we face is whether these rabbis do not understand the Torah, or whether they (and not people like Kellner and me) do understand the Torah!
[35] Isadore Twersky surveyed points of agreement and disagreement between Ibn Ezra and Rambam, who mentioned Ibn Ezra without comment in his letter to Samuel ibn Tibbon, the Hebrew translator of *the Guide of the Perplexed*. According to Twersky there are literary and conceptual parallels between the two thinkers, but the question of direct influence cannot be resolved. Cf. Twersky, "Did R. Abraham ibn Ezra Influence Maimonides?" (Hebrew) in Isadore Twersky and Jay Harris (eds.), *Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra: Studies in the Writings of a Twelfth-Century Jewish Polymath* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), Hebrew section pp. 21-48.
[36] Abraham ibn Ezra, Introduction to the Torah, the "third way" of reading Scripture.
[37] Babylonian Talmud, Bava Me?i`a 62a. In the case of two people on a journey, when one has a supply of water sufficient for only one person to survive, Ben Petura taught that they should both drink and die. Rabbi `Akiva taught that one's own life takes precedence over the other person's. In his 1910 essay "Between the Two Opinions" (*`Al Shetei Ha-Se`ipim* [a reference to 1 Kings 18:21]), A?ad Ha-`Am (Asher Ginzberg, 1856-1927) cites this passage in his criticism of Claude Montefiore's "Liberal Judaism" in England. Jewish ethics, A?ad Ha-`Am argued, are based on objective justice, as opposed to Christian altruism, which is simply an "inverted egoism. The English translation by Leon Simon may be found under the title "Judaism and the Gospels" in *Nationalism and the Jewish Ethic: Basic Writings of Ahad Ha'am*, ed. Hans Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1962), pp. 289-319, and in abridged form as "Jewish and Christian Ethics" in *Ahad Ha-Am: Essays, Letters, Memoirs* (Oxford: East and West Library,1946), pp. 127-136. The Hebrew essay is found in *Kol Kitvei A?ad Ha-`Am* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1965), pp. 370-377.
[38] The biblical *ger* was understood by the Talmudic rabbis contextually in two different senses: a resident alien (*ger toshav*), who adopts only certain basic laws and enjoys partial rights, or a full-fledged proselyte (*ger ?edeq*) who accepts the Torah and enjoys full rights as a Jews. For an extensive analysis, cf. David Novak, *The Image of the Non-Jew in Judaism* (second edition; Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2011).
[39] Cf. the somewhat different English translation by Charles Chavel, *Ramban: Commentary on the Torah*, Vol. 3 Leviticus (New York: Shilo Publishing House, 1974), pp. 292-293.
[40] The commentary to Leviticus was prepared by Mendelssohn's associate Naphtali Herz Wessely (1725-1805), with bracketed comments added by Mendelssohn. However, since Mendelssohn was responsible for the project as a whole, and supervised and edited the entire Torah commentary, adding his own parenthetical comments to sections prepared by his associates, I treat the whole *Bi'ur* as Mendelssohn's work and certainly as reflecting his ideas. For an extensive discussion of Mendelssohn's project and the translation and the *Bi'ur*, see Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn: A Biographical Study* (University of Alabama Press, 1973), especially Chapter 5, and more recently Edward Breuer, *The Limits of Enlightenment: Jews, Germans and the Eighteenth-Century Study of Scripture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), especially Part II. My edition of the *Bi'ur* is that of Prague, 1834. The *Bi'ur* may be found online with the link: http://www.torahmusings.com/2011/08/weekly-freebies-mendelssohns-biur/. According to Altmann (p. 375), Mendelssohn was concerned about Jewish youth consulting Christian translations with their Christological and critical slant. "The need to teach Torah to his sons led Mendelssohn to translate selected passages. He found pleasure in the work and it occurred to him that a German version of the entire Pentateuch, if not of the Bible as a whole, would be very much in the interest of a growing sector of Jewish youth . . . After a time he came to realize that a bare translation without commentary would not do. Only a combination of translation and commentary could open up and articulate the full meaning and beauty of the Hebrew text . . . What Mendelssohn had in mind . . . was an educational program aimed at a renascence of the biblical spirit and its broad humanism in the way in which the Haskala movement would conceive it" (p. 372).
