



## The Wisdom of Love: Man, Woman and God in Jewish Canonical Literature (Judaism and Jewish Life)

By Naftali Rothenberg

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The Wisdom of Love strives to challenge the discrepancy between the way source texts relate to love and the way they are perceived to do so, introducing readers to the extensive, profound, and significant treatment of love in the Jewish canon. This is a book about love, not its repression; it is an opportunity to study the wisdom of love, not those who lack such wisdom and are unlikely to ever acquire it. The Wisdom of Love brings about not only a change in perception?recognizing the existence of the wisdom of love per se?but also the realization that this wisdom is the very foundation of religious wisdom as a whole, rather than a peripheral branch of it. All love derives from a single source: love between man and woman. It is from this source that all other manifestations of love, such as love of God, love of wisdom, and love of one's fellow, draw their meaning.

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### **Editorial Review**

#### Review

"Rabbi Dr. Naftali Rothenberg of the Van Leer Institute of Jerusalem explores another religious approach to these issues in "The Wisdom of Love: Man, Woman and God in Jewish Canonical Literature". He finds that the Bible, Talmud, Midrash and halacha (Jewish law) devote considerable attention to love and that much of rabbinic tradition treats love's spiritual and physical aspects without inhibition. His study exposes a cognitive dissonance between what the Jewish canon says and what we expect our holy texts to say. The book celebrates love as a classical rabbinic ideal, and it is as rare as it is refreshing: scholarly, yet eminently readable; spiritual, yet sober." (Eugene Korn, editor of Meorot: A Forum for Modern Orthodox Discourse and American, director of the Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation in Efrat, Israel.)

"Spiritual and physical love between men and women are important parts of Jewish religious canons. They appear frequently in the Bible, and are therefore the subject of much analysis in works like the Talmud, the Midrash and mystical works like the Zohar. How these canonical works treat love is not well known nor well documented outside of small scholarly and religious circles. With this book, Rabbi Naftali Rothenberg, a senior research fellow at the Van Leer Institute of Jerusalem, reaches out to a broader audience. Though based on significant scholarship, Rabbi Rothenberg's presentation of the various interpretations offered in the canons is for those who want to understand and appreciate, rather than those conducting in-depth research." ((Annotation ©2010 Book News Inc. Portland, OR))

#### About the Author

Naftali Rothenberg is a senior research fellow and Jewish Culture and Identity Chair at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. Rothenberg also serves as the town Rabbi of Har Adar, Israel. He has authored and edited ten books.

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