

# The Asymmetry of Love According to Levinas and Jewish Tradition

Academic Lecture by  
**Catherine Chalièr**

Organized by the  
**Mennonite Seminary (VU)**

**Chris Doude van Troostwijk**  
Visiting professor Liberal Theology



Not only traditional Christian, but also secular thinkers have often downplayed the love dimension of Judaism by equating it with pure legalism.

In her lecture, the well-known philosopher Catherine Chalièr will propose a critique of this reductive idea, without however neglecting the difference between the two Biblical traditions.

Proposing a genuine Jewish interpretation of love, Chalièr departs from Levinas' notion of an ethical asymmetry in interpersonal relations in order to apply it equally to the specific love relation.

Her approach points *pars pro toto* to the urgent issue of the nowadays increasing popular, political and even academic oversimplifications of religious identities and relationships.

Catherine Chalièr is a retired professor of philosophy at the University of Paris Ovest Nanterre. She is an internationally recognized expert on Jewish philosophy (Spinoza, Rosenzweig, and the Chassidic Tradition), former collaborator of Levinas, editor of his posthumous works, and translator as well author of numerous books on the subject.

Lecture: **Catherine Chalièr**  
Responses: **Dirk-Martin Grube,**  
**Petruschka Schaafsma en**  
**Chris Doude van Troostwijk**

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