[41] The root **???** is found, for example, in Genesis chapters 40-41 regarding Joseph's ability to interpret dreams. The term **???** refers to languages other than Hebrew. The Targum to Psalm 114:1 translates the phrase **??? ????** (*me`am lo`ez*, "from a people of foreign language") as: **???? ??????** *(me-`ama barberai*), borrowing the Greek term and playing on the original meaning of barbaros as a foreign, i.e., non-Greek speaking person or nation.
[42] In other words, had "your fellow" and "like you" been joined by a conjunctive note, we would have to read the verse as saying "Love your fellow like you," in justice, wisdom, etc. However, since "your fellow" is separated by a disjunctive note from "like you," the verse should be read as saying, "Love your fellow [i.e., all humans]; he is like you," a human being created in the divine image.
[43] On the reception – positive and negative – of the *Bi'ur*, in addition to Alexander Altmann's chapter cited above (note 36), see: Shnayer Leiman, "R. Moses Schick: The Hatam Sofer's Attitude Toward Mendelssohn's *Bi'ur*," in *Tradition* 24 (3), Spring, 1989, pp. 83-86; Menachem Butler, "Moses Mendelssohn and the Orthodox Mind," in the online publication "The Lehrhaus," 9 January 2017 (https://www.thelehrhaus.com/scholarship/moses-mendelssohn-and-the-orthodox-mind/). Although in yeshivah circles today one would not be likely to find copies of, let alone study of, the *Bi'ur*, in a personal conversation with the late Isadore Twersky, he told me that his grandfather had told him that in his youth Mendelssohn's *Bi'ur* was studied in his yeshivah circles.
[44] See a discussion of Mendelssohn's traditionalism in contrast with Abraham ibn Ezra's radicalism in my "Moses Mendelssohn: A Medieval Modernist" in my *Jewish Philosophy: Foundations and Extensions*, Vol. Two (Lanham: University Press of America, 2008), pp. 205-242.
[45] Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem and Other Jewish Writings*, translated and edited by Alfred Jospe (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), pp. 104-109. Cf. the translation of Allan Arkush with Introduction and Commentary by Alexander Altmann, *Jerusalem: Or On Religious Power and Judaism* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1983), pp. 133-135. Original German in *Moses Mendelssohn's Sämmtliche Werke* (Vienna, 1838), pp. 286-290. On Mendelssohn's religious conservatism vs. his progressive political philosophy in which he argued not merely for toleration but for inter-religious pluralism, again see my "Moses Mendelssohn: A Medieval Modernist."
[46] See Michael Meyer, *The Origins of the Modern Jew: Jewish Identity and European Culture in Germany 1749-1824* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967).
[47] Isaac Markus Jost, *"Iggeret Bilshan be-Ahavat Re`a,"* published in *Tzion* 1 (Frankfurt am Main, 1841), p. 125, cited and translated by Asaf Yedidya, "Between Reform and Apologetics: The Public Letter by Isaac Markus Jost on 'Love Your Neighbor' and Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer's Response," in *Zutot* 10 (2012), p. 34-35.
[48] See the selections and discussions in Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), pp. 108-115.
[49] Zvi Hirsch Kalischer in *Tzion* 2 (1842).
[50] Cited and translated by Asaf Yedidya, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.
[51] Cohen, *Religion of Reason*, Ch. 5, #3, English translation p. 86; German, pp. 100-101.
[52] Hermann Cohen, *Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism,* trans. Simon Kaplan (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1972), Ch. 8, #3, pp. 113-114. German original (Leipzig: Gustav Fock, 1919), pp. 132-133. Cf. Alexander Altmann, "*Homo Imago Dei* in Jewish and Christian Theology:" "Hermann

Cohen still tried to retain its time-honored Platonic flavor [of the image of God], but he could do so only because he interpreted the Platonic 'idea' in his own fashion as *Grundlegung* (hypothesis). Hence 'man in the image or idea of God' meant to him the logically understood correlation between man's reason and its 'origin' or ground in God" (p. 259).
[53] Ibid, Ch. 8, #25, p. 128; German original pp. 148-149.
[54] Ibid, Ch. 8, #24, p. 127; German original p. 148.
