

I Am My Beloved's and My Beloved Is Mine

אני לדודי ודודי לי, ani l'dodi v'dodi li, I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine, is a common clause placed on wedding rings and other wedding or marriage mementos. It is a variation of a clause found in שיר השירים, Song of Songs, 2:16, דודי לי ואני לו, dodi li v'ani lo, my beloved is mine and I am his.

“May we always keep these words in our hearts as a symbol of our eternal commitment to each other.”¹

While the clause is popular in husband and wife expressions of commitment, the Shir haShirim expression is also a metaphor of Adonai and Israel as each other's beloved partner. Further expressing the metaphor, “May we always keep these words in our hearts as a symbol of our eternal commitment to each other.”

The Hebrew letters of the word אלול, Elul, the Hebrew month, can be read as an acronym for the phrase, אני לדודי ודודי לי, ani l'dodi v'dodi li. The Beloved, the rabbis teach, is one way of understanding God; the acronym reminds us that Elul is a time to keep God and love foremost in our minds. That tells us something important about the process of *teshuvah* (returning to God) in which we're meant to engage during the month of Elul. In order to align ourselves with our Source and Creator, to do the spiritual housecleaning we each need to do, we'd best focus on love, on our Beloved. Our relationships with others will then automatically fall into place.

1. A traditional sentence in a wedding ketubah.