
Ve-Ahavt ואהבת

Nina Judith Katz

You will love the Divine
with all your heart, with all your soul,
with all your being.

Therefore fear no abstract words or concepts,
nor dismiss them as flat, two-dimensional and distant,
but make them round by investing them with your being,
bring them near through the love of your heart,
give them the third dimension of your soul.

These words, with which I inspire you this day
shall be on your heart.

Therefore do not scorn words as mere and mightless
but weigh onto them the strength of your thoughts
and the warmth of your body.

Recognize the Divine in all people and peoples;
then you shall know it is not in the heavens
nor hidden in the bowels of the earth
but in you and your neighbors.

When this is evident to you,

Nina Judith Katz is a poet, a philologist, and a member of Havurat Shalom. She worked as a lexicographer on the American Heritage Dictionary, Third Edition. Her poetry has most recently appeared in WomenWise, The Wise Woman, and Spare Change.

your very breath shall teach it.
Any land wherein you know this truth
shall be your land
and your days in that land shall be long;
for you will know all the earth as My holy mountain
wherein none shall hurt or kill.
If you and your neighbors
do not make haste and perceive this
your lands will be laid waste
by your own petty wrath and neglect.

So instead seek Me out
in the love of your friends
in the cries of your enemies
in the antics of your neighbors
in the surging of your soul.
Find My hidden perches
and cling to Me most fiercely
where you most fear lest I slumber.
Warm My words with your body;
strengthen them with your thinking;
weave them into a tabard;
dress your soul in their fibers.
Let their fringes remind you
how to find the Divine.