[55] Lenn Goodman, *The Holy One of Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 27 refers to this passage in Cohen's *Religion of Reason*. However, for Hermann Cohen the commandment is not, in Goodman's words, to love one's fellow "as oneself" by "treat(ing) others as you'd wish to be treated," but to love the other because the other person is "like you" – and must be treated as a subject, because "he is *kamokha*, like you," similarly endowed with reason.
[56] *Hermann Cohen's Jüdische Schriten*, edited by Bruno Strauss, with Introduction by Franz Rosenzweig (Berlin: Schwetschke, 1924), Vol. III, p. 275. English translation by Eva Jospe, *Reason and Hope: Selections from the Jewish Writings of Hermann Cohen in Encounters in Modern Jewish Thought: The Works of Eva Jospe*, Volume Three, edited by Raphael Jospe and Dov Schwartz (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013), p. 218.
[57] Cohen was a student in the seminary in 1857. My father was also a student at the Breslau seminary 1928-1935 and received his rabbinic ordination there. Cohen is listed in his study. Cf. Alfred Jospe, "Faculty and Students 1904-1938: Biographies and Bibliographies" in Guido Kisch, *Das Breslauer Seminar* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1963), pp. 381-442.
[58] Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, trans. William Hallo (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), Part II: The Course, Book 3: Redemption, or The Eternal Future of the Kingdom, #199-200, pp. 213-215. *Der Stern der Erlösung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), p. 239.
[59] This quote is taken from Augustine's *Confessions*, Book X, #29:40 end, but which I presume was a deliberate change by Rosenzweig. Augustine wrote: "Da quod, etc." addressed as a prayer to God who should "Give what you command and command what you will," whereas Rosenzweig changed that to "Fac quod, etc." addressed as a command to people to "Do what you command and command what you will."
[60] *Star of Redemption*, "The Neighbor and the Self," #233, p. 239; *Stern der Erlösung*, p. 267.
[61] The Buber-Rosenzweig translation of the Bible is available online at: https://bibel.github.io/BuberRosenzweig/.
[62] Everett Fox, whose English translation of the Pentateuch, in his words "is in many respects an offshoot of the Buber-Rosenzweig translation" (p. x), renders our verse as "But be-loving to your neighbor (as one) like yourself, I am YHWH," in *The Five Books of Moses: A New Translation with Introduction, Commentary, and Notes* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), p. 603.
[63] On the occasion of the completion of Buber's work, Gershom Scholem observed: "Your translation . . . was a kind of *Gastgeschenk* which German Jewry gave to the German people . . . But events took a different course . . . I cannot refrain from asking: For whom is this translation now intended and whom will it influence? Seen historically, it is no longer a *Gastgeschenk* ("guest gift") of the Jews to the Germans but rather – and it is not easy for me to say this – the tombstone of a relationship that was extinguished in unspeakable horror. The Jews for whom you translated are no more. Their children, who have escaped this horror, will no longer read German." ("At the Completion of Buber's Translation of The Bible," English translation by Michael Meyer, in Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* [New York: Schocken Books, 1971], p. 318).
[64] For a clear overview of Buber's thought, especially his theory of "encounter" (*Begegnung*), see Encounters in *Modern Jewish Thought: The Works of Eva Jospe* (eds. Raphael Jospe and Dov Schwartz), Vol. One: Martin Buber (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013. Given Buber's knowledge of classical Jewish sources, it seems to me that his notion of "the Eternal Thou" present in a true human relation may reflect and be a philosophical extension of the notion of "the third one between them (*ha-shelishi beinehem*)" in Rashi's comment on Leviticus 5:21 (citing the *Sifra* 22:4 [Venice: 1545, column 60]), regarding the first case in Leviticus of transgressions against another person. Rashi observes that since this is a case of a transgression against another person, "Rabbi `Akiva said, 'What does 'transgressed against the Lord' mean? Whoever lends or borrows or engages in business, only does this with witnesses and a contract, so when he denies it, he denies the witnesses and the contract. But someone who deposits something with his fellow does not want anyone else to know, except for the third one [i.e., God] between them (*ha-shelishi she-beineihem*). So when he denies [the deposit], he is denying the so-called third one between them."
[65] Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, second edition, trans. Ronald G. Smith (New York: Charles Scribners, 1958), p. 75. Cf. the translation by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribners, 1970), p. 123; *Ich und Du* (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1983), p. 91.
[66] "Perfected Relation," in *The Way of Response: Martin Buber – Selections from his Writings*, ed. Nahum Glatzer (New York: Schocken, 1966, p. 87. From "Man and his Image-Work," in *Portfolio* VII (1963), pp. 163 ff. Translation by Maurice Friedman.
[67] Martin Buber, "Cheruth: Eine Rede über das Judentum," in *Reden über das Judentum* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1932), pp. 199-235; "Herut: On Youth and Religion," trans. Eva Jospe, in Martin Buber, *On Judaism* (New York: Schocken, 1967), pp. 149-174.
[68] Franz Rosenzweig challenged Buber's subjectivism in his 1923 response, "Die Bauleute: Über das Gesetz," in his *Kleinere Schriften* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1937), pp. 106-121; English translation "The Builders: Concerning the Law," in Nahum Glatzer (ed.), *On Jewish Learning* (New York: Schocken, 1955), pp. 72-92. For a discussion of Rosenzweig's criticism of Buber on this, see Raphael Jospe and Ephraim Meir, "Franz Rosenzweig's Inexpressible Joy," in *Judaism, Topics, Fragments, Faces, Identities: Jubilee Volume in Honor of Rivka Horwitz,* ed. Haviva Pedaya and Ephraim Meir (Beersheva: Ben Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2007), English section pp. 53-68.
[69] Buber, "?erut" (selections).
[70] Thus Paul in the New Testament repeatedly contrasts "the law" (*nomos*) with faith (*pistis*). For example: "Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit (*pneuma*) by works of the law (*ergon nomou*), or by hearing with faith (*pisteos*) . . . Now it is evident that no man is justified (*dikaioutai*) before God by the law (*nomo*); for 'He who through faith (*pisteos*) is righteous (*dikaios*) shall live'" (Galatians 3:2, 11; RSV). The reference is to Habakuk 2:4, that "the righteous (*?addiq*) shall live by his faithfulness (*emunato*)." It is not clear whether the personal pronominal suffix "his" moderating "faithfulness" or "fidelity" in this verse refers to a righteous person living faithfully, i.e. by his fidelity, or whether "his" refers – as *emunah* often does – to God, i.e., that a person lives by God's fidelity to humans. The Septuagint also had rendered "Torah" as *nomos*. In his *Two Types of Faith* (New York: Harper, 1961), trans. Norman Goldhawk, p. 7 Buber differentiated Christian faith (*pistis*), acknowledging something to be true without being able to prove it, from Biblical/Jewish faith (*emunah*), trusting someone, also without being able to give sufficient reason for the trust. A similar point had already been made by Mendelssohn, that *emunah* means "trust" (*Vertrauen*) in his *Jerusalem and Other Jewish Writings,* trans. and ed. Alfred Jospe (New York: Schocken, 1969), p. 71. Cf. the translation by Allan Arkush with Introduction and Commentary by Alexander Altmann (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1983), p. 100, and in *Moses Mendelssohn's Sämmtliche Werke* (Wien, 1838), p. 263. See the discussion in my "Faith and Reason: The Controversy over Philosophy in Jewish History" in *Jewish Philosophy; Foundations and Extensions*, Vol. One (Lanham: University Press of America, 2008), p. 57. As Mordecai Kaplan pointed out (according to his students; I have not found this in his writings), *emunah* (or its adjective form *ne'eman*) often refers to God's relationship to people. Thus Deuteronomy 7:9, "The God who faithfully keeps the covenant"; "a faithful God" (*el emunah*), Deuteronomy 32:4); God's testimonies, deeds, commandments, and ordinances are "faithful" (Psalm 19:8, 33:4, 93:5, 111:7, 119:86); "my fidelity and kindness (*emunati ve-?asdi*) are with him" (Psalm 89:25). Similarly in rabbinic Hebrew, in the central daily `*Amidah* prayer, God is referred to as "sustaining his fidelity to mortals *(meqayem emunato le-sheinei `afar*) and as "you are faithful to resurrect the dead" (*ne'eman ata le-ha?ayot metim*).
[71] "Herut," p. 164.
[72] Martin Buber, "What Are We To Do About the Ten Commandments?" in *Israel and the World: Essays in a Time of Crisis* (New York: Schocken, 1963), p. 83. Trans. O. Marx. Originally published in *Literarische Welt*, 1929.
[73] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1969), p. 28, cited by Richard Cohen, "Levinas, Rosenzweig, and the Phenomenologies of Husserl and Heidegger," in Emil Fackenheim and Raphael Jospe (eds.), *Jewish Philosophy and the Academy* (Madison: Fairleigh University Press & Associated University Press, 1996), p. 117.
[74] Emmanuel Levinas, *De Dieu qui vient à l'idée* (Paris : Libraire Philosophique, 1986), p. 144. Cf. the translation by Bettina Bergo, *Of God Who Comes To Mind* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). My thanks to Ephraim Meir with this passage.
[75] We should note, however, that Levinas's citation of the Buber-Rosenzweig translation is not exact and he may have been citing from memory. According to Levinas, Buber-Rosenzweig translated "he is like you" ("il est comme toi"), but the German simply has: "*Halte lieb deinen Genossen, dir gleich. ICH bins*" – "like you" (without the verb "ist"), which, in a sense, is closer to the Hebrew, where there is no such verb for being. However, as noted above, in the translation (in Hebrew letters) in the *Bi'ur* Mendelssohn did have the verb: "Liebe deinen Nächstein der dir gleich ist."[76] *Entre Nous: Thinking-of-the-Other*, translated by Michael Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 90. My thanks to Ephraim Meir for this reference.
[77] Emmanuel Levinas, *Time and the Other*, trans. Richard Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987), pp. 109-110.

[78] Lenn Goodman, *The Holy One of Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 212
[79] Ephraim Meir, *Levinas's Jewish Thought: Between Jerusalem and Athens* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2008), p. 174. Meir translates illéité as "he-hood" (in Hebrew: **???-???**).
[80] Ephraim Meir, *ibid*, p. 98.
[81] Meir, *ibid*, p. 147.
[82] Catherine Chalier, *What Ought I To Do? Morality in Kant and Levinas*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 80. [83] *Star of Redemption*, #199-200, pp. 213-215, cited above.
[84] Catherine Chalier, *What Ought I To Do? Morality in Kant and Levinas*, pp. 80-81, citing Levinas, *Altérité et Transcendance* (Montellier: Fata Morgana, 1995), p. 82.
[85] Catherine Chalier, *ibid*, p. 172.
[86] Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5 also found in Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 37a. Altmann "*Home Imago Dei* in Jewish and Christian Theology," pp. 241-243 discusses the similarities to and differences between *?otam* ("seal") in this passage and Philo's use of "seal" (*sphragis*). "The Mishnah thus accepted the *homo imago Dei* concept in its Philonic, and ultimately Platonic sense, but rather than dwell on its theological implications, it put it to good use in the context of Halakah. It was made to serve as a reminder of the dignity and value of each human individual . . . It is obvious that what mattered to the rabbis was the possibility of translating the *imago Dei* concept into halakic categories, to put it in pragmatic rather than theological terms."
[87] To reiterate: for Rambam, as he explained at length in the first chapter of the *Guide of the Perplexed*, cited above, *?elem* ("image") does not mean the external shape but the "natural form," i.e., the essence of person, namely reason.
[88] Cf. several other essays of mine: "The Concept of the Chosen People: An Interpretation" in *JUDAISM* , No. 170, vol. 43, No. 2, Spring, 1994, 127-148;"Educating for Interreligious Responsibility: Ritual Exclusivity vs. Spiritual Inclusivity" in *Caring for Future Generations: Jewish, Christian and Islamic Perspectives,* ed. Emmanuel Agius and Lionel Chircop (Twickenham: Admantime Press, 1998), 20-41; "Chosenness in Judaism: Exclusivity vs. Inclusivity" in *Covenant and Chosenness in Judaism and Mormonism*, eds. Raphael Jospe, Truman Madsen and Seth Ward (Madison & Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press / Associated University Presses, 2001), 173-194; "Pluralism Out of the Sources of Judaism: Religious Pluralism Without Relativism" in *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*, vol. 2, issue 2, 2007, 92-113; "Pluralism Out of the Sources of Judaism: The Quest for Religious Pluralism Without Relativism" in *Jewish Theology and World Religions*, eds. Alon Goshen-Gottstein and Eugene Korn (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012), 87-121. The current essay and these earlier ones are included in my forthcoming book *Accepting and Excepting: On Pluralism and Chosenness Out of the Sources of Judaism*.

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